

Access and Equity Policy and Procedures

Purpose of the policy

APIC is committed to providing all students with equal opportunity to pursue their training and development. This policy is to promote fair and equal access, for all Candidates and potential Candidates, regardless of characteristics such as their gender, sexuality, race, nationality, ethnic background, age, marital status, religion, pregnancy, political convictions, physical disability or intellectual impairment.

This policy seeks to create a training and education environment free from all forms of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, and which enables all Candidates to understand the education program in which they are enrolled/wishing to enrol to their full potential.

Scope

APIC is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to developing policies and practices that eliminate discrimination and harassment in the workplace and also its education, training and development programs, and in the provision of its services.

APIC has a legal responsibility to ensure that all reasonable steps have been taken to prevent discrimination and harassment from occurring in the workplace and training environment.

This policy covers all of APIC's policies and procedures and all training activities.

Policy statements

Approach

Access and Equity ensures fairness and can be achieved through practices that are free from bias or discrimination. It provides individuals with the opportunity to access, participate in, and, achieve outcomes of vocational education and training.

1. APIC will, where possible, remove barriers and open up developmental opportunities for all students by creating a training environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, bigotry, prejudice, racism and offensive behaviour.
2. All students will receive fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of training and employment without regard to political affiliation, race, colour, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, or physical, intellectual and/or mental disability.
3. A person with a disability may be excluded under this policy if the disability could cause occupational health and safety risks to the person and / or other students.
4. All trainers / assessors are responsible for observing and being advocates for the policy.
5. This policy will be widely disseminated in the organisation.
6. APIC's policies and procedures will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that they recognise and incorporate the rights of individuals.

7. The CEO, or their delegate, will be responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the policy.

Definitions

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;

Discrimination can be direct, indirect or systemic:

- **Direct discrimination**

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 (eg, sex, ethnic origin) are applied as a barrier. Direct discrimination has, as a focus, assumed differences between people.

- **Indirect discrimination**

Indirect discrimination is the outcome of rules, practices and decisions which treat 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.

- **Systemic 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:

- Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Commonwealth Racial Hatred Act 1995
- Disability Services Act 2006

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.

Procedures

1. RTO Manager is responsible for overseeing and implementation of all areas of equity and access practices within the day to day operations of the RTO.
2. The RTO Manager is responsible in the first instance for any queries relating to equity and access, and for escalating any unresolved issues to the CEO.
3. APIC puts its commitment to access and equity into practice by:
 - Identifying and removing any barriers to access and participation;
 - Ensuring all products and services offered under the RTO are free from limitation to users based on age, gender, physical, mental, social or other protected characteristics;
 - Ensuring all Candidates and prospective Candidates are informed that APIC will accommodate their learning needs.
 - Implementing reasonable adjustments as necessary to ensure delivery and assessment of all programs meet individual Candidate needs.
 - Ensuring all practices are free from discrimination.
 - Where possible delivering education, training and assessment programs and services that are relevant, accessible, fair and inclusive; and
 - All Candidates are provided with information about access and equity issues and APIC's complaint resolution process. Access and equity principles are communicated to candidates using the following methods:
 - APIC website
4. APIC personnel will observe the organisation wide commitment to access and equity requirements by ensuring:
 - Information and policies relating to access and equity are in place and readily available to all prospective Candidates and APIC personnel;
 - APIC Personnel are aware and informed of equal opportunity guidelines and dispute resolution processes and procedures;
 - All APIC Personnel undertake induction and have the opportunity to undertake ongoing professional development that ensures they have the knowledge and understanding to implement the policies and procedures of the organisation in relation to access and equity, and are able to communicate and support all prospective Candidates to achieve their learning goals:
 - All APIC Personnel interact with prospective candidates in a courteous, professional and non-discriminatory way. Access and equity principles are communicated to APIC Personnel through the following methods:
 - Staff Induction Training
 - Access to organizational policies and procedures
 - Annual Professional Development Activities.

5. The selection and recruitment of staff complies with accepted personnel recruitment standards and organizational policies and procedures encompassing the principles of equal employment opportunity and access and equity.

6. All Candidates have the right to object to discrimination and harassment in any form, and to complain when such discrimination takes place. For full information on the complaint or grievance process please refer to the APIC Complaints and Appeals Policy and procedure available at www.apic.edu.au

Responsibilities

The CEO is responsible for:

- overseeing and implementation of all areas of equity and access practices
- investigating complaints and appeals


The RTO Manager is responsible for:

- addressing the first instance for any queries relating to equity and access
- Staff Induction Training
- Annual Professional Development Activities

The Administration and Student Support Officer is responsible for:

- Updating student records in the student management system and filing all documentation.
- processing complaints and appeals forms, if required.

Approvals and document control

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