

ACCESS AND EQUITY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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1.2. Access and Equity Policy and Procedure

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Policy Content

Aspect	Details
Regulator	Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)
Standards Referenced	
Legislation / Requirements	

Purpose

This policy ensures that the RTO provides inclusive, fair, and equitable access to vocational education and training services by identifying and eliminating barriers that may restrict participation, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds or with diverse needs.

Objective

The RTO is committed to:

- Promoting equal opportunity and inclusive practices in training access, delivery, and assessment.
- Providing support structures to assist students with diverse needs, including language, literacy, numeracy, disability, or social disadvantage.
- Embedding equity principles into all operational procedures and decision-making processes.
- Maintaining a learning environment free from discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All current and prospective students
- Trainers and assessors
- Administrative and operational staff
- Third-party partners delivering services on behalf of the RTO

Policy Principles

1. Inclusive Recruitment and Enrolment

- All course information is made accessible in multiple formats.
- Selection criteria are applied consistently and without bias.
- Entry requirements are clearly communicated and adjusted where possible for students with special needs.
- Support is provided for completing forms, understanding enrolment processes, and attending orientation.

2. Identification and Removal of Barriers

- The RTO recognises potential barriers to participation such as:
 - Language, literacy and numeracy difficulties
 - Physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental health conditions
 - Cultural or religious practices
 - Geographic isolation or digital access limitations
- Where identified, reasonable adjustments and support services are offered to facilitate participation.

3. Equity in Delivery and Assessment

- Training is designed to accommodate a range of learning styles and personal circumstances.
- Assessment tools are adjusted where required to ensure fair access while maintaining assessment integrity.
- Language, literacy, and numeracy requirements align with the vocational level of each qualification.
- Special consideration may be granted in genuine cases of personal hardship or disruption.

4. Fair and Safe Learning Environment

- Students and staff are protected from bullying, harassment, and discrimination.
- Behavioural expectations are clearly defined in the Code of Conduct and enforced consistently.

- **Complaints related to discrimination or inequity are handled promptly and confidentially.**

5. Support Services and Referrals

- **The RTO provides access to in-house or external support services, including:**
 - **LLND support**
 - **Disability services**
 - **Counselling**
 - **Welfare referrals**
- **These services are provided at no cost to the student or on a referral basis.**

Procedures:

1.2.1. Ensuring Students Are Informed About Access and Equity

- **All prospective and current students are provided with accurate, easy-to-understand information about their access and equity rights.**
- **This information is made available through multiple channels, including:**
 - **The Student Handbook**
 - **The RTO website**
 - **Enrolment forms**
 - **Pre-training orientation sessions**
- **During orientation, trainers and administrative staff:**
 - **Explain the principles of equity, inclusion, and support.**
 - **Clarify how students can request reasonable adjustments or raise concerns.**
 - **Emphasise that support services are available for LLND challenges, disability, wellbeing, and personal needs.**
- **The Access and Equity Policy is available upon request and is accessible to students throughout their training via the student portal or administration office.**

- Students are assured that all disclosures or support requests are treated confidentially and handled with respect.

1.2.2. Identifying Individual Needs at Enrolment

- The enrolment process includes structured questions that help identify any barriers to learning or participation. These questions cover:
 - Language, literacy, numeracy, or digital skill concerns
 - Disability or medical conditions
 - Cultural, religious, or personal needs
 - Previous education and learning history
- Students are encouraged to disclose any needs honestly so that the RTO can prepare suitable support in advance.
- Where required, students complete an LLND (Language, Literacy, Numeracy, and Digital) skills assessment to determine if additional learning support is needed.
- Trainers and support staff may conduct follow-up conversations to further explore disclosed needs or clarify assessment outcomes.
- All information gathered during this stage is:
 - Reviewed by the relevant staff (e.g., trainer, student support officer, RTO manager)
 - Used to determine the appropriate learning support, reasonable adjustment, or referral pathways
 - Kept confidential and securely stored as part of the student record

1.2.3. Supporting Equal Access to Training and Assessment

- The RTO ensures that all training and assessment services are inclusive and accessible to eligible learners, regardless of background or personal circumstances.
- Enrolment is open to all applicants who meet the course entry requirements, without discrimination based on:
 - Age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or socioeconomic status.

- Trainers are responsible for making minor reasonable adjustments where required to support learners' equal participation. This may include:
 - Adjusting learning materials (e.g., large print, simplified formats)
 - Allowing assistive technologies in class
 - Providing additional time to complete assessments
- If the need exceeds what can be reasonably provided internally, students are referred to external professionals or community support services at no cost for the referral.
- Training facilities and delivery modes are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain accessible and appropriate for all learners, including those with mobility or technology limitations.

1.2.4. Addressing Language, Literacy, Numeracy, and Digital (LLND) Needs

- LLND needs are identified as part of the pre-enrolment or induction phase through:
 - LLND screening tools mapped to the ACSF
 - Trainer observations and verbal interactions
 - Student self-disclosure on enrolment forms
- Where LLND challenges are identified:
 - The RTO provides targeted support through one-on-one assistance, modified resources, or referrals.
 - Trainers tailor delivery approaches, using visual aids, simplified language, or repetition where necessary.
- The RTO ensures that all assessment tasks are valid but also reasonable, considering the ACSF level appropriate to the qualification.
- Additional training in digital skills may be offered where learners are unfamiliar with online platforms, emails, or file management.
- Records of LLND support provided are documented securely and reviewed as part of continuous improvement and learner progression tracking.

1.2.5. Preventing Harassment, Discrimination, and Victimisation

- The RTO enforces a strict zero-tolerance approach to harassment, discrimination, bullying, or victimisation of any student or staff member.
- All staff and students are made aware of acceptable standards of behaviour through the:
 - Code of Conduct
 - Student Handbook
 - Staff Induction and Ongoing Training
- Allegations of misconduct are taken seriously and addressed through formal internal procedures, including immediate investigation and disciplinary action if necessary.
- Students and staff are encouraged to report any experience of discrimination or unfair treatment. They can do this:
 - Directly to their Trainer or Manager
 - Via the formal complaints procedure
- The RTO ensures safe, respectful, and inclusive learning and work environments through regular training, monitoring, and feedback mechanisms.

1.2.6. Inclusive Learning and Course Design

- All training and assessment materials are reviewed and designed to accommodate diverse learner needs, cultural backgrounds, and levels of experience.
- Course prerequisites, assessment types, and delivery modes are designed with flexibility to support different learning styles and access requirements.
- Entry requirements are clearly communicated and do not discriminate against any learner group.
- Course delivery supports inclusion through:
 - Flexible scheduling (where possible)
 - Options for online or blended learning (if offered)
 - Materials adapted for accessibility, including for students with a disability or limited digital literacy

- Reasonable adjustments are made without compromising the competency standards required by the training product.

1.2.7. Supporting Fair and Consistent Assessment

- The RTO ensures all assessment processes are fair, transparent, and adapted to the learner's individual needs, without compromising the integrity of the qualification.
- All students are informed about the assessment requirements, tools, and timelines prior to course commencement and again during the training period.
- Where a student has a verified need (e.g., disability, literacy challenge, trauma), reasonable adjustments are implemented, such as:
 - Additional time for assessments
 - Alternative formats (e.g., verbal assessment, large print, use of a scribe or interpreter)
 - Separate assessment environments where appropriate
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Transfer are available and promoted as equitable pathways to qualification completion.
- Students are given the right to appeal any assessment decision, and the appeal process is clearly outlined and accessible through the Student Handbook and website.

1.2.8. Making Reasonable Adjustments

- Reasonable adjustments are made in both training and assessment to ensure students with disability, learning barriers, or special circumstances are not disadvantaged.
- Adjustments are based on individual needs disclosed during enrolment, LLND assessments, or through discussions with trainers and support staff.
- Examples of adjustments include:
 - Use of assistive technologies (e.g., screen readers, speech-to-text tools)
 - Modified assessment formats or extended deadlines
 - Access to a support person or interpreter

- Trainers and assessors are trained to identify and implement reasonable adjustments while maintaining the validity and consistency of assessment outcomes.
- Adjustments are documented and reviewed periodically to ensure they remain suitable throughout the learner's enrolment.

1.2.9. Facilitating Learning Support

- The RTO provides tailored learning support to students with language, literacy, numeracy, or digital (LLND) skill gaps, ensuring all learners have a fair opportunity to succeed.
- Initial LLND proficiency is identified through a pre-enrolment review and diagnostic assessments, enabling early intervention.
- Based on assessment outcomes, learners may receive:
 - One-on-one academic support sessions
 - Language and literacy workshops
 - Referrals to specialist LLND support providers (where required)
- Trainers are encouraged to implement inclusive teaching strategies to accommodate varied learning needs.
- Ongoing monitoring ensures support strategies remain effective and are modified if learner needs change.

1.2.10. Ensuring Physical Accessibility

- The RTO ensures all training and assessment venues, including classrooms, facilities, and breakout areas, are physically accessible to students with mobility or physical impairments.
- Facilities meet current building accessibility standards, and adjustments such as ramps, accessible toilets, and lifts are provided where necessary.
- For training delivered off-site or by third parties, the RTO confirms the accessibility of those locations through pre-delivery site inspections or documentation.
- Any barriers identified are addressed promptly, and alternative arrangements are made if the site cannot be reasonably modified.

- **Students with physical access needs are encouraged to disclose requirements early so suitable arrangements can be made prior to course commencement.**

1.2.11. Handling Complaints and Appeals Related to Access and Equity

- **The RTO provides fair and transparent procedures for handling any complaints or appeals related to discrimination, harassment, access, or equity issues.**
- **Students and staff are informed of the complaints process through the Student Handbook, orientation, and RTO website.**
- **Complaints can be made:**
 - **In writing using the RTO's Complaints and Appeals Form**
 - **Verbally to a Trainer, Support Officer, or RTO Manager (which must then be formally recorded)**
- **All complaints are treated confidentially and investigated promptly, with documented outcomes and corrective actions.**
- **Where a student is not satisfied with the outcome, they are informed of external appeal options including referring the matter to the relevant ombudsman or ASQA.**
- **Regular analysis of complaints is undertaken as part of the RTO's continuous improvement process to identify systemic issues or trends.**

1.2.12. Fair and Flexible Student Selection

- **Student selection is based solely on the eligibility criteria for the training product, such as:**
 - **Entry requirements**
 - **Language, literacy, and numeracy capacity**
 - **Course prerequisites**
- **No applicant is denied access on the basis of personal characteristics such as age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, or religious belief.**
- **The RTO uses a standardised pre-enrolment process to ensure all applicants are considered equitably.**

- Where limited places are available, allocation is determined by:
 - Date of application
 - Completeness of documentation
 - Meeting entry criteria
- Applicants who do not meet entry criteria are informed clearly, with guidance provided on alternative pathways or support options.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Chief Executive Officer (CEO) / PEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oversees implementation of access and equity policies across the RTO - Approves strategic initiatives addressing identified equity barriers - Ensures ongoing compliance with national and state legislation
RTO Manager / Compliance Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitors the application of equity principles across enrolment, delivery, and assessment - Conducts staff briefings and reviews on changes in equity-related legislation - Leads policy reviews and audits against access and equity benchmarks
Trainers and Assessors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apply inclusive teaching and assessment methods that support learners of all abilities and backgrounds- Identify and support students with special needs through reasonable adjustment - Encourage an inclusive classroom culture and respond to equity-related issues
Student Support Officer / Welfare Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides guidance and referral for students experiencing barriers to learning - Maintains up-to-date records of support actions and adjustments provided

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensures culturally responsive, fair and accessible support services
Administrative Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure communication materials are accessible and culturally sensitive - Assist students with completing forms or accessing services - Maintain impartiality in student interactions and uphold privacy protocols
All Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uphold the principles of fairness, inclusion, and non-discrimination in every student and colleague interaction- Report any observed breaches of access and equity principles to the RTO Manager - Participate in regular professional development relating to diversity, access, and equity

Continuous Improvement

- Access and equity practices are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain compliant, relevant, and effective.
- Issues identified through:
 - Student feedback forms
 - Complaints and appeals
 - Staff observations or academic records are discussed at monthly and quarterly management review meetings.
- Improvements are implemented where patterns or risks are identified, including:
 - Enhanced support services
 - Adjusted delivery methods
 - Revised enrolment procedures

- **Records of these improvements are retained in the Continuous Improvement Register and referenced during internal audits or RTO performance evaluations.**

Confidentiality and Privacy

- **The RTO treats all personal information collected during access and equity processes as confidential.**
- **Disclosure of information is only made where:**
 - **The student has provided written consent**
 - **It is legally required (e.g., regulatory reporting)**
- **All records of student disclosures, reasonable adjustments, and equity-related support are:**
 - **Stored in secure student files (digital and/or physical)**
 - **Only accessible by authorised personnel**
- **The RTO adheres to the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and ensures that students are informed of their privacy rights during orientation and through the Student Handbook.**

Retention of Records

- **Records related to access and equity are retained in accordance with:**
 - **SRTO 2025 retention requirements**
 - **National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2012**
 - **Applicable funding contracts (if relevant)**
- **Types of records retained include:**
 - **Enrolment forms showing disclosures or equity flags**
 - **Support plans or reasonable adjustment records**
 - **Correspondence regarding support referrals or interventions**
 - **Records of complaints or appeals relating to access or discrimination**
- **Minimum retention period: 2 years from the date the student completes or withdraws from the training product, unless a longer period is required under other legislation or agreements.**

- **All records are securely disposed of once the retention period has expired, following the RTO's data disposal procedures.**