

## Access, Equity and Diversity Policy

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Applied Education & Training strives to achieve equitable outcomes in education with a focus on inclusion, a student-centred approach, flexibility in learning where appropriate, cultural respect, access to facilities and resources, and improving the scope of access and equity where necessary.

Applied Education & Training is committed to promoting a fair and equitable environment for staff and students that is free from discrimination, harassment and vilification. Policies and procedures are aimed at ensuring that Applied Education & Training is responsive to the individual needs of clients whose age, gender, cultural or ethnic background, disability, sexuality, language skills, literacy or numeracy level, unemployment or remote location may present a barrier to access, participation and the achievement of suitable outcomes.

### **Access, Equity and Diversity Principles**

Applied Education & Training ensures a supportive and inclusive work and learning environment by applying the following principles:

- Equity is ensured through the fair and appropriate allocation of resources;
- Equality of opportunity is applied for all people without discrimination;
- Access is provided for all people to appropriate quality training and assessment services in accordance with their goals contingent upon entry requirements for their chosen course being met;
- Provision of opportunities to participate for groups traditionally under-represented in vocational education and training such as people with a disability, Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, people from remote or regional areas and long term-unemployed
- The principles of Access and Equity are covered at staff induction and at student induction and are regularly reviewed to ensure correct interpretation and application.
- Enrolment procedures will be free of any form of discrimination, and, if an individual does not meet the entry requirements, attempts will be made to assist them to identify alternative courses;
- Training and assessment policies and procedures incorporate access and equity principles
- At enrolment, students will be asked to identify personal needs or circumstances that may exist and for which they may require additional support (See Enrolment Policy).

## **Legislation**

Applied Education & Training is committed to complying with Commonwealth and State legislation, policies and standards regarding access, equity and cultural diversity including

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth),
- Anti-discrimination Act 1998 (Cth)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth) -including processes relating to enrolment, participation, support services, curriculum development and delivery and the elimination of harassment and bullying
- The Equal Opportunity Act (1995)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012
- Fair Work Act 2009

## **Providing equitable access**

Applied Education & Training strives to maximise the opportunities for access, participation and outcomes for students. It undertakes to identify and, where possible, remove barriers that prevent individuals from accessing and participating in our services and is committed to treating all prospective and actual students on the same basis.

Applied Education & Training provides equitable access to all required educational and support services, so that no student is disadvantaged regardless of their mode of study or location. Where there may be limitations regarding access to these resources, Applied Education & Training provides clear advice in pre-enrolment information so all clients can make an informed choice about which RTO and course of study best meets their needs.

Applied Education & Training ensures that staff acquire the knowledge and skills to relate to students without direct or indirect discrimination so they are aware of and know how to use available Applied Education & Training or external resources or to refer students to appropriate support services.

Applied Education & Training will provide a range of access and equity materials designed to assist students in undertaking and completing courses and qualifications.

## **Reasonable adjustment**

Applied Education & Training ensures it treats prospective students with a disability on the same basis as prospective students without a disability as it makes any decisions about admission or enrolment on the basis that reasonable adjustments will be provided. A

reasonable adjustment is a measure or action (or a group of measures or actions) taken by Applied Education & Training that has the effect of assisting a student with a disability. It balances the interests of all parties affected. In assessing whether a particular adjustment for a student is reasonable, Applied Education & Training considers the relevant circumstances and interests, including the effect of the adjustment on the student, including the effect on the student's ability to achieve learning outcomes and to participate in courses or programs.

When considering an adjustment to the course or program in which the student is enrolled, or proposes to be enrolled, Applied Education & Training is entitled to maintain the academic requirements of the course or program.

Once a reasonable adjustment has been determined, Applied Education & Training may consider if the adjustment would impose unjustifiable hardship on its operations. In determining what constitutes unjustifiable hardship, all relevant circumstances of the particular case are taken into account. See the *Learner Support Services Policy and Procedure* for further details.

### **Discrimination**

Applied Education & Training aims to provide an environment that is free from discrimination. Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others due to the person's circumstances, characteristics or beliefs. Discrimination can be:

- Direct i.e. action which specifically excludes a person or group of people from a benefit or opportunity, or significantly reduces their chances of obtaining it because of assumed differences.
- Indirect i.e. resulting from rules, practices and decisions which appear to be neutral but perpetuate an unequal situation, reducing a person's chances of obtaining or retaining a benefit or opportunity.
- Systemic i.e. perpetuated by rules, practices and decisions which result in actions that are
  - discriminatory and disadvantage a group of people because of their status or characteristics
  - serve to advantage others of different status or characteristics.

### **Bullying and Harassment**

Bullying, according to the Australian Human Rights Commission, is when people repeatedly and intentionally use words or actions against someone or a group of people to cause distress and risk to their wellbeing. Examples of bullying may include (but are not limited to):

- Keeping someone out of a group (online or offline)
- Acting in an unpleasant way near or towards someone

- Giving nasty looks, making rude gestures, calling names, being rude and impolite, and constantly negative teasing.
- Spreading rumours or lies, or misrepresenting someone
- Harassing someone based on their race, sex, religion, gender or a disability
- Intentionally and repeatedly hurting someone physically
- Intentionally stalking someone
- Taking advantage of any power over someone else

Harassment is any behaviour which is unwelcome, offends, humiliates or intimidates a person and causes the work or learning environment to become unpleasant. If a person is being harassed, then their ability to do their work is affected as they often become stressed and suffer health problems. Harassment may result from behaviour which is not intended to offend or harm, such as jokes or unwanted attention, however, this does not mean that it is lawful.

Applied Education & Training ensures that all staff and students understand what will be regarded as bullying and harassment, how complaints of bullying and harassment can be made and how claims will be treated. Applied Education & Training expectations in relation to bullying and harassment are not limited to the workplace or class hours, and will include all Applied Education & Training events which include, but are not limited to, classes, functions, meetings and conferences as well as social events.

Applied Education & Training expectations relate to, but are not limited by the following types of communication:

- Verbal communication either over the telephone, in person in the workplace, in online classes or meetings
- Written communication including letters, notes, minutes of meetings and other correspondence
- Internal and external electronic communication including:
  - email;
  - instant messaging services;
  - social media and networking forums including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and other forms of social media; and
  - communications via text message

Applied Education & Training is committed to creating a workplace which is free from workplace health and safety risks and one which strives to create positive working relationships, all individuals are expected to observe the following minimum standards of behaviour, including:

- Showing politeness and courtesy to others;
- Respecting the differences between people and their circumstances;
- Not engaging in any type of bullying behaviour towards others;
- Not assisting others in engaging in any type of bullying behaviour towards others;
- Adhering to the complaint procedure if they, personally, experience any type of bullying behaviour;
- Reporting any bullying behaviour(s) they see happening to others in the Applied Education & Training community; and
- Keeping information related to the investigation of bullying confidential.

NOTE: Fair and reasonable management action taken in to counsel an individual for instances of underperformance, investigating complaints made against personnel, discipline for misconduct and other directions in line with business needs does not amount to bullying.

### **Bullying and Harassment Complaints**

Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated at Applied Education & Training. If bullying or harassment occurs, the person responsible will be subject to investigation as outlined in the complaints policy and procedure. This may result in termination of employment of staff and removal of the student from the training course. Serious cases of bullying or harassment may constitute a criminal offence.

Any individual who believes that they have been subject to actions or words that may constitute discrimination or bullying should act upon such bullying as soon as possible by following the Complaints Process.

### **Monitoring and Improvement**

All Access and Equity practices are monitored by the Chief Executive Officer and areas for improvement identified and acted upon. (See Continuous Improvement Policy)