

1 Overview

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to ensure that staff, educators, EQUALS visitors and clients and students (collectively known as Stakeholders) are treated with respect and dignity. EQUALS will strive to uphold the right of Stakeholders so as to ensure that Stakeholders experience safety and freedom from violence, abuse or any form of intimidation at EQUALS International (Aust) Pty Ltd (EQUALS).

This policy acknowledges the [Standards for Registered Training Organisations \(RTOs\) 2015](#), the [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#) and the [Fair Work Act 2009](#). EQUALS ensures that its practices are fair and equitable.

Policy statement

- 1.1 EQUALS is wholly committed to providing an environment that is free from bullying. As an organisation which is underpinned by the spiritual values of equality, diversity and unity, we believe that staff, students and clients are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity. We believe that it is the right of every individual to experience safety and freedom from violence, abuse or any form of intimidation, whether overt or covert. Individuals must also demonstrate an awareness about the impact of their behaviour on others. It is a fundamental obligation of all staff and students to behave respectfully and appropriately at EQUALS.
- 1.2 EQUALS consider that bullying is inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour. Staff or students that are found to have either committed or condoned such behaviour may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 1.3 Bullying behaviour is often characterised by the following:
 - it is often hidden and not easily observable
 - reduction of the problem relies on information getting to those who are most able to act. Silence on the part of victims, staff, students and other individuals only contributes to the problem
 - education and awareness are key elements in the process
 - the policy needs to be well publicised so that everyone in the EQUALS community is familiar with it and can be involved in its implementation
 - there is need for on-going review of strategies and frequent education
 - no one strategy works; effective reduction of bullying comes from a multi-faceted approach.
 - punishment for bullying behaviour is not generally an effective measure
 - bullying is a pattern of behaviour by one person towards another which is designed to hurt, injure, embarrass, upset or cause to discomfort to that person.
- 1.4 **Individual Responsibilities**
 - 1.4.1 Stakeholders have a responsibility to ensure that their actions do not negatively affect another individual's learning, career, health or well-being and are consistent with the EQUALS values and principles and the Student Partnership Agreement. This includes not condoning bullying by failing to take action, such as raising the matter with the bully or with a member of the management team.
 - 1.4.2 An individual found to have bullied another person or to have condoned bullying may be subject to disciplinary action.

2 Procedure

Bullying is a concern for the entire EQUALS community and consequently all students, staff, educators and clients have a role to play in eliminating it from our Institution.

- 2.1 If an individual is found to have bullied another individual, EQUALS will detail the relevant information in individual file records. Those involved may also be requested to complete an incident report.
- 2.2 The individual found to have bullied another individual will receive counselling from EQUALS and continuation of learning with EQUALS International Pty Ltd will be at the total discretion of EQUALS.
- 2.3 Consultation with the victim will occur. Typically, a meeting with the people involved will be convened to consult about the incident/s and to develop a shared understanding of the emotional and physical impact of the incident/s.

3 Responsibilities

Compliance, monitoring and review

- Aligns with relevant legislation, government policy and EQUALS values.
- Is implemented and monitored to reflect the changing policy environment and emerging issues identified.
- Is reviewed to evaluate its continuing effectiveness in achieving its purpose and remaining relevant.

4 Definitions

Bullying: defined as the repeated less favourable treatment of a person by another or others in the workplace which may be considered unreasonable and inappropriate in workplace practice. It includes behaviour that could be expected to intimidate, offend, degrade, humiliate undermine or threaten.

Bullying is physical or psychological behaviour or conduct where strength (including strength of personality) and/or a position of power is misused by a person in a position of authority or by a person who perceives that they are in a position of power or authority.

Bullying is normally associated with an ongoing systematic pattern of behaviour. An isolated incident of behaviour is not considered bullying, but may of course lead to action being taken against the perpetrator based on that single incident. A bully is equally likely to be male or female.

Bullying may be overt or covert.

Overt Bullying

Examples of overt bullying may include:

- abusive behaviour towards another person such as threatening gestures or actual violence
- aggressive or abusive or offensive language, including threats or shouting
- demeaning remarks
- constant unreasonable and unconstructive criticism

Covert Bullying

Examples of covert bullying may include:

- deliberate exclusion, isolation or alienation of an individual from normal interaction, such as intentionally excluding the person from activities
- unreasonably ignoring the person
- undermining another person, including encouraging others to "gang up" on the person
- deliberately withholding information that a person needs to exercise her or his role or entitlements within the organisation

Providing guidance, conducting performance counselling, invoking unsatisfactory performance procedures or misconduct procedures does not in itself constitute bullying. Supervisors and managers are expected to offer constructive advice and comment as part of their role in a way that does not demean or humiliate.

Effects of bullying

Bullying can result in absenteeism, compromised learning, student withdrawal, reduced productivity and motivation, and loss of experienced and skilled staff through resignation. Bullying may also have significant social and health costs for individuals, including loss of confidence, increased anxiety, depression, loss of sleep, headaches and increased blood pressure. Bullying can also affect others in the workplace in a similar way, even when they are only witnesses to the bullying and are not subject to the bullying themselves.

In addition to productivity and turnover issues, bullying has a seriously negative effect on the Institute through both management time in dealing with the problem and potential legal implications.

Terms not defined in this document may be in the [EQUALS Glossary](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/home?lx=GCzY7kacE2GweBYJA3450Q)
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5 Approval and Amendment History

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
3.0	CEO	27/10/2016	Refer archived policy.
4.0	CEO	04/04/2019	Updated overview and terminology, minor updates throughout policy and procedure including edits to responsibilities, definitions, and comprehensive document map and clearer alignment to the appropriate responsible person/body. Change of policy number from 3-6000a to current.

6 Document Map

Approval Authority:	Executive Management Committee	Advisory Committee for Approval Authority	
Authorised By:	Chief Executive Officer		
Effective from:	04/04/2019		
Next Review Date:	04/04/2022		
File Location:	The current version of this policy can be accessed from the Policy Register (internal users only)		
Relevant Legislation:	Fair Work Act 2009 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015		
Related Documents and/or Registers:	Governance & Quality Assurance Framework Incident Report (F 039) Student Handbook		
Policy Subdivision	<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate or Academic Governance <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Management <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Operational Management		
Administrator:	Quality Advisor		