

POLICY #1

ACCESS AND
EQUITY

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INTERACTiON

Access and Equity Policy and Procedure

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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)

RELEVANT INTERNAL FORMS

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1. Purpose

Interaction Consulting Group (ICG), via its RTO is committed to providing equal access and equity in all aspects of our operations, including training and assessment services. We recognise the importance of ensuring that all learners, regardless of their background, have an equal opportunity to participate and succeed. This policy outlines our commitment to promoting access and equity and establishes the procedures for its implementation.

2. Scope

This policy and procedures apply to all the students, staff and stakeholders of Interaction Consulting Group (ICG).

3. Definitions

- Direct Discrimination - Discrimination happens when a person, or a group of people, is treated less favourably than another person or group because of their background or certain personal characteristics. This is known as 'direct discrimination'.
- Indirect Discrimination - It is also discrimination when an unreasonable rule or policy applies to everyone but has the effect of disadvantaging some people because of a personal characteristic they share. This is known as 'indirect discrimination'.
- Discrimination can be against the law if it is based on a person's:
 - Age
 - Disability, or
 - Race, including colour, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status
 - Sex, pregnancy, marital or relationship status, family responsibilities or breastfeeding
 - Sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status.
- Harassment can be against the law when a person is treated less favourably on the basis of certain personal characteristics, such as race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, breastfeeding, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status. Some limited exemptions and exceptions apply.

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- Sexual harassment is any unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviour where a reasonable person would have anticipated the possibility that the person harassed would feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. It has nothing to do with mutual attraction or consensual behaviour.
- Harassment linked to the disability of a person or their associate is against the law.
- Offensive behaviour based on racial hatred is against the law. Racial hatred is defined as something done in public that offends, insults, humiliates or intimidates a person or group of people because of their race, colour or national or ethnic origin.

4. Policy objectives

- a. To provide equal access to training and assessment services for all learners.
- b. To identify and remove barriers that may prevent learners from accessing or participating in our programs.
- c. To ensure fair and unbiased treatment of all learners, regardless of their personal characteristics or circumstances.
- d. To promote a culture of inclusivity and respect within our organisation.

5. Policy principles

- a. *Access and Equity*: We will ensure that learners have fair and equitable access to our training and assessment services, regardless of their gender, age, race, ethnicity, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.
- b. *Accessibility*: We will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the individual needs of learners with disabilities or specific requirements to ensure they can fully participate in our programs.
- c. *Respect and Dignity*: We will treat all learners with respect, dignity, and without discrimination, fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment.
- d. *Continuous Improvement*: We will regularly review and enhance our access and equity practices to ensure ongoing improvement and compliance with relevant legislation and standards.

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6. Implementation procedures

a. Access and Enrolment:

- i. Provide clear and accessible information about our training programs, entry requirements, and enrolment procedures to potential learners.
- ii. Offer multiple modes of communication and support to accommodate learners' individual needs (e.g., online, telephone, in-person).
- iii. Make reasonable adjustments to our recruitment and selection processes to ensure learners with disabilities or specific requirements can participate on an equal basis.

b. Reasonable Adjustments and Support:

- i. Conduct a thorough assessment of learners' support needs during the enrolment process and, where required, develop and implement reasonable adjustment plans to ensure their full participation.
- ii. Provide additional support services or resources, such as assistive technologies, interpreters, or accessible learning materials, as needed.
- iii. Regularly review and update reasonable adjustment plans to reflect learners' changing needs or circumstances.

c. Anti-Discrimination and Harassment:

- i. Prohibit any form of discrimination, harassment, or victimization of learners, trainers, assessors, or staff based on protected characteristics.
- ii. Establish procedures for reporting and addressing any complaints or incidents of discrimination or harassment promptly and confidentially.
- iii. Provide appropriate training and education to all stakeholders to promote understanding, awareness, and compliance with anti-discrimination policies.

d. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):

- i. Inform learners about the RPL process, including the evidence requirements and assessment methods.
- ii. Provide support and guidance to learners who wish to apply for RPL, ensuring transparency, fairness, and consistency in the assessment and validation of their prior learning.
- iii. Maintain records of RPL assessments and outcomes in accordance with regulatory requirements.

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e. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- i. Regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our access and equity initiatives through feedback mechanisms, learner surveys, and internal reviews.
- ii. Identify and address any gaps, barriers, or areas for improvement to enhance the accessibility and inclusivity of our training and assessment services.
- iii. Maintain accurate records and documentation related to access and equity practices, including complaints, reasonable adjustment plans, and outcomes.

7. Compliance

- a. This policy and its associated procedures align with the RTO Standards 2015, relevant legislation (such as the Disability Discrimination Act), and other applicable regulatory requirements.
- b. ICG will conduct periodic reviews to ensure ongoing compliance, making necessary updates and improvements to meet evolving standards and best practices.

8. Communication and implementation:

- a. Disseminate this policy to all stakeholders, including learners, trainers, assessors, and staff, ensuring they understand their roles and responsibilities in promoting access and equity.
- b. Provide appropriate training and professional development opportunities to enhance stakeholders' understanding of access and equity principles and their practical application.
- c. Regularly communicate updates, changes, or improvements to the policy and procedures as necessary.

9. Responsibilities

CEO and Managers are responsible for client equity.

The CEO will not condone nor engage in discriminatory/harassing behaviour.

The CEO is responsible for ensuring that all staff are aware of this policy and that complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the terms of the Complaints and Appeals Policy.

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The CEO and Managers are to ensure staff act according to this policy and all clients are made aware of their rights and responsibilities pursuant to this policy.

The CEO will maintain the confidentiality of all complaints. If the CEO feels that they are not the appropriate person to deal with the complaint, they will refer the matter to either a member of the management team or an external independent party for review and/or action.

Staff, Contractors' and Clients Responsibilities

Staff, contractors and clients have the responsibility to:

- Act to prevent harassment, discrimination and victimization against others;
- Respect differences among other staff, clients and contractors, such as cultural and social diversity;
- Treat people fairly, without discrimination, harassment or victimization;
- Respect the rights of others;
- Respect people's rights to privacy and confidentiality;
- Refuse to join in with these behaviours;
- Supporting the person in saying no to these behaviours;
- Acting as a witness if the person being harassed decides to lodge a complaint;
- Observe site rules or behaviour guidelines set by Trainers/Assessors;
- Behave in a manner that does not interfere with the learning of others; and
- Conduct themselves in a responsible manner while in training;
- Ensure the rights of all clients to have their say, balanced with the responsibility to listen to others and allow others to have their say.

If a staff, contractor or client feels harassed, bullied or otherwise a victim of unwelcome behaviour, the staff, contractor or client is encouraged to inform the person that the behaviour is unwanted, unacceptable and/or offensive. If the staff, contractor or client feels unable to approach the person, or if the behaviour continues following their request that the behaviour cease, the CEO should be contacted.

10. References

Relevant Legislation:

This policy reflects our commitment to the following legislation:

- National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (NVR Act) – Commonwealth
- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Commonwealth)
- Disability Discrimination Act 2009 (Commonwealth)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Commonwealth)

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- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth)
- Discrimination Act 1991 (Australian Capital Territory)
- Disability Services Act 1991 (Australian Capital Territory)

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

PROCEDURES:

- @ Enrolment: information must include information about reasonable adjustment and support resources (assistive tech, accessible learning materials etc.).
- Ensure information on A & E is disseminated in student and trainer manuals. Trainers to be emailed the trainer manual at induction; to sign and return.

REPORTING

- Weekly: (as per enrolment policy)
- Quarterly: Establish complaint mechanisms (quarterly review of complaints register) related to accessibility and equity in particular
- Yearly: Review reasonable adjustment plans regularly – once yearly at a minimum – and maintain records as such, including any barriers identified or feedback fr students



RELEVANT INTERNAL FORMS

- Enrolment Form (as per 'Enrolment' SOP)
- Complaints and Appeals (filed under the 'Complaints' SOP)

<i>Document: Access and Equity Policy and Procedures</i>	<i>Version:3.0</i>	<i>RTOID: 6170</i>
<i>Responsibility: Head of RTO</i>	<i>Last Reviewed: March 2024</i>	<i>Pg No. Page 8 of 8</i>
<i>Not controlled when printed</i>		