

51. AOT Access and Equity Policy

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| Related Legislation & Guidelines | <p>Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015</p> <p>National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (NVR Act) – Commonwealth</p> <p>Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Act 1990 (New South Wales)</p> <p>Education and the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Victoria)</p> <p>Vocational Education and Training Act 1996 (Western Australia)</p> <p>Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000 (Queensland)</p> <p>Training and Skills Development Act 2008 (South Australia)</p> <p>Training and Workforce Development Act 2013 (Tasmania)</p> <p>Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Commonwealth)</p> <p>Disability Discrimination Act 2009 (Commonwealth)</p> <p>Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Commonwealth)</p> <p>Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth)</p> <p>Discrimination Act 1991 (Australian Capital Territory)</p> <p>Disability Services Act 1991 (Australian Capital Territory)</p> <p>Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (New South Wales)</p> <p>Anti-Discrimination Act (Northern Territory)</p> <p>Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Queensland)</p> <p>Equal Opportunity Act 1994 (South Australia)</p> <p>Sex Discrimination Act 1994 (Tasmania)</p> <p>Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (Tasmania)</p> <p>Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Victoria)</p> <p>Disability Act 2006 (Victoria)</p> <p>Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (Western Australia)</p> |

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| Scope | Course Type | All | |
| Version Updates | Version 1 | Updates to formatting and document code | 01/03/2016 |
| | Version 2 | Minor updates to wording | 17/08/2018 |
| <p>Communication:</p> <p>All AOT policies, procedures and guidelines are saved in PolicyDoc (cloud based document management system) which is accessible by all relevant staff. Updates are communicated to staff through our knowledge management system. Updates are communicated to students via announcements in our Learning Management System.</p> | | | |

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a frame of reference in providing and maintaining training services that reflect fair and reasonable opportunity for all potential students and students, regardless of their diversity; allowing everyone to freely participate in the learning environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and vilification.

2. Policy

AOT promotes, encourages and values equity and diversity with regard to students. AOT will ensure services offered are provided in a fair and equitable manner to all students, free from bias.

AOT 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.

AOT will ensure:

- i. 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;
- ii. 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
- iii. all students/students have equitable access to training resources, facilities, equipment, support services, information, training and assessment personnel, materials, assessment opportunities, training opportunities.

3.1 Access and Equity Principles

AOT will not accept any form of discrimination and will apply the following principles in support of access and equity:

- i. AOT abides by access and equity principles.
- ii. AOT will respect a student's right to privacy, confidentiality and be sensitive to student needs.

- iii. AOT 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.
- iv. At enrolment, students will be asked to identify personal needs or circumstances that may exist and for which they may require additional support (See Enrolment Policy).
- v. AOT seeks to create a learning environment where all students are respected and can develop their full potential.
- vi. All students are given fair and reasonable opportunity to attend and complete training.
- vii. 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.
- viii. 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.
- ix. All perceived deficiencies in the Access and Equity Policy are to be documented, assessed and reviewed by the Director AOT.
- x. AOT will demonstrate its commitment by:
 - a) Selecting students according to a fair and non-discriminatory process
 - b) Developing training and assessment strategies 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.

3.2 Equal Opportunity

AOT is an equal opportunity company and does not discriminate against or favour target groups in either recruiting or training, unless prescribed by funding contracts.

3.3 Vulnerable Groups are defined as:

AOT will not market specifically to any vulnerable group

- i. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders;
- ii. People with a disability;
- iii. People from non-English speaking backgrounds;
- iv. People in transition and other special groups (i.e. people re-entering the workforce, long term unemployed, sole parents, people with literacy problems, and those who have been institutionalised);
- v. Women;
- vi. People from regionally isolated communities.

3.4 Special Needs/Considerations

- i. Students intending to enrol for training with AOT are requested, prior to enrolment, to advise AOT if they have any disability, physical or other impairment which may adversely affect their ability to successfully undertake training and assessment.
- ii. Students are encouraged to discuss with AOT any 'special needs' and/or 'reasonable adjustments' to the study environment which they consider are necessary or would assist them in the performance of their studies.
- iii. AOT, in collaboration with the Student, will assess the potential for the Student to successfully complete the training which may include flexible delivery options to optimise the ease and benefit of the Students' learning. However, no compromise to the integrity of the assessment against competency will be allowed.
- iv. Students with a disability are required to have the ability to fulfil the core requirements of the units of Competence to attain the relevant award. However, it is recognised that flexibility in arrangements may need to be implemented.

3.5 Language, Literacy and Numeracy

- i. Each Training Package sets a minimum requirement in language, literacy and numeracy skills of students, with which AOT must abide.
- ii. AOT makes appropriate concessions for language, literacy and numeracy issues of students where these concessions do not compromise the requirements of the relevant Training Package and the integrity, equity and fairness of assessment.
- iii. Where a Student is deemed, either prior to enrolment or throughout the training program, to possess a lower level of language, literacy or numeracy than is the minimum requirement for the requirements of the Training Package, AOT will provide appropriate advice and support to the Student regarding further learning options. At times, further language or literacy development or remedial assistance may be required to be completed prior to the continuation or completion of the Student's course of study.

3.6 Harassment

- i. Harassment will not be tolerated at AOT. If harassment occurs, the person responsible will be subject to disciplinary procedures. Disciplinary action will be taken against any staff or student involved in such behaviour. This may include termination of employment and removal of the student from the training course.
- ii. Serious cases of harassment may constitute a criminal offence.
- iii. AOT will not tolerate behaviour which is considered to be sexual harassment and expects all staff, contractors and students to treat each other with dignity and respect.

3.7 Bullying and Violence

- i. AOT will not tolerate bullying or violent behaviour and expects all staff, contractors and students to treat each other with dignity and respect.
- ii. AOT recognises bullying and violence demeans and infringes the rights of individuals and groups, damaging the work and learning environment.

3.8 Vilification

- i. AOT will not tolerate behaviour which vilifies another person and expects all staff, contractors and students to treat each other with dignity and respect.

3.9 Complaints

- i. AOT encourages informal resolutions of discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying and violence, victimisation, and vilification grievances in the first instance, as close to the

source as possible, with the option of conciliation or investigation of the complaint if necessary.

- ii. Complaints will be investigated in a confidential manner and action will be taken to ensure that the discrimination/harassment stops. Appropriate warning or disciplinary action will be taken where harassment is found to have occurred.
- iii. Those responsible for advising, conciliating or investigating a complaint must act fairly and impartially, they must act without bias and avoid any conflict of interest the respondent must be given a fair opportunity to know the case against him or her and to be given the opportunity to make a considered response.
- iv. All staff, students and contractors involved with the AOT complaint procedures will be treated with respect and courtesy. Enquiries and complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, equitable, fair, and confidential manner. All attempts will be made to deal with matters expeditiously while ensuring all parties are provided with sufficient time to prepare and or respond.
- v. AOT acknowledges that it is of paramount importance, and in the best interests of all parties, that confidentiality is maintained during these procedures.
- vi. AOT encourages the reporting of behaviour that breaches equal opportunity policy, but will not tolerate vexatious or frivolous complaints.

3.10 Victimisation

- i. In order for complaints to be brought forward, complainants must feel secure in the knowledge that the AOT procedures will be followed without fear of reprisal.
- ii. AOT will not victimise or treat any person unfairly for making a harassment complaint.
- iii. AOT will not tolerate behaviour of victimisation of another person and expects all staff, contractors and students to treat each other with dignity and respect.
- iv. Any complaint of victimisation will be treated in the same manner as a complaint of discrimination, sexual harassment or vilification.

3.11 AOT Responsibilities

AOT has a legal and moral obligation to provide equal opportunity in an environment free from discrimination for staff, contractors and students to ensure that discrimination/harassment does not occur in the workplace.

3.12 AOT will:

- i. Maintain policies and procedures for equal opportunities for all staff, contractors and students;
- ii. Disseminate policies and procedures to staff, contractors and students;
- iii. Examine all policies and practices, as they affect staff, contractors and students to ensure the elimination of discrimination and harassment;
- iv. Ensure that there is no discrimination against any individual student or group of students or staff, in access to facilities, products and services;
- v. Educate staff and contractors on the general goals and philosophy of equal opportunity together with the rationale for policies and practices which are adopted;
- vi. Eliminate sexist and other discriminator language from all publications and discourage the use of such language in all printed material and in the speech of its staff, contractors and students;
- vii. Establish and maintain mechanisms to deal with complaints.

3.13 Director Responsibilities

- i. AOT Director and Managers are responsible for student equity.
- ii. The Director will not condone nor engage in discriminatory/harassing behaviour.
- iii. The Director 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.
- iv. The Director(s) and Manager(s) are to ensure staff act according to this policy and all students are made aware of their rights and responsibilities pursuant to this policy.
- v. The Director will maintain the confidentiality of all complaints. If the Director 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.

3.14 Staff, Contractors and Students Responsibilities

AOT staff, contractors and students have the responsibility to:

- a) Act to prevent harassment, discrimination and victimization against others;
- b) Respect differences among other staff, students and contractors, such as cultural and social diversity;

- c) Treat people fairly, without discrimination, harassment or victimization;
- d) Respect the rights of others;
- e) Respect people's rights to privacy and confidentiality;
- f) Refuse to join in with these behaviours;
- g) Supporting the person in saying no to these behaviours;
- h) Acting as a witness if the person being harassed decides to lodge a complaint;
- i) Observe site rules or behaviour guidelines set by AOT Trainers/Assessors;
- j) Behave in a manner that does not interfere with the learning of others; and
- k) Conduct themselves in a responsible manner while in training;
- l) Ensure the rights of all students to have their say, balanced with the responsibility to listen to others and allow others to have their say.

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

3.15 Records Management

All documentation from regarding complaints concerning Access and Equity matters are maintained in accordance with Records Management Policy. (See Records Management Policy)

3. Related Forms and Documents

AOT's Document Register outlines all the forms and documents that relate to this policy. The Document Register is saved within PolicyDoc and is accessible by all relevant staff.

4. Quality and Continuous Improvement

All policies, procedures and processes are reviewed on an annual basis. This policy will be formally reviewed on the date set out in the version control table at the beginning of this document.

AOT reserves the right to review and update policies, procedures and processes at any time outside of the formal review cycle, as required by:

- a) changes in regulatory, statutory, or contractual obligations,
- b) results of internal quality assurance processes,

c) feedback received from staff.

Any recommendations to improve this document must be submitted to ceo@aot.edu.au.