



AUSTRALIAN STUDY LINK INSTITUTE

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CRICOS No: 03483G | RTO No : 40794

Access and Equity Operating Principles

1. Purpose

Australian Study Link Institute (ASLI) has documented Access and Equity operating principles policy to ensure that all staff, student and anyone dealing with ASLI is treated with equal opportunity during the course of its operations and training and development, regardless of their diversity; allowing everyone to freely participate in the learning environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying etc.

ASLI will use this policy to integrate access and equity principles into all the training and assessment activities it conducts, or which are conducted on its behalf.

2. Scope

This policy in its scope encompasses all ASLI policies, procedures, and all training function activities.

3. Responsibility

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Operations Manager will be responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the policy and ensuring that staff are fully aware about these principles and comply with application and associated procedure.

4. Definitions

4.1. Access and equity means policies and approaches aimed at ensuring that the provider 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.

4.2. 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.

4.3. Disadvantaged groups include the following groups who, traditionally, have been under-represented in Vocational Education and Training:

- People with a disability;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- Women;
- People from non-English speaking backgrounds;
- People from rural and remote areas; and
- Long-term unemployed.

4.4. Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others due to the person's circumstances, characteristics or beliefs.

Direct discrimination: Direct discrimination is any action that 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 a focus of assumed differences between people.

Indirect discrimination: Indirect discrimination is the outcome of rules, practices and decisions that treat people equally and which therefore appear to be neutral but which, in fact, perpetuate an initially unequal situation and 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: Systemic discrimination is a system of discrimination perpetuated by rules, practices and decisions that are realised in actions that are discriminatory and which disadvantage a group of people because of their status or characteristics and which serve to advantage others of different status or characteristics. Direct and indirect discrimination contributes to systemic discrimination.

4.5. 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.

Relevant legislation includes:

- Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Commonwealth Racial Hatred Act 1995
- Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010

4.6. Sexual harassment is defined by the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010 and 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”.

Sexual harassment can occur among peers or co-workers, and in subordinate-supervisor, supervisor-subordinate or staff-student, student-staff, student-student situations

4.7. Equal Employment Opportunities EEO: Under Victoria’s anti-discrimination laws, Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) must be offered by all organisations. This means all staff members are treated on their merits at every stage of their employment - from the recruitment and interview process through to their daily duties, promotion, training and development opportunities, and their resignation, retrenchment or redundancy.

All students are provided equal opportunity of receiving training with ASLI based on their merits at every stage of their student selection.

5. Policy Statement

5.1. The policy will ensure to remove barriers and to open up developmental opportunities for all students as well as for staff by creating a workplace and training environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, bigotry, prejudice, racism and offensive behaviour.

5.2. All students and staff will receive fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of training and employment without regard to political affiliation, race, colour, religion, national origin, sex, marital status or physical disability.

5.3. 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.

5.4. All trainers/assessors are responsible for observing and assisting in implementation of the policy.

5.5. ASLI’s policies and procedures will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that they recognise and incorporate the rights of individuals in various ways:

- Pre-enrolment materials study support and study skills programs;
- Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) Support;
- Equipment, resources and/or programs to increase access for learners with disabilities;
- Learning resource centres;
- Mediation services or referrals to these services;
- Flexible scheduling and delivery of training and assessment;
- Counselling services or referrals to these services;
- Learning materials in alternative formats, for example, in large print;
- Learning and assessment programs customised to the workplace.



6. Procedures

- 6.1. The policy will be included in information provided to employees, trainers/assessors and students.
- 6.2. If a member of staff or a student feels that the academy staff is not observing the policy, then he/ she should refer the matter to the Operation Manager or any ASLI staff member.
- 6.3. Any person with a complaint will be directed to use the ASLI's Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures.
- 6.4. When a complaint or report is received, the person who has received it must firstly consult the policy to confirm that there has been a breach of policy and then immediately take steps to correct the breach either through communication with the person committing the breach in order to rectify it or by reporting it to the CEO in the case where the breach cannot be dealt with at the staff member's level.
- 6.5. Once the breach of policy has been dealt with, the person receiving the report must send a written response to the person who has reported the breach.
- 6.6. If a member of staff or a student feels that ASLI's staff members are not observing the policy, then he or she should refer the matter to their Operation Manager.
- 6.7. The institute will follow up any report discreetly and will undertake an appropriate investigation.
- 6.8. If the report is verified, ASLI will view the matter seriously and will take appropriate action, which may include penalty and counselling (ASLI will assist the student / staff to appropriate and professional counselling services)
- 6.9. Person making complaint will be informed of the outcome in writing and all complaints will be finalised within 30 days of receipt of complaint or as soon as possible.
- 6.10. Where ASLI considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, the Institute will inform the complainant or appellant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required, and will regularly update the complainant or appellant on the progress of the matter.
- 6.11. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the action taken, then complainant may follow ASLI's internal complaint & appeal procedure by accessing ASLI's complaint and Appeals policy and if still dissatisfied, Student has the right to make external appeal by contacting the following organisations:

Overseas student Ombudsman (OSO):

The Overseas Students Ombudsman offers free and independent service for overseas students who have a complaint or want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by their private education or training provider.

The Overseas Students Ombudsman investigates complaints about problems that overseas students have with private education and training in Australia.

The Ombudsman (OSO) also:

- Provides information about best practice complaints handling to help private education providers manage internal complaints effectively.
- Publishes reports on problems and broader issues in international education that OSO identify through investigations.

The Overseas Students Ombudsman contact details are:

- **Website:** <http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/>
- **Email:** ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
- Contact Number: 1300 362 072

For further information, please visit www.oso.gov.au or contact overseas student ombudsman by telephone, 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST). In Australia, call: 1300 362 072 (calls from mobile phones at mobile phone rates). Outside Australia, call +61 2 6276 011.

Refer to <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/making-a-complaint/overseas-students>

Consumer Affairs Victoria

You can contact Consumer Affairs Victoria by telephone, 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST). In Australia, call: 1300 55 81 81 (calls from mobile phones at mobile phone rates). Outside Australia, call +61 3 8684 0735



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National Translating & Interpreting Service - 131 450

Consumer Affairs Victoria

GPO Box 123

Melbourne VIC 3001

<https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/internationalstudents>

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission

Level 3, 204 Lygon Street

Carlton. Vic 3053, Australia

Contact: 1300 891 848

Website-<https://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/discrimination>

7. Records Management

All documentation from regarding complaints concerning Access and Equity matters will be maintained in a file.

8. Monitoring and Improvement

All Access and Equity practices will be monitored by CEO or Operations Manager and areas for improvement will be identified and acted upon.