

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy



Preamble

Under our Equity and Diversity Policy, AAHE is committed to promoting access to its courses by peoples from diverse backgrounds. One of our most important strategies in this regard is to enable our students to access the Commonwealth government’s deferred loan scheme, *Fee-Help*, without which AAHE’s courses would be out of reach for many or most domestic students. The following Policy is written in anticipation of a successful Fee-Help application, which we can only submit after registration as an accredited higher education provider by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

Purpose/objective

The purpose of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Policy is to promote the full participation of ATSI peoples in the life and work of the Australasian Academy of Higher Education (AAHE).

Scope

All areas of AAHE share responsibility for implementing this policy and progressing its objectives.

Definitions

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	any person who: 1. is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent 2. identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and 3. is accepted by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in which they live as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
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Policy

1. Objects and principles

- 1.1 Education is for all Australians. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, this means the opportunity to gain a tertiary education, pursue excellence and achieve full participation in Australian society.
- 1.2 AAHE is committed to the achievement of educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians that are at least equal to those of AAHE’s other students.
- 1.3 AAHE will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, government, industry, professional associations, employer groups, and other non-government organisations to grow the number of employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates.

- 1.4 AAHE's approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student participation is guided by the following principles:
- a) *Achieve potential*: High expectations are held for, and by, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
 - b) *Equity*: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are able to access the same educational opportunities and achieve the same education outcomes as other Australians.
 - c) *Accountability*: AAHE academic staff are accountable, transparent and responsive.
 - d) *Cultural recognition*: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's histories, values, languages and cultures are acknowledged and respected.
 - e) *Relationships*: Meaningful relationships between AAHE and ATSI students entails valuing community cultural knowledge and demonstrating trust and respect.
 - f) *Partnerships*: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are engaged in the decision making and planning of services to ATSI students.
 - g) *Quality*: Our policies, practices, courses and partnerships are inclusive of the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families, and are informed by evidence.

2 Teaching and Learning

In accordance with AAHE's Equity and Diversity Policy, in our teaching practices, we will aim to:

- a) provide flexible admission pathways to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and build partnerships with schools and vocational educational institutions to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to transition to our courses
- b) work with professional associations and employers to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our courses
- c) arrange support and mentoring for academic staff who teach ATSI students to ensure that AAHE's learning environment, curricula, resources and assessments enable students to achieve the required graduate attributes
- d) build the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to progress into academic positions at AAHE
- e) recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' systems of knowledge and world views are vital to shaping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' education
- f) provide staff and services to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' experience at AAHE
- g) ensure that the AAHE campus is welcoming and non-discriminatory, and
- h) equip AAHE staff members with critical skills to recognise and counter prejudice in all of its forms
- i) monitor and report on the recruitment, admission, participation and completion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Procedure

There is no attendant procedure.

Related documents and relevant legislation

Equity and Diversity Policy and Procedure

Workforce Plan

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Advisory Council (ATSIHEAC) Recommendations

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (Vic) 2006

Closing the Gap, Australian National Report on Schooling, Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage

Commonwealth Department of Education and Training, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy

Council of Australian Governments' Education Council, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015-2016.

Equal Opportunity Act (Vic) 2010

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (S2.2.2, 6.2.1g)

Racial Discrimination Act (Cth) 1975

Racial and Religious Tolerance Act (Vic) 2001

TEQSA Guidance Note: *Diversity and Equity* (2017)

United Nations, Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2008

Universities Australia, National Best Practice Framework for Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities

Workplace Relations Act (Cth) 1996

Document information

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