

# Access, Equity, Support and Special Needs Policy and Procedure

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## **SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION**

### **PURPOSE**

The Australasian College of Health and Wellness (ACHW) is committed to a policy of fair and equitable access to services for all stakeholders. It is committed to providing support to students by identifying and removing barriers and encouraging equal educational opportunities.

This Access, Equity Support, Disability and Special Needs Policy ensures fair and equitable access and support to our services.

### **SCOPE**

This policy and procedure applies to all students and staff

## SECTION 2 – POLICY

### PRINCIPLES

The Access, Equity Support, Disability and Special Needs Policy is committed to and guided by the principles of:

- ï Access
- ï Equity
- ï Fairness
- ï Support for disadvantage

### POLICY

ACHW will strive to meet the needs of individuals and the community as a whole through fair treatment and the integration of access and equity guidelines. Current principles of social justice, including the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*<sup>1</sup>, will be appropriately addressed in all aspects of its operations. These operational areas include enrolment, participation, curriculum development, training delivery, assessment, student support services, and include elimination of harassment and victimisation.

This policy aims to remove barriers that prevent individuals from participating in ACHW courses and provide students with fair and equitable treatment without regard to political affiliation, race, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, disability or socio-economic background.

ACHW aims to achieve equal educational outcomes for all students and improve the position of particular groups in society. Such groups include:

- ï Women
- ï LGBTQI
- ï Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- ï People of non-English speaking backgrounds
- ï People with physical or intellectual disabilities
- ï The long-term unemployed
- ï Those who reside in remote/ rural areas

It is important to note that this policy applies to all forums, chatrooms and correspondences within the ACHW student platform. Acts of bullying and harassment, criminal activity, and offensive and graphic content will not be tolerated.

We will ensure that equity principles for all individuals and groups are implemented through the fair and reasonable allocation of resources and the right to equality of opportunity without discrimination. We will endeavour to provide opportunities for under-represented groups to participate in the higher education system. This will be done through such means as the implementation of customer-oriented programs targeting the specific needs of market segments and ensuring that the opportunities and benefits of Commonwealth assistance are made equally available to all eligible students.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://education.gov.au/disability-standards-education>

ACHW is committed to providing a fair environment for all students, with due consideration to the context of the circumstances applicable to that individual.

ACHW will continuously strive to develop quality support services that enhance individuals' chances to achieve positive outcomes. Student and staff feedback as well as industry consultation will inform the direction of these developments.

### **Related Legislation**

- ï Age Discrimination Act 2004
- ï Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- ï Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- ï Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- ï Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- ï Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (VIC)
- ï Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (QLD)

## **SECTION 3 – PROCEDURE**

### **ONGOING ACTIONS**

1. Ensure the establishment of non-discriminatory student selection procedures which uphold the principle that all applicants seeking to enrol are treated fairly and equitably and also encourage fair access for members of under-represented groups (such as people with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with a non-English speaking background, Australian South Sea Islanders, people with language, literacy and numeracy difficulties, and older people).
2. Ensure open, fair and transparent procedures for making decisions about the selection of students, which are based on the published clearly-defined entry requirements, and that students are selected on merit, based on those requirements and on an individual case by case basis.
3. Ensure access and equity issues are considered during development of curriculum; attention will be given to provision of a mix of appropriate instructional and assessment modes, support provided for students with special needs, and reasonable adjustment will be available.
4. Provide access to staff development to assist staff who deliver training to under-represented groups.
5. Provide access to staff development to assist unit convenors to meet the needs of a diverse range of clients.

## IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIAL NEEDS

During the enrolment process the student is given the opportunity to learn about the support services ACHW has available. At the time of enrolment, every student is required to complete an Application for Enrolment, which is a contract between the student and ACHW for the delivery of education services.

Within the Application for Enrolment, students are able to indicate if they have any special needs that may impact their enrolment or cause barriers in achieving.

It should be noted that special needs do not constitute a disability. Without the accompaniment of a disability, each is considered a disadvantage and is not addressed by the Disability Standards.

### A. LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND NUMERACY

Applicants or existing students identified with special needs in regard to language, literacy or numeracy will be provided with assistance to maximise the possibility of a successful outcome to the training.

The ACHW academic team will consult with each student in private. Discussion will focus on the student's need(s), his/her view of the assistance required, and how best to address the need(s). Possible options could be additional English language classes, special tutoring and/or outsourcing of specialised assistance.

### B. DISABILITY

Each individual with a disability will have different needs, so it is not possible to implement a set of specialised services which will suit all students with disabilities. Instead the following process recommended within the Disability Standards will be employed:

- i Step 1: Consultation with the student – regarding all relevant circumstances and interests, including the student's needs, the disability and his/her views on the assistance required;
- i Step 2: Consideration of whether a reasonable adjustment is necessary – would an adjustment be reasonable and to what extent would it achieve the aims?
- i Step 3: Identification of a reasonable adjustment if it is necessary – is there any other reasonable adjustment that would be less disruptive and intrusive and no less beneficial for the student?
- i Step 4: Making the reasonable adjustment – within a reasonable time according to the provision of relevant information in the student's possession about how they would be affected in relation to training.

This process must be repeated at regular intervals to ensure continuity in meeting the changing needs of the learner.

Further information on working with people with a disability and information on agencies provided support for people with disabilities can be obtained from the following national web site: <http://www.acrod.org.au/>

### C. STUDENTS FROM ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER BACKGROUND

Where an individual has indicated to be from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background and the need for academic support, the Head of School or Team Leader HE Student Support, ACHW will have confidential discussion with the student to determine what academic and non-academic support is required and the resources needed to provide the requested support.

Further details on the support to be provided to students from ATSI background is in the ACHW Framework for Support to students of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.

## REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT

### Students with Disability and Special Needs

It is expected that a person with special needs and/or a disability will be able to advise ACHW in regard to what adjustments he or she needs to be able to participate in their studies with ACHW. If necessary, ACHW will seek advice from government agencies or support organisations to determine what needs to be done to accommodate the requirements of the individual.

The following factors will be considered:

- ï the nature of the individual's disability;
- ï the information provided by, or on behalf of, the student about how the disability affects his/her ability to participate;
- ï the student's (or associate's) views about the adjustment;
- ï information provided by the student about his or her preferred adjustment;
- ï the effect of the adjustment on anyone else affected;
- ï the effect of the adjustment on the student, their ability to participate, achieve learning outcomes and operate independently; and
- ï the costs and benefits of making the adjustment.

Reasonable adjustment activities could involve, but not be limited to:

- ï providing additional lighting;
- ï providing an adjustable workstation or special seating;
- ï modifying equipment or providing special adaptive technologies such as voice-activated computer software, special keyboard, large screen monitor or associated aids;
- ï providing special assistance such as an interpreter for deaf candidates and provision of paper-based materials in advance of face to face sessions;
- ï adapting the training methodologies, without impacting on the delivery of the essential skills, knowledge and understanding required for the relevant competencies; and
- ï 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).

The possibilities are considerable and staff members/contractors need to think laterally. For example: a learner with a physical impairment may not be able to physically undertake a certain activity, but they may be able to direct someone else to do so. In some cases, this will meet the requirements of the unit of competency, such as for a supervisor who needs to know how to do something but does not have to physically do it.

Students should refer to the ACHW Assessment Policy for further information.

### Students with Disability and Special Needs

It is expected that a person from ATSI background will be able to advise ACHW in regard to what adjustments or support he or she needs to be able to participate in their studies with ACHW. If necessary, ACHW will seek advice from government agencies or support organisations to determine what needs to be done to accommodate the requirements of the individual.

The following factors will be considered:

- ï the nature of the individual's need;
- ï the information provided by, or on behalf of, the student about how their challenges affect his/her ability to participate;
- ï the student's (or associate's) views about the support and help needed;
- ï information provided by the student about his or her preferred support and help;
- ï the effect of the adjustment on the student, their ability to participate, achieve learning outcomes and operate independently; and
- ï the costs and benefits of making the adjustment.

Reasonable adjustment activities to support students from ATSI background could involve, but not be limited to:

- ï providing a dedicated academic support individual from ACHW;
- ï modifying equipment or providing special adaptive technologies;
- ï providing special assistance such as a mentor from external government and support agencies;
- ï adapting the training methodologies, without impacting on the delivery of the essential skills, knowledge and understanding required for the relevant competencies; and
- ï adapting the assessment methodologies, without impacting on the validity of the attainment of the relevant competencies. For example: varying question and response modalities (such as use of oral questioning rather than written, and audiotaped or videotaped answers instead of written answers).

The possibilities are considerable and staff members/contractors need to think laterally. For example an interview may be used in place of written assessments, an assessment may be adjusted to jointly assess multiple learning outcomes.

Students should refer to the ACHW Assessment Policy for further information.

## **SOURCES OF SUPPORT**

There are many sources of support in the employment, training and assessment of a person who has a disability; some of these are listed under the *Related External Sources* section of this document.

## **UNJUSTIFIABLE HARDSHIP**

Once an adjustment is considered reasonable in the circumstances, balancing the interests of all parties affected, the next step is to consider whether it would nonetheless impose unjustifiable hardship on the provider.

Where a claim of unjustifiable hardship is made, a provider should take into account all the financial and other resources that are reasonably available for the purpose of making any necessary adjustments for the student, and the impact of those adjustments on their capacity to provide education of high quality to all students while remaining financially viable.

ACHW should seek the advice of relevant external parties to help meet the needs of the student and to implementing a financially viable option for the student

## **ACHW ONLINE ETIQUETTE PROTOCOL**

Student Conduct Guidelines:

When communicating with staff and fellow students within ACHW online learning systems you are expected to follow the same standards of behaviour as you would in a classroom situation and obey the rules of online etiquette:

- ï Be respectful of your fellow students and ACHW staff and contractors
- ï Value the opinions of others. While you should feel free to disagree and present your own point of view you must do so in a manner that does not denigrate the opinions of others
- ï Use appropriate language and never use language that could be found offensive
- ï At no time attack others personally
- ï Do not act in a way that could constitute harassment, bullying or discrimination
- ï The use of offensive, violent and graphic content is prohibited
- ï Be careful of using CAPITAL LETTERS when posting. The use of CAPS can be interpreted as shouting
- ï Use humour or sarcasm very carefully as this can often be misinterpreted

ACHW regards sexual exploitation as a serious offense. Sexual exploitation can include solicitation of sexual material, any sexual content involving minors, threats to share intimate images and offers of sexual services. Where appropriate, ACHW will refer this content to the relevant authority.

For the safety of our students, the ACHW Student Platform is moderated by ACHW staff and contractors, including Student Support. ACHW discourages the creation of external forums and sites by students for the purposes of academic dialogue between students. ACHW is unable to monitor these sites and ensure student safety in these external environments.

Where students wish to create additional forums, ACHW will assist with this process.

If you have any concerns or would like to report something you have viewed in the ACHW online platforms, please contact Student Support.

Students should refer to the ACHW Student Conduct for further information.

## **REPORTING**

A student observing or experiencing behaviour, which may constitute a breach of this policy, whether by another student or staff member, must notify Student Services without delay. Any grievances will be handled in accordance with the ACHW Grievance Policy.



A staff member or contractor observing or experiencing behaviour, which may constitute a breach of this policy, whether by another staff member, contractor or by a student, must notify the Head of School without delay.

## SECTION 4 – REFERENCE AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### DEFINITIONS

Word/Term	Definition
Access	Services should be available to everyone who is entitled to them and should be free of any form of discrimination irrespective of a person’s country of birth, language, culture, race or religion.
Equity	Services should be developed and delivered on the basis of fair treatment of students who are eligible to receive them.
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. total or partial loss of the person’s bodily or mental functions;or</li> <li>b. total or partial loss of a part of the body;or</li> <li>c. the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness;or</li> <li>d. the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or</li> <li>e. the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person’s body; or</li> <li>f. a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction;or</li> <li>g. 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</li> <li>h. includes a disability that presently exists or previously existed but no longer exists, may exist in the future, or is imputed to a person.</li> </ul>
Reasonable adjustment	An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with a disability to participate in training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it takes into account the student’s learning needs and balances the interests of all parties affected, including the student, the provider, staff and other students.

### SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document name	Document type	Location
Selection and Admissions Policy	Policy	External website
Student Progression and Support Policy	Policy	External website
Student Code of Conduct Policy	Policy	External website

## SECTION 5 – GOVERNANCE

### RELATED EXTERNAL REFERENCES

#### *Sources of support for employment, training and assessment*

There are many sources of support in the employment, training and assessment of a person who has a disability; some of these are listed below.

#### ***Association of Competitive Employment (ACE) National Network***

ACE represents agencies who deliver open employment services for people who have a disability.

PO Box 5198

Alphington VIC 3078

Ph: 03 9411 4033

Fax: 03 9411 4053

Email: [info@acenational.org.au](mailto:info@acenational.org.au)

Website: [www.acenational.org.au](http://www.acenational.org.au)

#### ***Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET)***

ADCET provides information about inclusive post-secondary education and training teaching, learning and assessment strategies and support services for people who have a disability.

ADCET

University of Tasmania

Locked Bag 1354

Launceston TAS 7250

Ph: 03 6324 3615

Website: [www.adcet.edu.au](http://www.adcet.edu.au)

#### ***Australian Federation of Deaf Societies***

PO Box 1060

Parramatta NSW 2124

Ph: 02 8833 3615

Fax: 02 9893 8333

TTY: 02 9893 8858

#### ***Australian Federation of Disability Organisations***

247 Flinders Lane

Melbourne VIC 3000

Ph: 03 9662 3324

Fax: 03 9662 3325

Email: [office@afdo.org.au](mailto:office@afdo.org.au)

Website: [www.afdo.org.au](http://www.afdo.org.au)

#### ***Blind Citizens Australia***

PO Box 24

Sunshine VIC 3020

Ph: 03 9372 6400  
Fax: 03 9372 6466  
TTY: 03 9372 9275  
Freecall: 1800 033 660  
Email: [bca@bca.org.au](mailto:bca@bca.org.au)  
Website: [www.bca.org.au](http://www.bca.org.au)

***Brain Injury Australia***

PO Box 82  
Mawson ACT 2607  
Ph: 02 6290 2253  
Fax: 02 6290 2252  
Email: [bianational@apex.net.au](mailto:bianational@apex.net.au)

***Carers Australia***

PO Box 73  
Deakin West ACT 2600  
Ph: 02 6122 9900  
Fax: 02 6122 9999  
Email: [caa@carersaustralia.com.au](mailto:caa@carersaustralia.com.au)  
Website: [www.carersaustralia.com.au](http://www.carersaustralia.com.au)

***Commonwealth Disability Services Program Contacts***

<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au> or by telephone:

ACT: 02 6274 5206  
New South Wales: 02 9263 3818  
Northern Territory: 08 8946 3555

Queensland: 07 3360 2800  
South Australia: 08 8236 6111  
Tasmania: 03 6221 1411  
Victoria: 03 9285 8523  
Western Australia: 08 9346 5311

***Deafness Forum of Australia***

The forum coordinates the annual National Hearing Awareness Week, held in the last complete week of August.

218 Northbourne Avenue  
Braddon ACT 2612  
Ph: 02 6262 7808  
Fax: 02 6262 7810  
TTY: 02 6262 7809  
Email: [info@deafnessforum.org.au](mailto:info@deafnessforum.org.au)  
Website: [www.deafnessforum.org.au](http://www.deafnessforum.org.au)  
Website: [www.hearingawareness.org.au](http://www.hearingawareness.org.au)

***Mental Health Foundation Australia***

270 Church Street

Richmond VIC 3121  
Ph: 03 9427 0407  
Fax: 03 9427 1294  
Email: [admin@mhfa.org.au](mailto:admin@mhfa.org.au)  
Website: [www.mhfa.org.au](http://www.mhfa.org.au)

***National Council on Intellectual Disability***

PO Box 771  
Mawson ACT 2607  
Ph: 02 6296 4400  
Fax: 02 6296 4488  
Email: [ncid@dice.org.au](mailto:ncid@dice.org.au)  
Website: [www.dice.org.au](http://www.dice.org.au)

***National Ethnic Disability Alliance***

PO Box 381  
Harris Park NSW 2150  
Ph: 02 9687 8933  
Fax: 02 9635 5355  
TTY: 02 9687 6325  
Website: [www.neda.org.au](http://www.neda.org.au)

***Physical Disability Council of Australia Ltd***

PO Box 77  
Northgate QLD 4013  
Ph: 07 3267 1057  
Fax: 07 3267 1733  
Email: [pdca@pdca.org.au](mailto:pdca@pdca.org.au)  
Website: [www.pdca.org.au](http://www.pdca.org.au)

***SANE Australia***

PO Box 226  
South Melbourne VIC 3205  
Ph: 03 9682 5933  
Fax: 03 9682 5944  
Freecall: 1800 18 SANE  
Email: [info@sane.org](mailto:info@sane.org)  
Email: [helpline@sane.org](mailto:helpline@sane.org)  
Website: [www.sane.org](http://www.sane.org)

***SAI Global***

Standards Australia publications distributor.  
Ph: 131 242  
Fax: 1300 65 49 49  
Email: [sales@sai-global.com](mailto:sales@sai-global.com)  
Website: [www.saiglobal.com](http://www.saiglobal.com)

***Standards Australia***

Standards Australia develops standards and codes for building access.

Standards Australia Limited

286 Sussex Street

Sydney NSW 2000

GPO Box 476

Sydney NSW 2001

Ph: 02 8206 6000

Email: [mail@standards.org.au](mailto:mail@standards.org.au)

Website: [www.standards.org.au](http://www.standards.org.au)

***Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA)***

PO Box 605

Rosny Park TAS 7018

Ph: 03 6244 8288

Fax: 03 6244 8255

Email: [wwda@ozemail.com.au](mailto:wwda@ozemail.com.au)

Website: [www.wwda.org.au](http://www.wwda.org.au)

**SECTION 6 – DOCUMENT DETAILS**

**POLICY OWNER**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Access, Equity, Support, Disability and Special Needs Policy</b>
Endorsed by:	Director ACHW
Approved by:	Head of Compliance
Date Approved:	10.07.2017
Implementation Owner	Head of Quality Assurance
Maintenance Owner	Head of Quality Assurance
Review Date	15.01.2021

**CHANGE HISTORY**

Version	Approval date	Approved by	Approved by	Change
V1.0	10.07.2017	Head of Compliance	Director ACHW	Initial document review after purchase of MHMHE
V2.0		Approved by Academic Board on 10.03.2020		
V3.0		Approved by AB on 18.01.21		Further details added on support to be provided to students from ATSI background