

## Policy 01: Access and Equity Policy and Procedure

### Purpose

ACU is committed to providing all students with equal benefits and opportunities to pursue their training and development. This policy and procedure is to be used by ACU to integrate access and equity principles and to treat equally and fairly all VET students and all individuals seeking to enrol into the VET courses and all training and assessment activities it conducts.

### Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all ACU students, staff and training activities.

### Definitions

**Access and equity means** policies and approaches aimed at ensuring that VET is responsive to the individual needs of clients whose age, gender, cultural or ethnic background, disability, sexuality, language skills, literacy or numeracy level, unemployment, imprisonment or remote location may present a barrier to access, participation and the achievement of suitable outcomes.

#### Access and Equity principles include:

- Equity for all people through the fair and appropriate allocation of resources
- Equality of opportunity for all people without discrimination
- Access for all people to appropriate quality training and assessment services
- Increased opportunity for people to participate in training

**Disadvantaged groups** include the following groups who traditionally have been under-represented in Vocational Education and Training (VET):

- People with a disability
- Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders
- Women
- People from non-English speaking backgrounds
- People in rural and remote areas
- Long term unemployed

**Discrimination** can be direct, indirect or systemic.

#### Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination is any action which specifically excludes a person or group of people from a benefit or opportunity, or significantly reduces their chances of obtaining it, because their status or personal characteristics, irrelevant to the situation (e.g., sex, ethnic origin) are applied as a barrier. Direct discrimination has as a focus assumed differences between people.

#### Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination is the outcome of rules, practices and a decision which treats people equally and therefore appear to be neutral; but which, in fact, perpetuate an initially unequal situation and therefore significantly reduce a person's chances of obtaining or retaining a benefit or opportunity. Rules, practices and decisions are applied to all groups alike but it is the very assumption of a likeness that constitutes the discrimination.

#### Systemic discrimination

A system of discrimination perpetuated by rules, practices and decisions which are realised in actions that are discriminatory and disadvantage a group of people because of their status or characteristics and serve to advantage others of different status or characteristics. Direct and indirect discrimination contribute to systemic discrimination.

**Equity** focuses on outcomes. Equity is not concerned with treating people in the same way; it is concerned with ensuring that all groups of people participate and benefit to the same level.

#### Legislation includes

- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (VIC)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (QLD)

**Sexual harassment** is defined by the Commonwealth Sexual Discrimination Act 1984 as when a person:

- makes an unwelcome sexual advance or an unwelcome request for sexual favours;
- engages in unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, and a reasonable person would have anticipated that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

## Policy

### 1. Access and equity

- 1.1 The aim of the policy is to remove barriers and to open up developmental opportunities for all students by creating a workplace and training environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, bigotry, prejudice, racism and offensive behaviour.
- 1.2 All students will receive fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of training without regard to political affiliation, race, colour, religion, national origin, sex, marital status or physical disability.
- 1.3 A person with a disability may be excluded under this policy if the disability could cause occupational health and safety risks to the person and/or other students.
- 1.4 All trainers / assessors are responsible to observe and be advocates for the policy.
- 1.5 This policy will be widely disseminated in the organisation.
- 1.6 ACU's policies and procedures will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that they recognise and incorporate the rights of individuals.
- 1.7 Any breach of access and equity policy and procedure must be reported to the Compliance Manager or follow the complaints and appeals procedure.

### 2. Fair treatment and equal benefits and opportunities

- 2.1 ACU has open, fair and transparent procedures that, in our reasonable view, are based on merit for making decisions about the selection of persons who seek to enrol with the VET provider and the treatment of VET students undertaking a VET course of study.
- 2.2 People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and people with diverse academic, work and life experiences are encouraged to apply.
- 2.3 ACU ensures that all relevant information for students to make informed decisions is available on the website, in the student handbook and the course brochures.
- 2.4 ACU has the following policies and procedures in place in order to treat all current and prospective students in a fair and equitable manner with all academic and non-academic matters and provide equal benefits and opportunities.
  - Policy 02: Privacy Policy and procedure
  - Policy 03: Complaints and appeals policy and procedure
  - Policy 05: Enrolment policy and procedure
  - Policy 06: Fees, charges and refunds Policy and procedure
  - Policy 08: RPL and CT policy and procedure
  - Policy 10: Academic integrity and progress policy and procedure

## Procedure

Any breach of access and equity policy must be reported in accordance with the Policy 03: Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure.

Version History	Detail of update
Version 1.2	Rebranded to ACU College