

Approved by: Chief Executive Officer

Approved and commenced on: 12/09/2016

Review by: 12/09/2019

Responsible Officer: Chief Operating Officer

1. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- (a) Outline EQUALS' commitment to the principles and practices of social inclusion; and
- (b) Define the roles and responsibilities of all parties in relation to socially inclusive practices.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, students and programs (both VET and Higher Education) at EQUALS.

3. Policy

There is no universally accepted definition of social inclusion.

The Australian Social Inclusion Board defines social inclusion as having the resources, opportunities and capabilities to:

- Learn (e.g. participate in education and training);
- Work (e.g. participate in employment, unpaid or voluntary work including family and carer responsibilities);
- Engage (e.g. connect with people, use local services and participate in local, cultural, civic and recreational activities); and
- Have a voice (influence decisions that affect them)

UNESCO defines social inclusion as:

Inclusive society is defined as a society for all, in which every individual has an active role to play. Such a society is based on fundamental values of equity, equality, social justice, and human rights and freedoms, as well as on the principles of tolerance and embracing diversity.

EQUALS recognises social inclusion as encompassing practices and policies that enable people to participate in society; socially inclusive practices and policies are intended to create the conditions in which all members of society have equal opportunities and access to work and services; to make and pursue connections with family, friends and community; to pursue their personal interests; and

to have their voices heard. A socially inclusive environment is one in which everyone has the best opportunities to succeed, and no one is left out.

- 3.1 At EQUALS, we dedicate ourselves to the unity of all people, to the removal of all prejudice and injustice, and to the establishment of universal and lasting peace.
- 3.2 When making decisions, EQUALS seeks to take into account the likely impact of decisions on at-risk groups in society including: homeless people, children at risk of long term disadvantage, indigenous Australians, people living with a mental illness or disability, communities experiencing concentrations of disadvantage and exclusion, jobless families, long term unemployed, new arrivals, refugees and low skilled adults.
- 3.3 In particular, EQUALS works to actively measure, monitor and address participation, progress and completion of identified student subgroups: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) peoples; students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD); young people; long-term unemployed people; new arrivals; refugees; early school leavers; people living with mental or physical illness or disability; and students from communities experiencing concentrations of disadvantage and exclusion (low-SES).
- 3.4 EQUALS is committed to actively work to improve recruitment, admission, participation and completion of ATSI people through initiatives that include scholarship programs, specific support programs and referral services; and peer mentorship.
- 3.5 All EQUALS staff participate in formal and informal training in cultural competence and inclusive practice.
- 3.6 Measurement, monitoring and analysis of student subgroup performance is forwarded to the Executive Committee annually for review.
- 3.7 Our guiding principles in seeking to foster and support social inclusion are:
 - a) Reduce disadvantage by promoting equitable access and investing in those who are at risk of or experiencing social exclusion;
 - b) Increase social, economic and community participation by supporting people to boost their capacity to learn and actively participate in the education and labour market and in their communities;
 - c) Give a voice to communities in the design and delivery of support services and programs;
 - d) Use a strengths-based approach to recognise the varied and positive contributions of people from diverse backgrounds and to build on the strengths of individuals, families and communities;
 - e) Build partnerships with key stakeholders to share resources and capabilities to address social exclusion;
 - f) Develop tailored services that address individual, family and community needs, and connections to external services providing tailored services and programs;
 - g) Provide early intervention to support vulnerable people;

- h) Use evidence-based approaches to design, monitor and review organisational policies and programs, including teaching, learning and support strategies for student subgroups;
- i) Use locational approaches to customise programs;
- j) Plan for sustainability by establishing benchmarks and measuring progress towards long-term goals.

4. Definitions

5. Supporting Documentation

6. Version History

Former Version(s) Version 1 – *1-12000 Social Inclusion Policy* approved October 2011; reviewed September 2016.