

Access and Equity Policy and Procedure



Purpose

This policy is designed to ensure that Central Australian College is committed to promoting a fair and equitable environment for staff and students that is free from discrimination, harassment and vilification and is in line with obligations under Victorian Commonwealth Legislations.

Scope

This policy applies to all current and prospective staff and students of CAC. It should be read in conjunction with 'Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure'.

Relevant standards, acts and legislations

The Access and Equity policy and procedures are within the scope of compliance requirements adhering to State and Federal equal opportunity laws that include:

- The Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Cth)
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) (including Disability Standards for Education 2005)
- The Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- The Disability Act 2006 (Vic)
- Standards for Registered Training Organisation 2025 Division 2 Standard 2.4, Division 3 Standard 2.5

Definitions

Term	Definition
Access and Equity Principles	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

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Disadvantaged Group	Disadvantaged groups include the following groups who, traditionally, have been underrepresented in Vocational Education and Training: • People with a disability • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples • Women • People from non-English speaking backgrounds • People in rural and remote areas • Long-term unemployed
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 as 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.
Sexual harassment	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.

Policy

This policy affirms the commitment of CAC in implementing principles of access and equity at Central Australian College by:

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- Ensuring that training and education services are available to all students by creating a workplace and a training environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, bigotry, prejudice, racism and offensive behaviour.
- All students and staff will receive fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of training and employment regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, physical or intellectual impairment.
- Ensuring that the learning environment promotes and supports diversity of VET students and it fosters a culturally safe learning environment for First Nations people.
- Grievance procedures will be available to ensure that any concerns are dealt with immediately and appropriately.
- Where possible, a range of support services or appropriate referrals will be provided to students with special needs.
- CAC's policy and procedures will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that they recognise and incorporate the rights of individuals.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned policy statements, the Director/ CEO shall arrange for:

1. Information about Access and Equity
2. Student selection
3. Assessment process
4. Student support and engagement
5. Access to facilities
6. Feedback, Complaints and appeals

Procedure:

Central Australian College (CAC) will ensure the following procedure is practiced in order to implement the principles of access and equity:

1. Information about Access and Equity

a. Students

- i. During the pre-enrolment process students are guided to CAC website where information regarding access and equity is available.
- ii. The principles of access and equity are reiterated during the orientation session.

b. Staff

- i. The policy is included in information provided to employees, trainers/ assessors in the Employee Handbook.

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- ii. All employees of Central Australian College are required to ensure that all students receive fair and equitable services within their scope of responsibility.
- iii. All staff holds the responsibility to maintain a work and study environment free from discrimination and harassment.
- iv. Management is responsible for ensuring adherence to the CAC's policies and procedures that support this goal.

2. Student selection

- a. Students will not be denied access to services offered by CAC where they are deemed eligible for the service.
- b. Students will be individually assessed on their eligibility for the service being provided and selection will comply with relevant equal opportunity legislation and the selection criteria for the service.
- c. Whilst practising an open access policy, it is recognised that student eligibility for services may be influenced by:
 - Government funding/contract requirements
 - Course pre-requisites, and
 - Availability of services.
- d. Where limited places are available, student selection is on a first in, first served basis.

3. Assessment process

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

- Recognition of previously acquired skills and knowledge
- Adequate information on course and subject assessment, prior to enrolment in the course
- Adapting assessment to meet student needs while still maintaining a high quality, valid and consistent process
- Giving students the right to appeal an assessment or decision
- Giving all students an equal opportunity to demonstrate competence.
- Providing reasonable adjustment for VET Students with a disability including implementing reasonable adjustments where appropriate and enabling reassessment where necessary.

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4. Student support

a. Students are provided constant academic and non-academic support from the pre-enrolment phase up to completion of their course of study. For detail, please refer to 'Student support services policy and procedure'.

b. 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 illness, bereavement or personal trauma prevent a student from completing an assessment

c. Reasonable adjustment is provided to students with a disability or special need according to individual circumstances. Reasonable adjustment may include but is not restricted to:

- Educational support
- 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.

For detail, please refer to 'Reasonable adjustment policy and procedure.'

d. CAC shall ensure that classrooms foster positive and welcoming environment for underrepresented groups to participate in VET Courses such as First Nations People, women in traditional trades.

5. Access to facilities

CAC's premises provide appropriate access and facilities such as disabled toilets to those with a physical disability.

6. Feedback, Complaints and appeals

- Complaints and appeals are addressed in a fair and equitable manner.
- Individuals who believe they have been treated unfairly are encouraged to use CAC's student complaints and appeals procedures.
- CAC will promptly and thoroughly investigate all complaints and appeals in accordance with its complaints and appeals policy.

For detail, please refer to 'Feedback, complaints and appeals policy and procedure'.

Policy Reference:

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- The Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Cth)
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Relevant Policies and Procedures

- Student Support Services Policy and Procedure
- Reasonable Adjustment Policy and Procedure
- Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

Forms and Documents

- Reasonable adjustment form
- Complaints and appeals form

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