

Name of Policy	Cultural Diversity Policy
Description of Policy	Australian Catholic University recognizes, respects, promotes and celebrates the value of cultural diversity and will adopt and implement inclusive policies and strategies which advance cultural diversity as a positive force in the life of the University community.
<input type="checkbox"/> New Policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revision

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Approved By	Academic Board
Officer Responsible	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)
Contact Officer:	Administrative Officer, Secretariat

CULTURAL DIVERSITY POLICY

1. Policy

Australian Catholic University recognises, respects, promotes and celebrates the value of cultural diversity and will adopt and implement inclusive policies and strategies which advance cultural diversity as a positive force in the life of the University community.

2. Context

Australian Catholic University aspires to be a community characterized by academic excellence, intellectual integrity and ethical practice. The University explicitly engages the social, ethical and religious dimensions of the questions it faces in teaching and research and service. In all its endeavours, the University is guided by a fundamental concern for justice and equity, and for the dignity of all human beings.

The University expresses its distinctive identity by creating a welcoming community of staff and students that –

- reflects its ethos
- values and celebrates the diversity of the University community
- expresses a commitment to access and equity
- demonstrates ethical conduct
- highlights the primary values of human dignity, respect and freedom
- appreciates the importance of cross-cultural knowledge
- demonstrates acceptance of cultural diversity and
- aims to ensure that the diverse nature of Australian society is reflected in all aspects of its employment and education.

A commitment to cultural diversity embodies sensitive and ethical appreciation and recognition of cultural differences.

The University has a particular commitment to the education of Australian Indigenous peoples, to increasing the number of Australian Indigenous people employed by the University and to the objectives expressed within the Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation.

A commitment is also made to internationalisation as a process which integrates an international dimension and an intercultural dimension into the University's teaching and learning, research and research training, and community engagement.

3. Relevant legislation

There is a range of relevant federal and state legislation with which ACU National must comply and which relates directly or tangentially to recognition and accommodation of cultural diversity (see Appendix 1).

4. Policy objectives

The objectives of this policy are for the University, in its working, teaching and learning, research and community engagement to –

- (a) give specific acknowledgement and support to the cultures of Australian Indigenous peoples;
- (b) recognize and value the multicultural nature of Australian society and of the University community;
- (c) provide a diverse, flexible and creative study and work environment which acknowledges, supports, values and encourages cultural diversity and assists in the development of understandings of and insights into a range of cultures;
- (d) facilitate the contribution and successful participation within the University, its courses and activities, of students and staff from diverse cultural backgrounds;
- (e) emphasise the value of cultural diversity and strengthen its commitment to cultural inclusiveness, in
 - (i) the content and delivery of courses and units, including clinical and practicum placements; and
 - (ii) the delivery of services across all areas of the University;
- (f) educate students and staff so that they are capable of responding sensitively, sympathetically and justly in any cultural context;
- (g) attempt to redress any unfair, discriminatory or illegal practices which may result or have resulted directly or indirectly from cultural difference, identity and/or context;
- (h) promote cultural activities which celebrate the diversity of its staff and students; and
- (i) as far as is reasonably practicable, provide culturally appropriate support services for Australian Indigenous and international students and staff.

The University in its various activities, including the development and application of policies which guide its operation, will be informed by its commitment to support of and sensitivity to cultural diversity.

5. Policy implementation

In order to achieve the above policy, the University will develop and adapt its policies, procedures and practices to integrate the principle of respect and support for cultural diversity. It is, however, recognized that resource constraints may affect the extent to which and/or timelines within which implementation of the strategies listed below can be achieved.

5.1 Teaching and learning, and research and research training

5.1.1 The University will develop strategies to give effect to its commitment to inclusive, cross-cultural perspectives in the design and delivery of curricula.

5.1.2 In course proposals and reviews, the principles of inclusive curriculum will be applied in the design and delivery of the curriculum and to teaching methodologies and methods of assessment used.

5.1.3 Teaching and learning activities, including but not limited to curriculum design, content, delivery and assessment, will -

- (a) provide an orientation to assist the introduction of students to the subject or discipline and to relevant academic expectations, and in particular will assist in the transition of students facing a variety of linguistic, personal and intellectual challenges;
- (b) include cross-cultural content, value diversity, and respect and support culturally diverse approaches to learning and ways of understanding;
- (c) create an open and inclusive approach which values learning from others (particularly others from different cultural backgrounds) and respects diversity of perspectives;
- (d) equip students to undertake projects and research in a manner which observes ethical guidelines, is sensitive to relevant cultural protocols of subject groups, including language protocols, and generally is culturally appropriate;
- (e) be designed to engage students of diverse cultural backgrounds;
- (f) maintain a learning environment that forestalls marginalisation or isolation of students on the basis of cultural difference.

5.1.4 Through its Strategic Plan for Research the University will develop strategies to ensure that research training, supervision and assessment practices are sensitive to and support cultural diversity.

5.1.5 The Principles of Inclusive Curriculum and their implementation will ensure that curriculum supports a range of perspectives from groups of different cultural backgrounds, and a learning environment which is supportive of all students.

5.1.6 The Language and Literacy Policy and its implementation will promote use of spoken and written language that is free from stereotyping or bias and inclusive in valuing diversity.

5.1.7 Professional learning opportunities will be structured having regard to the University's commitment to supporting cultural diversity.

5.2 Employment

5.2.1 Employment policies and procedures will, where appropriate, foster the cultural diversity of the workforce.

5.2.2 The University will explore how it may best expand employment of Australian Indigenous people.

5.2.3 The University will conduct training and development programs of relevance to cultural diversity on the basis of need.

5.3 Decision-making

5.3.1 Decision-making within the University will, wherever reasonably practicable, be informed by input from staff and/or students from diverse backgrounds.

5.3.2 To the extent reasonably possible and appropriate, the membership of various bodies, associations and committees will reflect the diversity of the University community.

5.4 Study and workplace culture

5.4.1 Consistent with the Mission and ethos of the University, relevant policies, procedures and practices will promote a culture in which all members of the University community -

- (a) understand, value and have informed respect for cultural diversity in all interactions between and among –
 - students
 - students and staff
 - staff;
- (b) are sensitive to the needs of students and staff whose first language is not English; this includes Australian Indigenous people;
- (c) have the right, within reasonable limits, to adhere to their cultural traditions and to express their ideas and opinions, while respecting the rights of others, without fear of discrimination, harassment or bullying;
- (d) recognise that visitors to and temporary residents in Australia are entitled, subject to relevant legislative provisions, to the same consideration as Australian citizens.

5.4.2 To the extent reasonably possible, the University will endeavour to make provisions –

- (a) to assist the transition of, and promote the successful adjustment by, students of different cultural backgrounds (including international students) to study within the University;
- (b) for the cultural needs of all staff and students;
- (c) to assist students, particularly international students, to prepare for re-acculturation on return to their home country.

Associated Policies

Australian Catholic University Mission Statement
Australian Catholic University Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation
Policy on Course Approval, Amendment and Review – Accredited Higher Education Courses
Strategic Plan for Research
Policy on Quality Teaching and Learning
Language and Literacy Policy
Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning
Code of Conduct for Staff
Statute 10
Equal Opportunity Policy

Responsibilities

Persons/areas affected: *All staff, students and other members of the University community and bona fide visitors*

Accountabilities

Compliance with Policy *Senior Executive, Heads of Schools/Directors:*
Development/implementation of policy and inclusion of initiatives to support, value and promote cultural diversity within strategic and operational plans, policies, procedures and practices.

Policy Review

The University may make changes to this policy from time to time to improve the effectiveness of its operation. In this regard, any staff member who wishes to make any comments about this policy may forward their suggestions to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs).

Further Assistance

Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding this policy should first consult his/her nominated supervisor who is responsible for the implementation and operation of these arrangements in the work area. Should further advice be needed, the staff member should contact the Director, Institute for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY POLICY: RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Commonwealth Legislation

The Racial Discrimination Act 1975
The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986
The Disability Discrimination Act 1992
The Racial Hatred Act 1995

State Legislation

The Anti-Discrimination Act (New South Wales) 1977
The Anti-Discrimination Act (Queensland) 1991
The Discrimination Act (Australian Capital Territory) 1991
Australian Capital Territory Human Rights Act - 2004
The Equal Opportunity Act (Victoria) 1995
The Racial and Religious Tolerance Act (Victoria) 2001
Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities - 2006