

1 Overview

Equality, diversity and unity are spiritual values central to the vision and mission of EQUALS International (Aust) Pty Ltd (EQUALS). These values represent the thread which interconnects and binds the very fabric of EQUALS.

This policy sets out the commitment to inclusion, diversity and equity at EQUALS. This commitment also reflects the intent of Standard 2.2 of the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2015](#). It also acknowledges EQUALS' legal obligations under State and Federal legislation, to ensure that our working and teaching practices are fair and equitable, and our working and learning environment non-discriminatory and safe. Relevant legislation has been referenced in the Document Map.

Scope

This policy applies to all EQUALS' staff, students, volunteers, visitors and members of advisory and governing bodies, in all campuses and locations, and at all times whilst engaged in EQUALS business or otherwise representing EQUALS.

2 Context

This policy provides a framework for the development of policies and strategies which are aimed at achieving business and educational processes that address the needs of all staff and students.

EQUALS recognises that particular groups of people in society have experienced, and continue to experience, institutional disadvantage and unequal educational outcomes. These may include culturally and linguistically or gender diverse people, women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people with disabilities, and the rurally isolated.

We all have a right to work and study in an environment free from harassment, discrimination or threatening behaviour. This right is accompanied by our responsibility to respect the rights of others and respect differences and diversity.

This policy aims, therefore, to assist the EQUALS community to achieve best practice by promoting the establishment of strategies and processes which effectively address the issues of disadvantage, equity and equal opportunity.

3 Policy

3.1 Overarching Statement

*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.*

The Universal House of Justice

3.2 Guiding Principles

EQUALS is committed to providing inclusive and equitable access to learning and employment opportunities as well as learning and employment outcomes. EQUALS passionately supports the inclusion of all people in all aspects of EQUALS community.

Consistent with EQUALS' spiritual values, EQUALS' Guiding Principles are that we:

- recognise human diversity as an asset and strength; acknowledging its potential as a source of vitality, creativity and growth

- are responsible for creating and promoting inclusive research, learning, teaching and working environments open to differences, welcoming of diversity, intolerant of harassment and discrimination; where all people are treated with respect, fairness and justice
- acknowledge equitable practices as key enablers of participation and opportunity
- integrate inclusion, diversity and equity into EQUALS' planning and practice, through shared ownership and responsibility
- enable each other to build the skills and confidence to implement, advocate, and model inclusive practices assisted by clear policies, processes, and professional development.

3.3 EQUALS aims to:

- build an EQUALS community in which all members are able to realise their full potential and participate in all aspects of EQUALS life
- ensure differences among members of EQUALS are respected and valued
- foster an inclusive and vibrant culture for students and staff that respects and values diversity.
- provide an environment free from discrimination and harassment
- celebrate the diverse student profile, and to ensure that its learning and teaching and social and cultural environment enables and supports the participation of all students; including those experiencing disadvantage
- take opportunities to recruit, appoint, develop and promote staff from equity groups, at all levels and across all of its teaching, research and administrative areas
- use its best endeavours to ensure that EQUALS' publications and official documents use inclusive and non-discriminatory language and imagery.

In some circumstances EQUALS may take special measures that lawfully discriminate between groups of individuals in order to provide substantive equality of opportunity for members of a group with a particular attribute.

4 Responsibility

4.1 People are sometimes treated unfairly because of their characteristics, such as:

- age
- disability
- race, ethnicity or colour, cultural or linguistic background
- religion or belief
- gender or sexual orientation
- how they dress or what they look like
- where they live or their socio-economic background.

4.2 Everyone at EQUALS has a responsibility to apply the principles of inclusiveness, diversity and equity in policies, practices and behaviours. Furthermore, EQUALS has a responsibility to provide guidance and training on inclusivity, diversity and equity to both students and staff.

In summary EQUALS will make sure that:

- policies, practices and behaviours are fair for everybody
- staff treat everyone fairly and are appropriately trained on what they need to do
- practices and procedures do not disadvantage anybody and are reviewed regularly for fairness

Putting the policy into practice

4.3 EQUALS strives to live the principles of inclusion, diversity and equity through every day behaviours and actions embedded in our policies, procedures and practices as follows:

- EQUALS' policies and procedures are non-discriminatory
- staff are provided with information and training about access and equity issues and EQUALS' complaint resolution processes

- students are provided with information about access and equity issues and EQUALS' grievance handling and resolution processes
- all components of the education process are evaluated to ensure that they are inclusive and value students from diverse backgrounds
- action plans are developed and put in place to meet any deficiencies.

Student selection and admissions

- 4.4 EQUALS ensures fair, open and transparent student recruitment procedures, including special consideration for the recruitment and admission of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Related document:

- [Student Selection and Admissions Policy and Procedure](#)

Student assessment and progression

- 4.5 EQUALS implements fair and transparent procedures for student assessment, progression and attainment of awards.

EQUALS also enables special consideration for the assessment and progression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Related documents:

- [Student Assessment Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Student Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure](#)

The learning environment

- 4.6 EQUALS ensures that approaches to learning and teaching are designed to accommodate student inclusiveness and diversity, including the under-representation and/or disadvantage experienced by identified groups, and create equivalent opportunities for academic success regardless of students' backgrounds.

Identified student participation, progress, and completion data by identified student subgroups, is collected, analysed, monitored. The findings are reported and used to inform admission policies and improvement of teaching, learning and support strategies.

Related documents:

- [Learning and Teaching Plan](#)
- [Governance and Quality Assurance Framework](#)

Staff recruitment

- 4.7 Through this policy EQUALS:
- promotes fair, open and transparent procedure for the recruitment of staff; and
 - provides fair and accessible opportunities for training and promotion for staff.

Related document:

- [Staff Employment and Development Policy and Procedure](#)

Planning and Training Requirements

- 4.8 All EQUALS fixed-term and continuing staff complete the online training package (or equivalent) on equality and diversity. Staff must complete the course within their probationary period or within their first six months of employment if their probation period exceeds six months.

- 4.9 EQUALS also ensures that opportunities are provided for staff to build capacity in the areas of equity, diversity and inclusivity, particularly those in a leadership or supervisory role.
- 4.10 EQUALS also embeds equity, diversity and inclusivity considerations into its planning, reporting and accountability arrangements.

Related document:

- [Strategic Plan \(Strategic Directions\)](#)

Policy and communications generally

- 4.11 When developing or reviewing policies and procedures, EQUALS:
- ensures that any new or updated policies and procedures are analysed for any adverse impact they might have on diversity and equity, and take any necessary action to mitigate this; and
 - promotes the use of inclusive language and avoid the use of words or phrases which are discriminatory or exclusive in all publications and correspondence.

Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.12 All senior EQUALS leaders are responsible for ensuring that members of the EQUALS community are aware of, and comply with, EQUALS' commitment to equity, diversity, unity and inclusiveness.
- 4.13 Heads of units, managers and coordinators/supervisors are required to demonstrate and promote equity, diversity, unity and inclusivity in EQUALS' environment.
- 4.14 All members of the EQUALS community will ensure that their own behaviour is appropriate and in accordance with EQUALS' Guiding Principles and relevant policies and practices.
- 4.15 Staff are responsible for ensuring that they understand and comply with this policy and behave in a courteous, sensitive and non-discriminatory manner when dealing with other staff, students and outside clients.
- 4.16 Students are responsible for behaving in a courteous, sensitive and non-discriminatory manner when dealing with staff, other students and visiting members of the community.

See also the Student Handbook, regarding:

- Student Partnership Agreement
- EQUALS' rights and responsibilities
- Students' rights and responsibilities
- Student Support

- 4.17 The Executive Management Committee (EMC) are responsible for fostering the implementation of access and equity best practice by ensuring that:
- EQUALS' mission statements and corporate goals clearly define its role in meeting the needs of diverse groups
 - policies are in place, widely dispersed and understood
 - barriers to access and participation are identified and strategies developed to overcome them
 - key staff have identified responsibility and expertise in equal opportunity matters
 - the equity profile of the potential staff/student base is defined and participatory practices established
- 4.18 As Access and Equity Co-ordinator, the Chief Operating Officer (COO) role is to provide services to staff and students, including advice and information on anti-discrimination legislation, and assist with

grievances under the anti-discrimination policies and procedures including sexual harassment and complaint resolution.

4.19 The Academic Director (Higher Education), Academic Manager (Vocation Education and Training) and the Student Advisors, provide information, support and confidential counselling to assist students, as appropriate, including:

- educational and career planning
- student allowance
- benefits and access to financial assistance
- study skills and learning assistance
- personal counselling
- grievance and conflict resolution
- stress management
- support for students with a disability.

Disability support

4.20 The Campus Coordinator is the principal point of support, providing information and negotiation for resources and/or equipment for students. Students are under no obligation to disclose a disability or to seek additional assistance. However, staff are more likely to provide effective assistance and support if they understand the disability requirements. If students decide to disclose this information, the earlier they do so the more likely EQUALS will be able to provide for their particular needs.

[A *Guide for EQUALS' Staff on Students with a Disability* is currently being designed to assist if students have a disability and are currently undertaking or considering undertaking study.]

Sexual Harassment

4.21 Sexual harassment is any unwelcome or uninvited sexual advance that a person does not initiate, like or reciprocate. If someone offends, humiliates or intimidates a person, information on options on how to deal with it can be found by contacting a Sexual Harassment Contact Officer.

4.22 Sexual Harassment Contact Officers provide, in a confidential environment, information on the various options open to anyone should he/she wish to make a complaint of sexual harassment. The Sexual Harassment Contact Officer can also provide support to those who wish to take action.

4.23 Sexual Harassment Contact Officers include the COO (for professional staff) Academic Director (for Higher Education academic staff and students), Academic Manager (for Vocation Education and Training staff and students).

See also the following documents:

- Student Handbook
- Staff Induction and Orientation

4.24 Staff and students are expected to:

- treat others with respect at all times, and promote an environment free of all kinds of bullying and harassment;
- actively discourage discriminatory behaviours or practices; and
- participate in training and learning opportunities that would enable them to adopt best practice.

5 Definitions

Terms not defined in this document may be in the EQUALS Glossary
<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/home?lx=GCzY7kacE2GweBYJA345OQ>

6 Approval and amendment history

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Details
1.0	CEO	04/10/2016	Document creation
2.0	Board of Directors	21/08/2018	Policy review. Major amendments, inclusion of roles and responsibilities, legislation and policy and procedure links in the document map.
2.1	EMC	13/11/2018	Minor amendments to document map.

7 Document Map

Approval Authority	Board of Directors	Advisory Committee for Approval Authority	Executive Management Committee
Authorised by	CEO		
Effective from	21/08/2018		
Next review date	21/08/2021		
File location	The current version of this policy can be accessed from the Policy Register (internal users only)		
Relevant legislation	Australian Human Rights Commission Act, 1986 (Cth) Disability Discrimination Act, 1992 (Cth) Equal Opportunity Act, 1984 (SA) Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 Racial Discrimination Act, 1975 (Cth) Sex Discrimination Act, 1984 (Cth) Work Health and Safety Act, 2012 (SA)		
Related documents and/or registers	Governance and Quality Assurance Framework Learning and Teaching Plan Staff Employment and Development Policy and Procedure Strategic Directions (Strategic Plan) Student Assessment Policy and Procedure Student Handbook Student Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure Student Selection and Admissions Policy and Procedure		
Policy subdivision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate or Academic Governance <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Management <input type="checkbox"/> Operational Management		
Administrator	Quality Advisor		