

Policy and Procedure		
Doc #: PP-2.11	Access, Equity and Diversity	
HESF 2021: Standard 2.2		
National Code 2018: Standard 2, 6		
NVETR (Outcome Standards for RTOs) Instrument 2025: Standard 2.4, 2.5		
Rev #: 6	Approved By: Group Chief Operating Officer	Date: 4/11/2025

REVISION HISTORY			
Rev	Description of Change	Author	Effective Date
1	New – Adopted from BMC and existing ACA Access and Equity Policy	Zita	21/07/14
2	Changed the format of the Policy and Procedure	Zita	17/09/14
3	Changed SNR 16.5,20 to Standards 1.7, 7.5and 8.5	Jeevan	01/04/15
4	Minor changes	Gabriela	01/04/16
5	Reviewed the document. Minor changes to clauses 5.3.1, 5.8.2 and 6.10.	Elaine	20/12/18
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated purpose and scope to include Academies Australasia colleges in Schedule 1 • Removed “ACA” in the title, renamed as “Access, Equity and Diversity” • Retired AAPoly’s Diversity and Equity Policy and STA’s Access and Equity Policy • Updated definitions, responsibilities and general guidelines • Added procedure • Updated the mapping of the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025 	Compliance	4/11/25

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 Academies Australasia colleges (The College), as listed in [Schedule 1](#), are committed to ensuring access, equity and ensuring a learning environment that promotes and supports the diversity of students and staff.
- 1.2 The College is committed to ensuring compliance with the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (NVETR) (Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025, Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, and applicable state funding regulations.
- 1.3 The intent of this policy is to outline how the College responds to the diverse needs of individual students and staff, including those related to age, religion, gender, cultural, ethnic background, impairment, sexuality, language skills, literacy or numeracy level, unemployment, imprisonment, disability or remote location, which may otherwise present barriers to accessing the College's programs, services or achieving successful training outcomes.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to:
 - Prospective and current students of the College.
 - Staff, including full-time, part-time, casual, and contract staff.
 - Training programs, including government-funded programs (Smart and Skilled, VSL, Skills First), and workplace operations.

3.0 Definitions

- 3.1 **Access** – The opportunity of an individual to enter, participate in, and benefit from the learning and work environment, regardless of their background, physical abilities or personal circumstances.
- 3.2 **Discrimination**¹ – The unfair or unfavourable treatment of a person because of a personal characteristic or attribute, real or imputed, including the setting of a requirement, condition or practice that is unreasonable and that people with a particular characteristic cannot meet.
 - a. **Direct Discrimination** – Direct discrimination happens when someone is treated unfavourably because of a personal characteristic protected by the law. It often happens because of unfair assumptions about what people with certain personal characteristics can and cannot do.
 - b. **Indirect Discrimination** – Indirect discrimination happens when there is an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice that disadvantages a person, or a group of people, because of a personal characteristic.
- 3.3 **Diversity** – Differences between individuals or groups of people in age, cultural background, disability, ethnicity, family responsibilities, gender, language, marital status, religious belief and sexual orientation; including other ways in which people are different, such as learning, life experience, work experience and socio-economic background.

¹ Ref. Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic), Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth), Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth), Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth), Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

- 3.4 **Equal opportunity** – Equal access to and participation in, aspects of public life, including learning and employment.
- 3.5 **Equity** – The fair treatment of people on the basis of respect and merit, the recognition of disadvantage and the absence of discrimination.
- 3.6 **Harassment** – Any unwelcome behaviour, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that demeans, humiliates, or intimidates an individual or group. This includes incidents of antisemitism, Islamophobia, and racism. Harassment can occur as a single serious incident or as repeated behaviour and creates an environment that is hostile, offensive, or detrimental to a person.
- 3.7 **Reasonable adjustment** – An adjustment or modification made by the College to the training and assessment of a course to ensure individuals with disabilities can participate in the course. Such adjustment not causing the College unjustifiable hardship. (*As defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*).
- 3.8 **Student Management System (SMS)** – A platform used by the College to manage student data and administrative tasks, such as enrolment, attendance, grades, and reporting (e.g. Paradigm, VETtrak).
- 3.9 **Victimisation** – Any form of detriment directed at a person for alleging, making or participating in, supporting or resolving a complaint of discrimination, sexual harassment or victimisation; or a person associated with a person who alleges, makes or participates in, supports or resolves a complaint of discrimination, sexual harassment or victimisation.

4.0 Responsibilities

- 4.1 **Academic Board (Higher Education)** – Ensures that all courses approved for initial and continuing accreditation accord with the principles for inclusive curricula.
- 4.2 **Academic Head** – Responsible for assessing the needs, reasonable adjustment and final acceptance of diverse students into courses.
- 4.3 **Admissions and Student Services Staff** – Responsible for identifying in the admission documents students with diverse needs. They disclose this information to the Academic team to confirm if the college is able to offer reasonable adjustments for the student.
- 4.4 **Staff** – Responsible for ensuring access and equity to all students or prospective students.
- 4.5 **Staff members with supervisory roles** – Responsible for promoting an inclusive learning environment. They are also responsible for exercising their leadership and authority to ensure the environment remains free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- 4.6 **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** – Leads the implementation of diversity, access, and equity initiatives across the College. Allocates resources for reasonable adjustments and refers high-cost decisions to the Board.
- 4.7 **Students** – Responsible for treating others with respect, embracing diversity, and contributing to a safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environment. Students must also comply with the College's policies on behaviour and conduct.
- 4.8 **Group Compliance Manager** - Responsible for policy review, ensuring ongoing alignment with legislative and regulatory requirements across all College sectors.

5.0 General Guidelines

All individuals will be treated with respect and dignity, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment. To uphold this, the College:

- asserts that staff and students have the right to work, study, and interact in an environment free from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- applies zero tolerance towards discrimination, harassment, or victimisation. Complaints are addressed through formal investigation, conciliation, or informal resolution, all underpinned by principles of natural justice.
- ensures its publications and official documents use inclusive and non-discriminatory language to foster respect and inclusion.

5.1 Gender Equality Strategy

Academies Australasia Group Limited's (ultimately owner of the College) objective is to have a diverse and skilled workforce and a work environment that values and utilises the contributions of employees from diverse backgrounds, skills, experiences and perspectives. Another objective is to have an equal balance of male and female employees (excluding academic staff), and at least 30% of Board and senior group executives being female.

Each year the numbers will be assessed against these targets. Academies Australasia Group Limited is compliant with the Workplace Gender Equality Act.

In line with objective, the College aims to provide a working and learning environment conducive to active participation by women. In particular, the College has:

- women who hold senior positions as leaders in the College and on the College management team. They provide strong models for women students and staff;
- a strict anti-harassment policy, and by education and information, a friendly working and learning environment which is harassment and discrimination free;
- provided a flexible timetable which allows women with other commitments to access education; and
- required trainers not to use examples which portray women in a caricatured, disadvantaged or less powerful position or occupation.

5.2 Disabilities strategy

The College complies with the regulations covering physical access. Wheelchair access is available to the College.

5.3 Training and Assessment

The College is committed in broadening its student profile by supporting the participation of individuals from under-represented or disadvantaged groups, ensuring equitable opportunities for academic success regardless of background. The College believes that access to education and training should be available to all on an equitable basis, recognising the potential for education to enhance life opportunities, provide personal and professional fulfilment, and contribute positively to society as a whole.

The College is committed to the creation of a working and learning environment which caters for the culturally diverse society in which we live. The College supports laws and policies which eliminate discrimination and harassment and promote fair treatment for all.

The College recognises the need to:

- identify and remove structural barriers to access and equity in education and training; and
- where possible, encourage the customisation of training delivery which suits the

needs of all students and is sensitive to cultural differences.

To achieve this, the College will:

- include Access, Equity and Diversity Policies in the Student and Staff Handbooks;
- take these policies into account when recruiting, developing and promoting staff;
- require staff to be aware of and enforce these policies, particularly with its strong focus on international students;
- encourage staff to take these policies into account in delivering training and assessment; and
- continue their policies and procedures such as Recognition of Prior Learning (including assessing overseas qualifications and courses) and flexible timetabling which allow greater participation by minorities and disadvantaged groups.

5.4 Students from non-English speaking backgrounds

A substantial proportion of the College's students come from a non-English speaking background. The College tries to recruit trainers with experience in teaching students coming from diverse backgrounds.

5.5 Equal Opportunity Legislation

The College abides by the Equal Opportunity Legislation of each State that protects those involved in the training system. This legislation makes discrimination and harassment in the provision of education, employment and the provision of goods and services unlawful.

5.6 Equality in Student Selection

The College is committed to ensuring that student selection processes are fair and equitable and, are consistent with competency level and Training Package requirements. The College ensures that applicants who do not meet entry requirements are advised of pre-entry training they may take to meet eligibility criteria.

Selection into our programs is based upon the applicant student:

- meeting required entry requirements including\minimum level of English language proficiency, educational qualifications or work experience.
- meeting required industry age requirements that may be in place for a particular course.
- has or can access to particular equipment or requirements pertaining to their mode of study.
- has the physical industry requirements that may be required for a particular course.

5.7 Equality in Student Enrolment

The College is committed to the enrolment of students when there is a capacity to deliver the course for which the student is enrolling and where the student has:

- applied in the prescribed manner.
- met the selection requirements for the relevant course.
- supplied accurate personal and previous qualification information.
- agreed to abide by the College's policies, procedures and code of conduct.
- paid the prescribed fees.

5.8 Equity and Access

The College is committed to providing support services and equal access to opportunities for students with a disability, in accordance with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (1992).

The College shall always respect a student's right to privacy and confidentiality in relation to their disability and be sensitive to the needs of students with a disability. Students with a disability are required to have the ability to fulfil the core requirements and satisfactorily complete competencies/learning outcomes within all courses to attain the relevant award. However, it is recognised that flexibility in arrangements may need to be implemented. Such arrangements may be negotiated with the Academic Head (VET or Higher Education).

The College ensures that student admission and staff recruitment processes are fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory. Selection is based on clear, objective criteria, and safeguards are in place to ensure that individuals, including those with disabilities, are not disadvantaged. For more information see the Student Selection and Admission Procedure.

The College is an equal opportunity employer and education provider, as such does not discriminate against, or favour target groups in the recruitment of students or staff.

Target groups are defined as:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- People with disabilities
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse, including those from non-English speaking backgrounds
- People in transition and other special groups (i.e. people re-entering the workforce, long term unemployed, sole parents, people with low literacy, language or numeracy skills, and those who have been institutionalised)
- Women
- People from regionally isolated communities
- LGBTQIA individuals, where appropriate and relevant to support inclusion.

5.9 Inclusive Practices and Reasonable Adjustment

The College acknowledges that the diverse needs of its staff, students, and associates are best supported through inclusive practices and, where appropriate, the provision of reasonable adjustments. It is committed to removing barriers by making reasonable adjustments to policies, procedures, or practices to accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Where practicable and reasonable, the College will consider and implement reasonable adjustments to educational arrangements for students with special needs and employment arrangements for staff to ensure equitable access and participation.

Students are encouraged to disclose their needs prior to enrolment or as early as possible once the course start to academic staff to allow timely planning and implementation of appropriate support. All requests will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and adjustments will be implemented provided they do not impose unjustifiable hardship on the College. The Academic Heads will decide on the required adjustments. For those adjustments that may involve significant costs, the Academic Heads will refer them to the CEO who will consider the request in light of the potential benefits to people with and without disabilities.

5.10 **Monitoring and Continuous Improvement**

The College is committed to evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement of its access, equity and diversity practices through ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

The implementation and continuous improvement of this Access, Equity and Diversity Policy are overseen by the Compliance Manager, in collaboration with Heads of Department, Student Services Managers, and Academic Managers.

To support this commitment:

- The College collects and analyses data on student participation, progression, and completion, in accordance with its Quality and Auditing Policy.
- This data is used to inform decisions related to admissions, student support services, and teaching and learning policies, with the aim of continuously improving equity, access, and student outcomes across all cohorts.

6.0 **Procedure**

6.1 **Non-Discriminatory Selection and Admission**

Student admissions and staff recruitment decisions must be based on clear and objective criteria. Marketing and recruitment materials must reflect the College's commitment to diversity and equity.

Prospective students and staff with disabilities or from disadvantaged groups must not be excluded unless their condition clearly prevents them from meeting the inherent requirements of the course or role.

6.2 **Disclosure and Identification of Support Needs**

Students and staff are encouraged to disclose any disability or personal circumstances that may require support or adjustments, as early as possible. Disclosures may be made during application, enrolment, onboarding, or at any time during study or employment. All disclosures must be treated with confidentiality and handled in accordance with the College's Privacy Policy.

Marketing/Admissions staff must ensure that the student's disclosed disability or support needs are disclosed to the Academic Heads prior to accepting students to ensure that needs are appropriately assessed and that suitable support arrangements can be identified and implemented.

6.3 **Assessment and Implementation of Reasonable Adjustments**

When recruiting staff, reasonable adjustments are assessed by the DH and discussed with the CEO prior to appointment.

For students, reasonable adjustments are assessed on a case-by-case basis by Student Services or relevant managers.

Adjustments must:

- be practicable and reasonable,
- not compromise competency standards or inherent job/course requirements,
- not cause unjustifiable hardship to the College.

Adjustments requiring significant cost or infrastructure changes will be referred to the CEO, who will consider their broader benefits for people with and without disabilities.

6.4 Ongoing Monitoring and Review

Adjustments implemented must be regularly reviewed for effectiveness and continued relevance. Students or staff may request changes or raise concerns through formal feedback or grievance channels. Academic and administrative teams must ensure ongoing support and escalate complex cases to CEO as needed.

7.0 External References

- 7.1 Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- 7.2 Age Discrimination Act 2004
- 7.3 Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- 7.4 Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- 7.5 Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- 7.6 Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012
- 7.7 Fair Work Act 2009
- 7.8 Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- 7.9 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students
- 7.10 NVETR (Outcome Standards for RTOs) Instrument 2025
- 7.11 Australian Capital Territory Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT)
- 7.12 New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- 7.13 Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Act 1996 (NT)
- 7.14 Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (QLD)
- 7.15 South Australia Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)
- 7.16 Tasmania Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (TAS)
- 7.17 Victoria Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (VIC)
- 7.18 Western Australia Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)

8.0 Internal References

- 8.1 Student Selection and Admission Policy and Procedure
- 8.2 Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- 8.3 Management Review (Continuous Improvement) Policy and Procedure
- 8.4 Language Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Policy and Procedure
- 8.5 Assessment Policy and Procedure
- 8.6 Student Handbooks
- 8.7 Code of Conduct
- 8.8 Staff Handbook
- 8.9 Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure

Schedule 1
Academies Australasia Colleges (The College)

Academies Australasia Institute (AAI)
Academies Australasia Polytechnic (AAPoly)
Australian College of Technology (ACT)
Clarendon Business College (CBC)
Supreme Business College (SBC)
Academies Australasia Hair and Beauty (AAHB)
Academy of English (AOE)
Australian International High School (AIHS)
Skills Training Australasia (STA)