

Equity and Diversity Policy



Purpose/objective

This Policy articulates how the Australasian Academy of Higher Education (AAHE) promotes a fair, equitable, respectful and inclusive working and learning environment. The Procedure explains how to implement this Policy.

Scope

This Policy and Procedure applies to all AAHE students and staff members, to the members of its Boards and committees and to its recruitment agents. AAHE encourages its contractors, consultants and visitors to adhere to the same principles.

Definitions

Terms used in this document are defined in the AAHE Glossary.

Policy

Principles

1. AAHE aims to ensure that each of its students and staff members experiences a respectful and inclusive working and/or learning environment and contributes to its maintenance.
2. AAHE is committed to widening access and participation in higher education by students from diverse backgrounds and equity groups and to reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.
3. AAHE will design teaching materials and assessment practices that are inclusive and will provide accessible spaces for its students and staff.
4. AAHE will make reasonable adjustments for any staff member, student or prospective student with a disability or health condition.
5. AAHE adheres to principles of merit, equal employment opportunity and diversity when appointing, promoting and managing the performance of AAHE staff.
6. Equity and diversity principles will be considered in the development of AAHE policies, systems and communications and in planning for staff and student support and activities.
7. AAHE will review its performance each year in terms of equity and diversity and will make adjustments to its processes where improvements are required.
8. AAHE's processes for handling inappropriate behaviour (including unlawful discrimination, unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, bullying, victimisation and vilification) will be actively promoted and readily accessible to staff, students and the public.
9. AAHE will respond quickly and sensitively to any allegations of inappropriate conduct or reports of breaches of this Policy.

Related documents and relevant legislation

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy
Academic Progress Policy and Procedure
Academic Promotions Policy and Procedure.
Admissions Policy
Assessment Policy and Procedures
Equity and Diversity Procedure
Health and Safety Policy
Privacy Policy and Procedure
Professional Staff Development Policy and Procedure
Recruitment Policy and Procedure
Scholarship and Professional Development Policy and Procedure
Staff Code of Conduct
Staff Grievances Policy and Procedure
Student Code of Conduct
Student Complaints Policy and Procedure
Student Support Framework
Teaching and Learning Plan
[Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#)
[TEQSA Guidance Note: Equity and Diversity](#)
[Age Discrimination Act 2004 \(Cth\)](#)
[Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 \(Cth\)](#)
[Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#)
[Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#)
[Disability Standards for Education 2005 \(Cth\)](#)
[Equal Opportunity Act 2010 \(Vic\)](#)
[Fair Work Act 2009 \(Cth\)](#)
[Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 \(Vic\)](#)
[Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 \(Vic\)](#)
[Public Administration Act 2004 \(Vic\)](#)
[Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 \(Vic\)](#)
[Racial Discrimination Act 1975 \(Cth\)](#)
[Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cth\)](#)
[Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 \(Cth\)](#)

Document information

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1	Board of Directors	14/10/21	1/10/23	

Equity and Diversity Procedure

1 Recruitment of students and staff

- 1.1 AAHE's marketing materials will use inclusive language that recognises a diverse range of prospective students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, people with disability, people from remote, rural or isolated areas, people who are the first in their family to attend a higher educational institution, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, women, and international students.
- 1.2 On its website and in other publications, AAHE will acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we operate and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging, on webpages and in other publications.
- 1.3 AAHE's Admission Policy requires that AAHE's student admission and selection processes are fair, consistent and transparent. The Policy allows non-standard criteria to be used to facilitate the enrolment of students from under-represented groups, with specific consideration being given to applications from mature age people and from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- 1.4 AAHE's Teaching and Learning Plan sets out the actions and success indicators supporting AAHE's commitment to widening access and participation in higher education by students from diverse backgrounds and equity groups.
- 1.5 The Recruitment and Appointment Policy and Procedure seeks to ensure that AAHE adheres to principles of merit, equal employment opportunity and diversity when appointing AAHE staff and AAHE will actively seek applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. All AAHE position descriptions include the following statement: *Employment opportunities are not limited by race, ethnicity, religion, disability, age, sexuality, gender or other protected attributes. Applications are encouraged from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.*

2 The student experience

- 2.1 The Admission Policy and Procedure requires that offer letters to successful applicants include a section on students' rights and obligations, which include complying with the Student Code of Conduct. That Code requires that AAHE students themselves contribute to the maintenance of a safe, inclusive and harmonious learning environment.
- 2.2 All students attend an orientation program that provides an overview of the Student Code of Conduct and the meanings of the terms it uses (including bullying, discrimination and sexual harassment) to ensure that they understand what is expected of them. The cultural competence materials used in student induction or orientation processes will highlight the disadvantages experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the importance of the reconciliation process.
- 2.3 Student engagement is monitored from the start of semester and AAHE intervenes quickly where a student is identified as being at risk in accordance with the Academic Progress Policy and Procedure. Particular attention is paid to students who may require additional support based on identified academic risk factors and personal circumstances.
- 2.4 The Assessment Policy and Procedure requires that all assessment tasks be fair and equitable and provide for suitable alternative assessment arrangements. These include Assessment Adjustment Plans for any student who requires different methods of assessment

to evidence their achievement of the learning outcomes because of an ongoing health condition or disability.

- 2.5 The Student Support Framework explains how AAHE facilitates student success through the provision of support services that are designed for a diverse range of students. The effectiveness of those services in creating equivalent opportunities for students to succeed regardless of their backgrounds will be regularly reviewed and adjustments made as appropriate.
- 2.6 AAHE aims to produce graduates with personal values that embrace diversity and fairness through the embedding of the AAHE Graduate Attributes (as defined in the Teaching and Learning Plan) in the Academy's curricula.
- 2.7 Any current, prospective or past student who considers that they have not been treated in accordance with the Equity and Diversity Policy may lodge a complaint under the Student Complaints Policy and Procedure.

3 The staff experience

- 3.1 Letters of offer to new staff will include links to the Staff Code of Conduct and to the Fair Work Ombudsman's [Fair Work Information Statement](#), which provides information regarding staff rights in relation to flexible work arrangements and protections from discrimination, bullying and harassment.
- 3.2 AAHE staff are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe, inclusive and harmonious working and learning environment, as set out in the Staff Code of Conduct. In addition to communicating respectfully and avoiding inappropriate behaviour, staff members are expected to
 - ensure that all teaching material is accessible and inclusive
 - model appropriate behaviour for their students
 - intervene quickly and sensitively when inappropriate conduct is observed or is reported to have occurred to ensure that it does not continue.
- 3.3 AAHE will provide all new staff with an organisational induction program that includes an introduction to the Code and AAHE staff will undertake training to develop their cultural competence (including in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) and understanding of their responsibilities in relation to equity and diversity, anti-discrimination legislation and privacy.
- 3.4 Managers are required to consider the principles of staff access and equity and merit and achievement relative to opportunity when planning the professional and career development opportunities for professional staff.
- 3.5 The special circumstances that may have adversely affected a staff member's achievements, such as an extended illness, maternity/parental leave or caring responsibilities, are taken into account when staff apply for promotion under the Academic Promotions Policy and Procedure.
- 3.6 A staff member who considers that they have not been treated in accordance with the Equity and Diversity Policy may lodge a complaint under the Staff Grievances Policy and Procedure.

4 Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Dean is responsible for integrating EEO, equity and diversity issues into academic planning and management, including professional development for academic staff (for example in relation to designing teaching materials and assessment practices that are

inclusive), and for approving reasonable adjustments for individual students and prospective students in accordance with the [Disability Standards for Education 2005](#).

- 4.2 The Marketing Manager is responsible for promoting diversity in markets and student mix and for checking that marketing materials comply with the principles articulated above.
- 4.3 The Registrar is responsible for ensuring that equity and diversity principles are taken into account in the development of student and staff systems and information, in planning student support and activities and in professional development for professional staff.
- 4.4 Each AAHE staff member and student is expected to contribute to the maintenance of a safe, respectful and inclusive working and learning environment as set out in the Staff Code of Conduct and Student Code of Conduct.

5 Reporting

- 5.1 The Academic Board is responsible for considering actions recommended by the Teaching and Learning Committee to address issues identified in relation to equity groups as specified by the Dean, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- 5.2 The Executive Management Committee will consider annual reports from the Dean and Registrar on AAHE's performance in terms of equity and diversity and the actions that may be required to facilitate improvements, including data and findings on participation, progress and completion by equity groups within the AAHE population.
- 5.3 The Registrar prepares a report for the Academic Board on student complaints each semester and briefs the Executive Management Committee immediately where any risks or potential breaches of the Higher Education Standards Framework are identified.
- 5.4 The Principal and Chief Executive Officer will provide a report to the Board of Directors on any lapses in compliance with Standard 2.2 of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Diversity and Equity) and the corrective actions taken.

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