

Access & Equity Policy and Procedure

1. APPLICATION

IVET Group owns and operates two Registered Training Organisations;

- IVET Institute - RTO # 40548
- TAE Academy - RTO # 32413

Unless stated otherwise herein, this document applies to both of the above and any reference to IVET, IVET Institute, TAE, TAE Academy, the 'institute' or the 'academy' should be considered a reference to any these respective trading names.

2. SCOPE

This policy and procedure relates to the provision of all education and support services by IVET Group to students and third party partners. All IVET Group staff, third party partners, and contractors or agents employed or engaged by IVET Group are obliged to comply with this policy and procedure.

3. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Disability: According to Disability Discrimination Act 1992; disability, in relation to a person, means:

- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- the malfunction, malformation, or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions, or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour; and includes a disability that:
- presently exists; or
- previously existed but no longer exists; or
- includes
- behaviour that is a symptom or manifestation of the disability.

Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others due to the person's circumstances, characteristics or beliefs.

- Direct Discrimination takes place when a person, organisation or group of persons is treated less fairly than others on the basis of stereotyped beliefs or views.
- Indirect discrimination includes rules, practices or policies which appear to be non-discriminatory and equally applicable, but operate in such a way that certain groups of people are excluded without just cause.

Reasonable adjustment refers to reasonable adjustment that can be made to facilities, documentation, learning and assessment, and support services which will facilitate access for disabled students and potential students and staff and ensure valid and reliable assessment decisions at a reasonable cost while meeting the special requirements for the individual(s).

4. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy and procedure provides IVET Group staff and third party partners with a clear set of guidelines to ensure access and equity principles are upheld in all activities associated with recruitment, selection, enrolment and training and assessment practices.

IVET Group is committed to promoting diversity and equity by creating an inclusive environment, removing barriers to participation, providing support and assistance, respecting diversity, and monitoring and evaluating performance. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that IVET Group meets all legislative and regulatory requirements relating to equal opportunity for staff, students and third party partners.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1 Access & Equity Principles

5.1.1 The following principles are applied to all educational services, practices and procedures at IVET Group:

- i. Each student has equal opportunity to access, participate and achieve learning outcomes regardless of age, gender, cultural or ethnic background, disability, sexuality, language skills, literacy or numeracy level, unemployment, imprisonment or remote location.
- ii. Processes are fair, valid, reliable and consistent in relation to enrolment, recognition and progression through a unit or training program.

- iii. Learning and teaching activities accommodate diversity and create opportunities for academic success for all students, and in particular for student equity groups.
- iv. IVET Group's website, guides and publications promote inclusion.
- v. Complaints and appeals are addressed in a fair and equitable manner.

5.1.2 All IVET Group staff and third party partners have a shared responsibility for creating and promoting inclusive learning and assessment environments open to differences, welcoming of diversity, intolerant of harassment and discrimination; where all people are treated with respect, fairness and integrity.

5.1.3 The IVET Group complies with the following legislation:

- i. Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)
- ii. Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- iii. Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- iv. Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)
- v. Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- vi. Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth)
- vii. Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- viii. Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- ix. Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (Tas)

5.2 Student Recruitment & Enrolment

5.2.1 IVET Group employs a systematic and transparent approach to student recruitment and enrolment through procedures that are open, fair and transparent.

5.2.2 IVET Group provides clear information to students, prior to enrolment, about each of the following;

- i. Course entry requirements;
- ii. Enrolment and induction procedures;
- iii. Course information, including content and vocational outcomes;
- iv. Fees, charges and refunds, including course cancellation terms;
- v. Provision for language, literacy and numeracy assessment;
- vi. Student support, including any external support the IVET Group may arrange;
- vii. Flexible learning and assessment procedures;
- viii. Welfare services;
- ix. Access to the Complaints and Appeals policy;
- x. Academic misconduct definitions and outcomes;
- xi. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) & credit transfer arrangements;

- xii. Student safety information;
- xiii. Privacy and access to personal information;
- xiv. Attendance and course progress assistance; and
- xv. Support service contacts.

5.2.3 Information is distributed to students via;

- i. Promotional materials (Course Guides, Course Flyers)
- ii. Verbal information via telephone
- iii. Student Handbook
- iv. Meetings, presentations, expos
- v. Websites
- vi. Course video trailers
- vii. The TAE LMS and IVET portal

5.2.4 To ensure that the student recruitment and enrolment process is bias-free and non-discriminatory, IVET Group:

- i. Uses the same recruitment and enrolment processes for all prospective students;
- ii. Admission to training programs is based on availability of places and the prospective student satisfying course/qualification entry requirements, where applicable.
- iii. Prospective students are provided with adequate information and support to enable them to select the most suitable program for their requirements.

5.2.5 At the time of enrolment, students will be asked to disclose any special needs, attaching supporting documentation if applicable.

5.2.6 Prospective students undertake a Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) evaluation prior to an enrolment being accepted. If a student does not meet the minimum level of LLN for the specific course, the Trainer/Assessor will evaluate whether the student should commence the course or if referral to specialist support or reasonable adjustment may be provided.

5.2.7 Where prospective students indicate any type of disability and/or learning difficulty during enrolment, the following procedures will be applied:

- i. Any disabilities and/or learning difficulties indicated on the enrolment form will be recorded in the learning management system/portal and is accessible by the relevant Trainer/Assessor for review, as part of the enrolment process.
- ii. The Trainer/Assessor will be responsible for assessing the student's disabilities and/or learning difficulties to determine whether reasonable adjustments can be implemented to provide appropriate training for the student. They will advise the student of the decision concerning enrolment and any reasonable adjustment that would be provided.

- iii. The Trainer/Assessor will record details of reasonable adjustments in the learning management system/portal.
- iv. If reasonable adjustments cannot be accommodated, the prospective student is informed and offered course counselling to determine if an alternative course is possible.
- v. The Trainer/Assessor will coordinate the implementation of agreed reasonable adjustments prior to the student's commencement of the training program.

5.3 Training Program Design

- 5.3.1 Training Program resources and assessments are designed to be flexible and to be able to make reasonable adjustments, if required. All resources will be non-discriminatory and will contain inclusive language and examples.
- 5.3.2 To ensure that all training program resources developed by IVET Group are inclusive of a range of student needs, the IVET Group:
 - i. Offers flexible training products designed to provide multiple entry and exit points or pathways through the program (if applicable), including credit transfer and recognition of prior learning;
 - ii. Considers the requirements of students with a range of disabilities;
 - iii. Incorporates inclusive and non-discriminatory content and references;
 - iv. Ensures that language, literacy, and numeracy requirements are consistent with the vocational level of the unit and qualification.

5.4 Academic Progress & Support

- 5.4.1 The IVET Group ensures students have equal opportunities to participate in learning and other activities, to progress and successfully complete their studies.
- 5.4.2 All assessment tasks have been designed to be fair, reliable, and consistent. All students are provided with the requirements of the assessment task prior to the assessment being undertaken.
- 5.4.3 Assessments delivered via the online system have been adapted for flexible delivery and are provided to students in the relevant format.
- 5.4.4 Any adjustment to assessment for students with disabilities will be negotiated before the assessment task is required to be undertaken.
- 5.4.5 Monitoring of course progress is implemented according to the T/P/004 Monitoring Course Progress Policy & Procedure, which details staff responsibilities for monitoring, recording and provision of feedback to students.

5.5 Support Services for Special Needs

- 5.5.1 Students with a recognised disability will be offered specialised services to assist them to participate in training and assessment activities for which they are enrolled. These services may be provided by IVET Group or another person or agency.
- 5.5.2 People from all social and cultural backgrounds will be equally treated and due respect will be given to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background (CALD), work and life experiences, people with disability and mature age students.
- 5.5.3 IVET Group takes all reasonable steps to provide a student with a recognised disability all support services on the same basis as a student without a disability and without experiencing discrimination.
- 5.5.4 In order to provide appropriate support services for a student with a recognised disability, IVET Group will:
- Consult with the student about the student's requirements of access to specialised support services;
 - Decide if an adjustment is reasonable so that the student can participate in the training program for which they are enrolled; and
 - Identify what an appropriate adjustment might include and make the necessary adjustment for the enrolled student.
- 5.5.5 IVET Group may provide support services, or facilitate the arrangement for services, for students with a recognised disability including:
- The use of adaptive/assistive technology;
 - Educational support;
 - Alternative assessment methods;
 - Extra time to complete a course or assessment;
 - Learning support for basic literacy or numeracy difficulties.
- 5.5.6 IVET Group will provide training to all staff to make them aware of the support services available for students with recognised disabilities to enable them to assist students to access the support services required.

5.6 Reasonable Adjustment

- 5.6.1 IVET Group recognises that not all students learn in the same manner, and that with an amount of 'reasonable adjustment', students who may not learn best with traditional learning and assessment methods will still achieve good results.
- 5.6.2 IVET Group is aware that the training programs will sometimes need adjustments to ensure equal opportunity for students with disabilities. This may include administrative, physical, or procedural modifications.

5.6.3 In cases of reasonable adjustment:

- i. A student with a recognised disability may not always require adjustments in some circumstances, or
- ii. A student with a recognised disability may require multiple adjustments and may include multiple activities.

5.6.4 At all times, the integrity of the training and the assessment requirements or processes must be maintained.

5.6.5 IVET Group will seek information from the student about their preferred adjustment, as the student may have a developed understanding of what may be suitable.

5.6.6 The following factors will be considered:

- i. the nature of the student's disability;
- ii. the information provided by, or on behalf of, the student about how the disability affects them;
- iii. the student's (or associate's) views about the adjustment;
- iv. information provided by the student about their preferred adjustment;
- v. the effect of the adjustment on anyone else affected;
- vi. the effect of the adjustment on the student, their ability to participate, achieve learning outcomes and operate independently; and
- vii. the costs and benefits of making the adjustment.

5.6.7 Reasonable adjustment activities could include, but may not be limited to:

- i. providing additional lighting;
- ii. providing an adjustable workstation or special seating;
- iii. modifying equipment or providing special adaptive technologies such as voice-activated computer software, special keyboard, large screen monitor or associated aids;
- iv. providing paper-based resources in advance of face to face sessions;
- v. adapting the training methodologies, without impacting on the delivery of the essential skills, knowledge and understanding required for the relevant competencies;
- vi. adapting the assessment methodologies, without impacting on the validity of the attainment of the relevant competencies. For example: allowance of extra time, varying question and response modalities (such as use of oral questioning rather than written, and audiotaped or videotaped answers instead of written answers).

5.6.8 All reasonable adjustments will be recorded in the learning management system/portal.

5.6.9 IVET Group and its third party partners will support students to achieve the required competency standards. Where assistance cannot be provided to the student, a referral will be offered, where possible, to an external agency that can assist.

5.7 Costs and Benefits of Reasonable Adjustment & Support for Special Needs

- 5.7.1 The effects of reasonable adjustment and support for special needs on the IVET Group, staff and students and direct and indirect costs will be considered by:
- The costs associated with staffing, special resources, and the modification of training resources and assessments;
 - The adverse impact on learning, occupational and social outcomes for the student, other students, and staff;
 - Benefits that may be achieved to all from the student with a recognised disability's participation.

5.8 Exceptions

- 5.8.1 The *Disability Discrimination Act Standards for Education 2005* do not render it unlawful for RTO's or education providers to not comply with requirements of the standards in the following circumstances:
- Where IVET Group claims that it would impose unjustifiable hardship;
 - The student's disability is an infectious disease or other condition, and it is reasonably necessary to isolate or discriminate to protect the health and welfare of the students and staff;
 - Where IVET Group is complying with courts orders, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission decisions, prescribed law and regulations of the Commonwealth, State or Territory of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

5.9 Unjustifiable Hardship

- 5.9.1 When a reasonable adjustment is recommended, consideration will be given as to whether the adjustment will impose hardship on IVET Group.
- 5.9.2 If unjustifiable hardship is considered, IVET Group will take into account all financial and other resources that are reasonably available for the purposes of making any necessary adjustments for the student, and the impact of those adjustments on the capacity to provide training programs of high quality to all students while remaining financially viable.
- 5.9.3 IVET Group will consider direct and indirect costs and benefits including:
- Costs associated with staffing, the provision of special resources, modifying training materials and resources;
 - The adverse effects on learning, occupational and social outcomes of the student, other students, and staff;
 - Identified benefits to all involved persons from the student's participation.
- 5.9.4 When IVET Group applies the principles of unjustifiable hardship, they will:

- i. Ensure that the process for seeking the adjustment is accessible and transparent;
- ii. Notify the student regarding decisions made on reasonable adjustment and the reasons for the decision as soon as possible.

5.10 Disability Harassment

5.10.1 Disability harassment is defined as an action taken in relation to an individual's disability that is reasonably likely to humiliate, offend, intimidate, or distress the individual with a disability.

5.10.2 IVET Group is committed to implementing strategies and programs that are designed to support the rights of students with a disability to protect them wherever possible from discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.

5.10.3 IVET Group is committed to implementing strategies and processes to prevent harassment or victimisation in the training environment. This includes all reasonable steps to ensure all staff and students are made aware of the responsibility for protection of all students against harassment or victimisation with a recognised disability and the actions that must be undertaken if harassment or victimisation occurs.

5.11 Student Support

5.11.1 Students who may require extra support or counselling are encouraged to make contact with any member of the IVET Group training or administration team. External support services are available through the following organisations:

- readingwritinghotline.edu.au
- beyondblue.org.au
- mentalhealthonline.org.au
- mindhealthconnect.org.au
- lifeline.org.au

5.12 Roles and Responsibilities

5.12.1 All IVET Group staff and third party partners are responsible for ensuring they are aware of, and comply with, IVET Group's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusiveness.

5.12.2 All IVET Group staff and third party partners will ensure that their own behaviour is appropriate and in accordance with IVET Group relevant policies and procedures.

5.12.3 All IVET Group staff and third party partners 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 external clients.

- 5.12.4 All IVET Group students are responsible for behaving in a courteous, sensitive and non-discriminatory manner when dealing with staff, other students and third party partners.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS