

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR ACCESS AND EQUITY

PURPOSE

Central Coast Community College (the College) is committed to providing all students with equal benefits and opportunities to pursue their educational goals and participate in programs offered by the College. This policy and procedure is used to integrate access and equity principles and to treat equally and fairly all students and all individuals seeking to enrol into the VET courses and all training and assessment activities it conducts.

APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

This policy and procedure applies to all College students, staff and training activities.

DEFINITIONS

Access and equity means policies and approaches aimed at ensuring that VET is responsive to the individual needs of students whose age, gender, cultural or ethnic background, disability, sexuality, language skills, literacy or numeracy level, unemployment, imprisonment or remote location may present a barrier to access, participation and the achievement of suitable outcomes.

Access and Equity principles include:

- Equity for all people through the fair and appropriate allocation of resources
- Equality of opportunity for all people without discrimination
- Access for all people to appropriate quality training and assessment services
- Increased opportunity for people to participate in training

Disadvantaged groups include the following groups who traditionally have been under-represented in Vocational Education and Training (VET):

- People with a disability
- Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders
- Women
- People from non-English speaking backgrounds
- People in rural and remote areas
- Long term unemployed

Direct discrimination is any action which specifically excludes a person or group of people from a benefit or opportunity, or significantly reduces their chances of obtaining it, because their status or personal characteristics, irrelevant to the situation (e.g., sex, ethnic origin) are applied as a barrier. Direct discrimination has as a focus assumed differences between people.

Indirect discrimination is the outcome of rules, practices and a decision which treats people equally and therefore appear to be neutral; but which, in fact, perpetuate an initially unequal situation and therefore significantly reduce a person's chances of obtaining or retaining a benefit or opportunity. Rules, practices and

decisions are applied to all groups alike but it is the very assumption of a likeness that constitutes the discrimination.

A system of discrimination perpetuated by rules, practices and decisions which are realised in actions that are discriminatory and disadvantage a group of people because of their status or characteristics and serve to advantage others of different status or characteristics. Direct and indirect discrimination contribute to systemic discrimination.

Equity focuses on outcomes. Equity is not concerned with treating people in the same way; it is concerned with ensuring that all groups of people participate and benefit to the same level.

Legislation includes

- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (VIC)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (QLD)

Reasonable Adjustments means making adjustments to ensure equal opportunity for students with disabilities. The nature of reasonable adjustments is such that they are designed to minimise the disadvantage experienced by students with a disability, rather than provide students with a competitive advantage. They can include administrative, physical or procedural modifications.

Sexual harassment is defined by the Commonwealth Sexual Discrimination Act 1984 as when a person:

- makes an unwelcome sexual advance or an unwelcome request for sexual favours;
- engages in unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, and a reasonable person would have anticipated that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

POLICY STATEMENT

The College is committed to providing quality training and assessment products and services in compliance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015. The College promotes, encourages and values equity and diversity with regard to students and ensure services offered are provided in a fair and equitable manner to all students, free from bias.

The College is committed to providing flexible learning and assessment options, allowing students alternatives which recognise the diversity of their individual needs and circumstances aiding them in their learning goals.

The College will ensure:

- a) all training and assessment policies and procedures incorporate access and equity principles;

- b) all students have equitable access to the benefits of training and assessment irrespective of their gender, age, race, religion, culture, linguistic background, marital status, geographic location, socio-economic background, disability, sexual preference, family responsibility or political conviction;
- c) all nominations and enrolments into training courses and programs will be conducted at all times in an ethical and responsible manner, ensuring fairness and compliance with Equal Opportunity legislation; and
- d) all students have equitable access to training resources, facilities, equipment, support services, information, training and assessment staff, materials, assessment opportunities, training opportunities.

PROCEDURES

- 1. The College abides by access and equity principles.
- 2. The College will respect a student's right to privacy, confidentiality and be sensitive to student needs.
- 3. The College provides equal opportunity for all students and is responsive to the individual needs of students whose gender, pregnancy, race, marital status, sexuality, age, family/carer responsibilities, disability, transgender, political conviction, cultural or ethnic background, linguistic background, religious belief, geographic location, socio-economic background, employment/unemployment, imprisonment may present a barrier to access, participation and achievement of suitable outcomes.
- 4. At enrolment, students will be asked to identify personal needs or circumstances that may exist and for which they may require additional support.
- 5. The College will ensure that all staff, employees, and contractors have access to the information and support needed to prevent discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying and violence, victimisation, and vilification or to deal with it appropriately if it occurs.
- 6. The College seeks to create a learning environment where all students are respected and can develop their full potential.
- 7. All students are given fair and reasonable opportunity to attend and complete training.
- 8. All staff are given fair and reasonable opportunity to participate in relevant decision making processes and the allocation of resources and services as required to fulfil their duties and responsibilities.
- 9. Deficiencies will be investigated to determine whether a breach or policy deficiency exists. Should a discrepancy be proven, the impact of that breach or deficiency will be identified along with how the policy should be amended to eliminate the breach or deficiency in the future.
- 10. All perceived deficiencies in the Access and Equity Policy are to be documented, assessed and reviewed by management.
- 11. The College will demonstrate its commitment by:
 - a) Selecting students according to a fair and non-discriminatory process
 - b) Making its training relevant for a diverse student population
 - c) Providing suitable access to facilities and resources
 - d) Providing appropriate support services
 - e) Providing appropriate complaints procedures
 - f) Consulting with relevant industry groups
 - g) Raising staff, contractor and student awareness of equity issues.

VARIATIONS

The College reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this policy from time to time.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

Policy and Procedure for Student Enrolment

Policy and Procedure for Delivery of Training

Policy and Procedure for Consultation of Industry