

Diversity, Equity and Fair Treatment Policy and Procedure

1 Purpose and scope

The policy provides a commitment to diversity, fair treatment and equity for students, staff and the community at AIE Institute. It also provides a framework for reasonable adjustments to learning to support the participation of students with a disability, mental health condition or other disorder that may affect their learning. AIE Institute fully encourages and supports diversity practices, but it should be noted that the language of instruction of AIE Institute is English.

This policy applies to all members of AIE Institute's higher education community.

2 Objectives

AIE Institute recognises diversity and is committed to providing fair treatment, an inclusive environment, equitable access and opportunities to students and staff. It expects that all students and staff to treat others with fairness and without discrimination.

AIE Institute:

- a. Ensures that students and staff are treated with respect and not discriminated against on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, race, marital status, sexual preference, disability, socio-economic background, geographical region or religion
- b. Recognises and respects diversity of background and language of all students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, international and domestic students
- c. Provides support for students to assist their studies
- d. Ensures that admission processes respect diversity and are transparent and applied in an equitable manner
- e. Provides reasonable adjustment of resources and learning to support people with a disability where the disability has been disclosed
- f. Provides equal opportunity for women and all people in the workplace to promote diversity
- g. Keeps confidential all information provided with regard to disclosures relating to disability or other requests for support or reasonable adjustment to learning
- h. Provides all students, including specific equity groups listed below, with equivalent opportunities for successful transition into and progression through its courses, irrespective of their educational background, entry pathway, place of study or mode of delivery.

The student equity subgroups are:

- i. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- j. People from lower socio-economic backgrounds
- k. People with disability
- l. People from remote, rural or isolated areas
- m. People who are the first in their family to attend a university or other higher educational institution
- n. People from non-English speaking backgrounds
- o. Gender, especially women in the Game Programming specialisation.

3 Implementation

All levels of governance and staff ensure that diversity is recognised and encouraged across AIE Institute, and that equity and fair treatment is applied to all processes and decisions. Specific equity subgroups are identified through the Admissions Application Forms for domestic and international students. Progress of equity subgroups is monitored through the LMS and SMS. Reports on course participation, progress, and completion of identified student subgroups are generated for continuous benchmarking and QA review.

4 Procedure

4.1 Responsibilities

AIE Institute ensures that:

- a. Appropriate resources for student support are provided to support students from diverse backgrounds and equity subgroups to encourage an inclusive environment
- b. Staff are assisted by student support services in programs for equity subgroups and where there are diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds
- c. Diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds are targeted in the dissemination of information regarding AIE Institute's programs and recruitment processes to encourage diversity and to provide fair opportunity
- d. Admissions processes encourage participation from people with diverse backgrounds and all students get an equal chance in admissions irrespective of their race, ethnicity or culture.
- e. Reporting and monitoring of access, participation, retention and completion rates from various backgrounds occurs and is acted upon to promote diversity and equity.

Students are responsible for:

- f. Acting in accordance with the purpose and objectives in this policy
- g. Seeking assistance if learning resources need to be adjusted
- h. Making use of the available support and resources provided by AIE Institute.

Staff are responsible for:

- i. Acting in accordance with the purpose and objectives in this policy
- j. Monitoring and identifying students who need support
- k. Advising students of the support available through Student Support Services.

The *Student Support Policy and Procedure* provides details of support available.

4.2 Equivalent opportunities for transition

4.2.1 Scholarships

AIE Institute offers scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other equity subgroups. The Board of Directors identifies scholarship criteria, which is advertised on AIE Institute's website.

4.2.2 Orientation

Students attend compulsory workshops in learning resources, assessment expectations, academic study skills, researching, referencing, writing and personal support skills during Orientation week.

4.2.3 Course design and assessment

The first semester of study is designed to enhance collaborative learning opportunities through the 4 core units undertaken by all students. Base-level knowledge for these core units is incorporated into unit design

and learning materials. Terminology and vocabulary is clarified in the first lessons, and learning materials are delivered through a range of media, including text, images, charts, animations, videos and presentations.

Assessments for first semester units are designed, where possible, as iterative assessments that build on each other in order to scaffold learning for students. Formative assessments or low-weight summative assessment tasks are also used at this introductory stage. Assessments are designed to be relevant and authentic and therefore engaging and are aligned with learning outcomes.

4.2.4 Learning environment

Physical and digital learning environments are accessible, inclusive and safe. Accessible bathrooms, lecture theatres, game labs and study and social spaces are provided at both Canberra and Sydney campuses. Accessible learning and library resources are available online and on-campus.

4.3 Equivalent opportunities for progression

4.3.1 Reasonable adjustment of learning

4.3.1.1 Assessment of applications

The Teaching and Learning Committee is responsible for determining reasonable adjustment of learning requests and considering the interests of all parties who may be affected. The Teaching and Learning Committee should consider:

- a. The circumstances of the students/s, and consults with them throughout their studies
- b. The extent of the adjustment and if it still allows the student to achieve the learning outcomes for the unit and program
- c. Professional requirements for the program and whether they can still be met
- d. Whether the proposed adjustment would adversely affect any other parties
- e. The costs associated with the adjustment and the benefits
- f. Whether expert advice is needed to make the adjustment or to make the decision.

Students should make an application for reasonable adjustment of learning prior to enrolment, or as soon as the circumstances are known. Refer to *Admissions Policy and Procedure* for further details.

The Teaching and Learning Committee should provide its decision to the applicant within 10 business days of receiving the application.

4.3.1.2 Adjustments

The types of adjustments that may be made could include, but are not limited to:

- a. Extensions to assessment or examination due dates or timeframes
- b. Alternative arrangements for assessment
- c. Alternative modes of delivery and resources
- d. access to an assistant
- e. Adaptation to equipment or facilities.

4.3.2 Individual support plans

Student progress is monitored and individual support plans are available to students who have failed an assessment, have not met attendance requirements or otherwise been classed as 'at risk' and require individual support. A risk status categorisation and register assists with determining the level of intervention and support. Refer to *Assessment, Moderation and Progress Policy and Procedure* for more details.

4.3.3 Course design and assessment

Course design and learning materials are designed to encourage engagement through relevant assessments that are written in plain English, with accurate, unambiguous and detailed instructions. Course learning objectives and outcomes are clearly stated and mapped to assessment rubrics.

Assessments are designed so that students can demonstrate their learning through a variety of tasks, including essays, presentations, reflections, reports, images, posters, quizzes and exams and through individual and group work. Exams are conducted in minimal distraction environments.

4.3.4 Learning materials

In accordance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.0 and *Dyslexia booklet: a resource for tertiary practitioners in disability services*, National Disability Coordination Officer Program, Melbourne, 2016, the following equivalent opportunities are in place:

- a. Course learning materials are offered in a variety of media formats, including text, images, videos and hands-on materials to accommodate varied learning styles and modes
- b. Accessibility has been considered in the preparation of course documents and learning materials, including the use of plain English, a sans serif font, left-aligned text, sufficient colour contrast and consistent heading styles to organise sections
- c. Learning materials are available anywhere, anytime via the cloud-based LMS, Canvas, which is accessible from any web-based device
- d. Prescribed and recommended reading lists are provided for each unit of study, and also comprise links to other media such as YouTube videos and blogs. All readings are available through the campus library, open 9–5 pm each day. Library resources are approximately 40 per cent digital, with the expectation that the virtual component of the library will continue to grow.

4.3.4.1 Continuous improvement of equivalent opportunities

In order to continue to improve upon providing equivalent opportunities for students in the future, AIE Institute will consider implementing the following, where feasible.

4.3.4.1.1 Immediate opportunities

- a. PowerPoint slide templates that conform to accessibility guidelines
- b. Faculty training and professional development in implementing accessibility and promoting a diverse and inclusive learning environment that supports equal opportunity
- c. Faculty training and professional development in principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- d. Peer mentoring
- e. Accessibility questions in student surveys.

4.3.4.1.2 For future consideration

- a. Recording of lectures via Canvas or other technologies such as Panopto or Kaltura
- b. Closed captioning on lectures and video material
- c. Alternative text for images in lectures and presentations
- d. Audio transcripts of lectures and video material.

4.3.5 Learning management system

AIE Institute uses the Canvas LMS, which conforms to accessibility standards Level A and Level AA of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.0 and is compatible with assistive technologies. Students can adjust content to their own learning needs, as Canvas works with screen readers, and supports screen magnification and browser-provided zoom functionality. Canvas is accessible via keyboard and touch devices, and provides an easy-to-use interface for users with cognitive or learning disabilities.

Canvas has a roll call attendance feature that allows attendance to be taken and calculated as another assignment in the grade book. This feature assists in monitoring students' attendance and what materials they may have missed if they were absent. Canvas also has features for quizzes and exams, that enable staff to give students extra time on a student-by-student basis and to give students extra attempts on a quiz or exam. Staff are also able to monitor how long a student takes on a quiz or exam to assist in determining if a 1–1 learning support consultation is required.

4.3.6 Student support services

Student support services are available to all students requiring support for academic, language, cultural, general or personal issues.

4.4 Complaints and appeals

Students or staff who have been found to breach this policy may be subject to disciplinary action under the *Student Code of Conduct* or the *Staff Code of Conduct*.

If a student is not satisfied with a decision related to this policy, they may seek an appeal as outlined in *Student Grievance Policy and Procedure*.

If a staff member is not satisfied with a decision related to this policy, they may seek an appeal as outlined in *Staff Grievance Policy and Procedure*.

Under section 32 of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, it is unlawful for a person to contravene a Disability Standard. An aggrieved person or someone on their behalf can make a complaint to the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) about non-compliance with the DDA. This includes complaints about non-compliance with a Disability Standard. If conciliation by the AHRC is unsuccessful, an aggrieved person may commence legal proceedings in the Federal Court or Federal Magistrates Court.

5 Definitions

Disability is broadly defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 as having any of a wide range of physical, mental health or learning conditions, including: Loss or damage of a bodily or mental function. The *Disability Standards for Education 2005*, Part 1, 1.4 Definitions, states that '**disability**, in relation to a person, means:

- a. Total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- b. Total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- c. The presences in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- d. The presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- e. The malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- f. A disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- g. A disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour; and includes a disability that:
 - I. Presently exists; or
 - II. Previously existed but no longer exists; or
 - III. May exist in the future; or
 - IV. Is imputed to a person.'

Learning Management System (LMS) is an online portal for classrooms, with features for trainers and students to view assignments, grades, and access learning materials.

Reasonable adjustment refers to a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students (*Disability Standards for Education 2005*).

Reasonable adjustment of learning refers to a reasonable adjustment to a unit or program that may alter the activities or resources but still retains the overall learning outcomes of the program.

6 Related Documents

The following policies and procedures are related to this policy:

- a. Admissions Policy and Procedure
- b. Assessment, Moderation and Progress Policy and Procedure
- c. Course Development Policy and Procedure
- d. Course Review Policy and Procedure
- e. Credit and RPL Policy and Procedure
- f. English Language Proficiency Policy and Procedure
- g. Recruitment and Performance Policy and Procedure
- h. Staff Code of Conduct
- i. Staff Development and Scholarship Policy and Procedure
- j. Staff Grievance Policy and Procedure
- k. Student Code of Conduct
- l. Student Support Policy and Procedure
- m. Student Grievance Policy and Procedure
- n. Teaching and Learning Plan.

The following legislation is related to this policy, though not all are mandatory for Institutes of Higher Education:

- o. Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)
- p. Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)
- q. Australian Human rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- r. Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- s. Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)
- t. *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999 (Cth)
- u. Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- v. Race Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- w. Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- x. Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth).

*Under the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999*, only organisations of 100 employees or more are required to demonstrate that they have a program for women employees.

Resources:

- y. Alchin, G & Ganner, J 2019, Inclusive publishing in Australia, Australian Inclusive Publishing Initiative (AIPI), Sydney.
- z. Perez, T & Kelly, M 2016, Dyslexia booklet: a resource for tertiary practitioners in disability services, National Disability Coordination Officer Program, Melbourne
- aa. Victorian Government digital standards, retrieved 30 September 2019 <<https://www.vic.gov.au/make-content-accessible>>
- bb. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.0.

7 Review

Three years from commencement.

8 Accountabilities

The Board of Directors is responsible for review and approval of this policy.

The policy is to be implemented via induction and training of staff and distribution to students and AIE Institute's higher education community via the website and other publications.