

Access and Equity Policy

Scope

Impact Training Centre Ltd (ITC) is committed to meeting the needs of the individual students and the community as a whole, through the integration of access and equity guidelines. This policy is guided by Queensland's *Anti Discrimination Act 1991*.

ITC will promote inclusive practices and procedures to ensure that equity principles for all, regardless of race, gender, age, social or educational background or any disability that may be present are implemented through fair allocation of resources (including human resources) and the right to equality of opportunity without discrimination.

ITC will ensure that no applicant for admission to this organisation will be disadvantaged in any way by virtue of their race, gender, age (recognising of course the minimum age), social or educational background or disability.

This policy states how ITC will provide inclusive education services and a learning environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. This policy relates to the provision of all education and support services by ITC to students. In addition, all staff employed or engaged by ITC are obliged to comply with this policy.

Legislation

Australian federal and state legislation makes it unlawful for organisations to discriminate against people because of their age, gender, race, marital status, sexuality, or physical or intellectual disability. The following legislation underpins all matters related to access and equity at ITC:

- *Anti Discrimination Act 1977*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (including Disability Standards for Education)
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004*
- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986*

Principles

The following principles are applied by ITC in the development and implementation of all learning and assessment strategies. To ensure that the student recruitment and admission process is bias-free and non-discriminatory.

ITC Access and Equity Policy is based on the following principles:

- uses the same recruitment and admission process for all applicants
- Access for all people to appropriate quality vocational education and training programs and services.
- provides literacy support for specific groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as set out in our Admissions policy
- bases admission to courses and programs solely on availability of places and the applicant satisfying course entry requirements
- Provides applicants with adequate information and support to enable them to select the most suitable program for their needs.
- To ensure that the learning environment is free from harassment, discrimination and victimisation,
- specifies standards of behaviour expected from students and staff in its Code of Conduct
- Provides and maintains training services that reflect fair and reasonable opportunity, and consideration for all students and staff, regardless of race, colour, religion, gender or physical disability, regardless of the prevailing community values.
- Equity for all people through the fair and appropriate allocation of resources and involvement in vocational education and training.
- Equality of outcome within vocational education and training for all people, without discrimination.
- Increased opportunity for people to participate in vocational education and training and in relevant decision making processes within the vocational education and training system.
- All staff are to be given fair and reasonable:
(1) opportunity to participate in relevant decision making processes; and
(2) allocation of resources and services.
- All applicants are to be given fair and reasonable opportunity to attend and complete training.
- has policies and procedures in place for preventing harassment and discrimination

ITC's policies are inclusive of a range of student needs; we consider during the interview process:

- issues relating to access and equity when specifying course entry requirements and prerequisites
- offers credit transfer and recognition of prior learning if applicable
- takes into account the requirements of students with a disability when designing courses
- provides inclusive and non-discriminatory learning materials
- language, literacy and numeracy requirements are consistent with the vocational level of the qualification

ITC provides an assessment process that is fair, valid, reliable and consistent through:

- recognition of previously acquired skills and knowledge
- adequate information on course structure prior to enrolment in the course
- adapts assessment to meet student needs while still maintaining a high quality,
- valid and consistent process (see reasonable adjustment below)
- giving students the right to appeal an assessment or recognition decision
- giving all students an equal opportunity to demonstrate competence.
- Support is provided to those with special needs.
- Reasonable adjustment is provided to those with a disability or special need according to individual circumstances. This means providing the appropriate services and/or facilities for student learning and assessment. Reasonable adjustment may include but is not restricted to:
 - The use of adaptive/assistive technology (equipment and software designed for use by people with a disability)
 - educational support
 - alternative assessment methods
 - Learning and assessment aids such as papers in large print or the use of scribes or interpreters
 - Extra time to complete a course or assessment.
- Learning support is facilitated for those with basic literacy, numeracy or English
- Language difficulties or other identified areas of learning difficulty.
- Special consideration may be granted if through misadventure (eg. illness, bereavement or personal trauma) a student is prevented from completing an assessment or sitting an examination; or believes that their performance in an assessment event has been affected by the incident.
- Complaints and appeals are addressed in a fair and equitable manner.
- Individuals who believe they have been treated unfairly are encouraged to use ITC's student complaints and appeals procedures. ITC will promptly and thoroughly investigate all complaints and appeals in accordance with stated procedures.
- Students also have the right to appeal against any decisions as set out in the complaints and appeals procedure.

Re-evaluation and Amendment

All perceived deficiencies in the Access and Equity Policy are to be documented at the Review and investigated to determine whether a deficiency exists, and, if so:

- a. the impact of the deficiency;
- b. how the policy should be amended to eliminate the deficiency; and

- c. whether the suggested amendment is consistent with a 'best practice strategy'.

Process

1. Ensure the establishment of non-discriminatory student election procedures which encourage fair access for members of under represented groups.
2. Ensure that any relevant access and equity issues are considered during course development.
3. Ensure that staff members understand this policy and are aware of its implications.

Some Implications of the above policy with respect to studying:

- 1 There are two types of discrimination:
 - 1.1_ *Direct Discrimination* occurs when a person is treated unfairly because of their gender, race and age or because they have a disability.
 - 1.2_ *Indirect Discrimination* is more difficult to identify and often occurs unintentionally. Indirect discrimination often occurs when there is a requirement (a rule, a policy e.g. in assessment, or a system) which appears fair but has an unfavourable effect on one group compared to another. If the impact of the policy is proportionally worse on one group over another (e.g. one culture over another, or women against men) then indirect discrimination is probably occurring.
- 2 With those two aspects in mind, the following applies:
 - 2.1 Any assessment adopted must be fair to all and must not discriminate against any particular student or group of students. For example, there are students who 'freeze' during written examinations. If in the lecturer/trainer's fair and honest opinion there is a student who will be disadvantaged in this way, then an oral exam, or some less threatening means of assessment may be chosen for that student or for the class as a whole. The 'take-home' examinations are an attempt to address this issue.
 - 2.2 Students who have satisfied basic entrance competencies in English, and yet still find it difficult to present assignments in that language, should be given an extension to allow them the extra time needed to present finished assignments. Lecturers/trainers are asked to carefully monitor students whose first language is not English to ensure that a fair assessment is being made.

- 2.3 Students whose cultural background may find them expressing truth differently to that normally expected by those in a basically Western type culture, need to be assessed in a way that doesn't discriminate against them. Lecturers/trainers need to feel free to be creative, using the possibility of written and acted dramas and/or projects of appropriate standard to ensure that assessment methods are fairly and equitably applied.
- 2.4 Teasing or horseplay based on gender, race, social or educational background is to be discouraged within the College community.
- 2.5 If staff members or students become aware of any policy of the Centre which they regard to be indirectly discriminatory, or if they become aware of instances of direct discrimination, they are requested to draw same to the attention of the Principal or the Registrar immediately.

Fair Treatment declaration for VET Fee help

Overview

Impact Training Centre Limited supports the concept of equal opportunity and is committed to providing all staff, students and potential students with a working and learning environment which values diversity, respects differences and provides an environment that is safe, healthy, positive, supportive and free from all forms of harassment, bullying and discrimination.

Definitions

For the purposes of this section of the document the following applies:

The Act refers to the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*

Student/s refers to all persons enrolled in a unit of study who are, or would be entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance under clause 43 of Schedule 1A of the Act; and

Potential Students refers to all persons seeking to enrol in a VET unit of study that meets the course requirements under subclause 45(1) of Schedule 1A of the Act and who are, or would be, entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance under clause 43 of Schedule 1A of the Act.

Equity and Diversity Policy

This policy represents Impact Training Centre Ltd's commitment to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to successfully gain skills, knowledge and experience through vocational education and training.

This policy has been developed to address the particular requirements of:

- potential students;
- students currently enrolled at Impact Training Centre Ltd; and
- institute staff.

Impact Training Centre Ltd is responsible for fulfilling its commitment to access and equity by ensuring continued participation of target groups in VET programs.

These target groups include:

- women;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- people with a disability;
- rural and regionally isolated communities; and
- people in transition and other special groups (i.e. people re-entering the workforce, sole parents, people with literacy issues, the long-term unemployed, and those who have been institutionalised).

Equity

Essentially, equity means fairness. At Impact Training Centre Ltd it means that people are provided with an opportunity to access, participate in and successfully achieve outcomes. Impact Training Centre Ltd also has an understanding that:

- it is common for people to identify with more than one equity group
- there are differences within and between equity groups;
- each equity group does not experience the same type of disadvantage; and
- there remain many common barriers for equity groups.

Diversity

Impact Training Centre Ltd recognises that there are many factors which influence the ability of people to access, participate in and succeed in a vocational education and training environment, including:

- Language
- Prior educational experiences
- Goals and expectations
- Values and beliefs
- Work and social experiences
- Income
- Cultural identity
- Geographical location
- Learning styles
- Motivation
- Gender
- Family
- Religion
- Age

Fair Treatment

Impact Training Centre Ltd will treat fairly all Students and Potential Students.

Student Selection

Impact Training Centre Ltd has open, fair and transparent processes, based on merit for making decisions about:

- the selection, from among potential students; and
- the treatment of students.

Potential students seeking to enrol in a VET unit of study with Impact Training Centre Ltd, regardless of their background, circumstances or eligibility for funding will be assessed for entry to study through the same published entry requirements and through the same processes under subclause 45(1) of Schedule 1A of the Act.

The above paragraph does not prevent Impact Training Centre Ltd from taking into account, in making decisions mentioned above, educational disadvantages that a particular student or potential student has experienced or the fact that the student or potential student may be enrolled via a VET restricted access arrangement after consultation with the RTO Coordinator or Principal.

Impact Training Centre Ltd will ensure that prior to enrolment prospective students have access to information regarding the course, training, assessment, services and VET FEE-HELP provided by the Institute to enable them to make an informed decision about the suitability of the course and the Institute facilities in meeting their individual needs.

Impact Training Centre Ltd will provide accurate and timely information to each student, prior to enrolment in regards to:

- student selection, enrolment and orientation procedures;
- course information, including educational and vocational outcomes;
- fees and charges, including refund policy;
- provision for language, literacy and numeracy assistance;
- student support services;
- flexible learning and assessment procedures;
- appeals and complaints procedures;
- disciplinary procedures; and
- recognition of prior learning (RPL), including credit transfer processes.

Selection Procedures

Impact Training Centre Ltd has open, fair and transparent procedures, based on merit for making decisions about:

- a) the selection, from among Potential Students; and
- b) the treatment of Students.

Potential Students seeking to enrol in a VET unit of study with Impact Training Centre Ltd, regardless of their background, circumstances or eligibility for funding, will be assessed for entry to study through the same published entry requirements

and through the same process.

As a rule Impact Training Centre Ltd is able to accommodate enrolment for all eligible students.

However, in instances where it is identified that there are limited places available for enrolment in a particular program of study the Institute will undertake a merit based selection process.

Applications will be sought from eligible students and the selection process will be based on one or a combination of (but not limited to) the following evaluation methods:

- Portfolio;
- Academic Record (including pre-requisite requirements);
- Interview; or
- Skills testing

All students must be a minimum of 15 years of age upon commencement of the program to be eligible to be considered for entry into VET Programs. With the Diploma of Christian Ministry and Biblical Studies, students seeking to gain entry must be aged 17 or over. The selection process will be conducted by the relevant teaching team members. Impact Training Centre Limited will ensure that throughout the process of selection and enrolments, applicants are treated fairly, courteously and expeditiously. Selection criteria and principles to be utilised, when applicable, will be published at time of advertising. These requirements will be communicated at time of enquiry or program advertising.

Please provide selection criteria and procedures for each VET unit of study that meets the requirements under subclause 45(1) of Schedule 1A of the Act.

The above paragraph does not prevent Impact Training Centre Ltd taking into account, in making decisions mentioned above, educational disadvantages that a particular Student or Potential Student has experienced or the fact that the student or Potential Student may be enrolled via a VET restricted access arrangement.

Publication

This *Fair Treatment and Equal Benefits and Opportunity Policy and Procedure* will be made available to Students and Potential Students through publication on the website www.lifeleadershipcollege.qld.edu.au and the Student handbook.

Review

- A. Access and Equity Policy will be reviewed yearly.
- B. The initial review will be conducted by the Principal or their nominee and recommendations will be brought to a combined Staff/Student meeting for discussion and addition.
- C. During study terms, every Wednesday morning students are given an opportunity in the staff meeting to raise any issues of concern either by:
- Informal discussion with supervisor
 - Raising concerns with peers
 - Making an appt with the Principal to discuss the matter further if they still feel it has not been addressed.
- D. The Principal or their nominee will initially review the policy using the following parameters:
- i. Is the Access and Equity Policy being satisfactorily applied?
 - ii. Are there any areas in which the Access and Equity policy has been found wanting? Are there any blind spots?
 - iii. Have there been any instances of direct discrimination in the training or in the assessment?
 - iv. Have there been any instances of indirect discrimination in the training or in the assessment?
 - v. Have there been students who have felt treated unfairly?
 - vi. Why have students felt that they have been treated unfairly?
 - vii. Are there any other areas where improvements could be made?
- E. These parameters are to be discussed fully at the combined staff/student meeting and the results marked in the following reporting matrix, which is duly signed and dated by the chairperson. The report then becomes a part of the minutes.
- F. The RTO Coordinator or their nominee is to action the necessary changes and report to the Management Board accordingly.
- G. The comments of the Board are to be minuted carefully and any adjustments made.

Review of Access and Equity Policy

Review Parameters	Y	N	Improvements Needed (Details below)
1. Is the Access and Equity Policy being satisfactorily applied?			
2. Are there any areas in which the Access and Equity Policy has been found wanting? Are there any 'blind spots'?			
3. Have there been any instances of direct discrimination in the training or assessment?			
4. Have there been any instances of indirect discrimination in the training or assessment?			
5. Have there been students who have felt treated unfairly?			
6. Why have students felt that they have been treated unfairly?			
<hr/> Signature of RTO Coordinator		<hr/> Date	