

Policy and Procedure:

Access and Equity

Objective:

The Australian Institute of Fitness ('AIF') supports the concept and principles of access and equity, and is committed to providing students and prospective students ('Newbies') with a working and learning environment which values diversity and respects differences, and an atmosphere that is safe, healthy, positive, supportive and free from all forms of discrimination.

Effective Date:

1 September 2021

Definitions:

Bullying is any unwelcome and offensive behaviour that intimidates, humiliates and/or undermines a person or group. Bullying involves a persistent pattern of behaviour over a period of time and may include verbal abuse, physical assault, unjustified criticism, sarcasm, insults, spreading false or malicious rumours, isolating or ignoring a person, putting people under unnecessary pressure and sabotaging someone's work or their ability to complete their work. Bullying may or may not be related to any characteristic or attribute protected by law, *Fair Work Act 2009*.

Discrimination is where a person treats or proposes to treat, a person with an attribute less favourably than another person without the attribute is or would be treated under the same circumstances. Examples include but are not limited to discrimination by age, disability, employment, nationality, religion, gender and sexual orientation.

Harassment is any unwelcome and uninvited comment or action that results in a person being intimidated, offended, humiliated or embarrassed.

Student means an enrolled learner that has agreed to use the services provided by AIF.

Sexual Harassment is unwelcome or uninvited comments, attention or other behaviour of a sexual nature which makes an individual feel embarrassed, uncomfortable, intimidated, upset, frightened, anxious, humiliated or offended. Sexual harassment can be verbal, physical, written or visual. It is not associated with mutual attraction or friendship.

Vilification is a public act of inciting, encouraging or urging others to physically harm, hate, have serious contempt for, or severely ridicule a person, or group of people because they (or they are believed to) belong to a specific minority group.

Policy:

AIF will treat all students and prospective students fairly, by ensuring that inclusivity is incorporated into AIF's culture. AIF recognises that there may be individual differences and students with particular needs. These needs are

acknowledged, respected and valued. At all times, AIF staff will treat fairly and consistently:

- all applicants seeking to enrol with AIF
- all applicants/students seeking a review or reconsideration of a decision made by AIF
- any applicant/student or stakeholder who uses AIF's complaints or appeals process.

Responsibilities and Accountabilities:

This version of the policy and procedure and any amendments to related documents, have been authorised by AIF's Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The Head of Training, as delegated by the CEO, is responsible for ensuring this policy and procedure is implemented at all times across AIF and ensuring that all staff are fully trained in its operation.

AIF's Compliance Coordinator is also responsible for ensuring this policy and procedure and related documents are maintained and up to date through an annual revision, as well as through any ongoing quality activities including audits and feedback.

In accordance with the AIF Code of Conduct, any breach of this policy is dealt with seriously and may result in disciplinary action including termination of employment, depending on the severity of the breach.

Where Team Members consider that significant departures from the principles of this policy have occurred, they are obligated to report it immediately to their Line Manager or iExec Team Member. Failure to do so constitutes a breach of this policy and AIF Code of Conduct.

Procedure:

The processes for the selection and admission of students is governed by the following overarching principles:

- access and equity
- fairness
- consistency
- transparency
- timeliness
- merit.

AIF promotes, encourages and values equity and diversity in all aspects of its operations. AIF ensures services offered are provided in a fair and equitable manner to all, free from bias. The following principles and processes are implemented to achieve a working and learning environment that is free from harassment and discrimination:

- It is the right of all staff and students to work and study in an environment free of any form of harassment and discrimination
- All reports of harassment and discrimination will be treated seriously, in an unbiased, respectful and sensitive manner. Any form of harassment and discrimination is considered unacceptable behaviour and will not be tolerated

- When AIF management is informed of any event involving harassment or discrimination, it is their responsibility to take immediate and appropriate action to address it
- In dealing with all complaints and appeals, the rights of all individuals involved will be respected and confidentiality will be maintained
- It is the intention of management that a process of discussion, cooperation and conciliation will resolve all grievances, complaints and appeals. The aim is to achieve an acceptable outcome for the involved parties while minimising any potential damage to the organisation
- Victimisation is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. No person making a complaint or appeal or assisting in the investigation of a complaint or appeal will be victimised
- Harassment or discrimination should not be confused with legitimate comment and advice (including constructive feedback) given appropriately by AIF management or its trainers and assessors or any other AIF staff member and those with a grievance will be supported to understand the spirit in which the comments were made
- Staff, students and other stakeholders cannot make any frivolous or malicious complaints. All persons are expected to participate in AIF's complaint and appeals resolution process in confidence that the procedures are designed to ensure fair resolution.

AIF ensures:

- All training and assessment policies and procedures incorporate access and equity principles
- 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
- All applications and enrolments into AIF training courses are conducted at all times in an ethical and responsible manner, ensuring fairness and compliance with Equal Opportunity legislation, *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- All students have equitable access to AIF information, training and assessment resources, quality facilities, material and equipment, support services and staff, training and assessment staff, assessment opportunities and training opportunities
- Staff training and information is offered, including informally through staff and team meetings on a regular basis and against a structured and approved AIF team program.

Student Selection

Student selection processes are fair, equitable and consistent with the training package requirements.

Prospective students seeking to enrol in funded courses with AIF, regardless of their background, circumstances or eligibility for funding will be assessed for entry to study through the same published entry requirements and through the same selection process.

Entry requirements for courses offered by AIF are:

- Meeting any pre-requisite qualification or demonstration of relevant work experience as per the training package or other specific course acceptance criteria
- Meeting any age requirements that may be in place (see table below)
- Applying in the prescribed manner
- Supplying accurate personal and previous qualification information
- Attendance at an interview with a member of the AIF Careers Team to determine suitability and appropriateness of the preferred course
- Agreeing to abide by the AIF's policies, procedures and code of conduct
- Paying the applicable course fee.

Age Table

Age	Admission
Under 16	No Admission
16 Years old	SIS30321 Certificate III in Fitness only
17 Years old	SIS30321 Certificate III and SIS40221 Certificate IV in Fitness Only
18 Years old and over	All courses

With the exception of Massage related courses, the above table is a guide only. Where a Newbie can demonstrate aptitude for a Diploma level enrolment (such as through demonstrated prior knowledge or experience or successful completion of AIF's LLN Questionnaire), then consideration may be given to allow admission. Approval is granted after review and assessment by the General Manager, Training (or delegate).

Admission into both the HLT42021 Certificate IV in Massage Therapy Practice and the HLT52021 Diploma in Remedial Massage is restricted to Newbies who are 18 years of age or older.

Enrolment applications are made during the course of the interview. The interview provides all relevant information about the course to the Newbie and ensures that they meet the entry requirements listed above.

Regardless of a student's particular needs, they are required to have the ability to fulfil the core requirements and satisfactorily complete competencies/learning outcomes within all courses to attain the relevant award. However, it is recognised that reasonable adjustment and flexibility in arrangements may need to be implemented. Such arrangements may be negotiated with the Master Coach of their respective program but only where the student has demonstrated appropriate readiness and suitability to undertake their preferred course.

Where a prospective student is identified as not meeting the entry requirements, they are advised of an appropriate pathway, which may enable their selection,

such as pre-training or workplace experience or to undertake a foundation skills or alternative training course with an alternative RTO.

Acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the Land

AIF is committed to upholding Section 19 of the Charter of Human Rights whereby Aboriginal people are acknowledged as holding distinct rights, including the right to enjoy their identity and culture.

To create a sense of identity and belonging as well as demonstrate its full commitment, AIF has in place a range of strategies including:

- Culturally appropriate symbols at each campus through its welcoming plaques at Reception
- Showing AIF's acknowledgment video as part of all orientation programs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNIRxrSyMVU&t=33s>

Disability or Impairment

AIF provides support services and equal access to opportunities for students with a disability, in accordance with the provisions of the *Disability Discrimination Act (1992)* (in line with AIF's Reasonable Adjustment policy and procedure).

AIF respects a student's right to privacy and confidentiality in relation to their disability or impairment (in line with AIF's Privacy policy and procedure).

Reasonable Adjustments

AIF provides equitable access to all required educational and support services, so that no student is disadvantaged regardless of their mode of study or location. In assessing whether an adjustment to the course of the course or program in which the student is enrolled, or proposes to be enrolled, is reasonable, AIF is entitled to maintain the academic requirements of the course or program, and other requirements or components that are inherent in or essential to its nature (refer to AIF's Reasonable Adjustment policy and procedure).

Accepting Different Circumstances

Fairness is considered in the context of the relevant circumstances and there may be situations in which the fair treatment of a student may result in students in different circumstances being treated differently.

AIF will ensure that, in its own reasonable view, selection procedures are fair and transparent and are based on merit. It is the responsibility of the General Manager - Training to ensure that each applicant's circumstances are considered, and where they are fully satisfied that the applicant would have a reasonable prospect of successfully completing the course, despite the fact that one or more of the standard selection criteria have not been fully satisfied, they may accept selection of the student at their discretion.

Therefore, while being guided by standard selection criteria, each application will be assessed on a case by case basis. AIF's General Manager - Training will consider all cases which require case by case assessment. The circumstances and final decision will be documented on the student's file.

Applicant or Student Right to Appeal or Lodge a Complaint

Should an applicant or student be dissatisfied with the outcome of any decision where they believe that they have been unfairly treated, AIF will advise of its Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure and encourage the applicant/student to lodge an appeal.

Should a student believe that they have been treated disrespectfully, including harassed or bullied, AIF will advise of its Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure and encourage the applicant/student to lodge an appeal.

Study Environment Free of any Harassment and Discrimination

Under Australian law it is a requirement of every workplace to ensure it provides an environment free from all forms of harassment and discrimination, including victimisation and bullying. In doing so, all staff and students are treated fairly and have the opportunity to feel safe, valued and respected.

AIF inbound students agree to behave in accordance with the AIF code of conduct, with a copy made available as part of the enrolment process, and to which all enrolling students must sign a declaration acknowledging receipt, understanding of and their commitment to following all the requirements and at all times..

Staff's employment contracts also clearly outline adherence to AIF's staff code of conduct requirements, also specified in the Team Handbook.

Zero Tolerance

AIF has a zero level of tolerance to the following behaviours:

- Discrimination
- Harassment
- Bullying
- Sexual harassment
- Vilification.

AIF has a duty to prevent and address all forms of discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation and vilification. Appropriate action will immediately be actioned in the event that any form of discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation and/or vilification takes place through referral to AIF's Head of Compliance and Training for their attention. There is an organisational commitment that the issue will be treated seriously and will be investigated, including any behaviour (overt or covert) from any of its staff, other students or stakeholders.

All matters of discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation and/ or vilification are treated with strict confidentiality, impartiality and without recrimination to the person raising the issue.

Where a matter is brought to AIF's attention and after investigation, disciplinary action from a formal warning through to possible student/staff expulsion will be acted upon. This is in line with the procedure outlined in managing breaches of AIF's code of conduct and managed by the General Manager - Training (refer to AIF's Academic Misconduct policy and procedure).

NSW Smart and Skilled Program - Additional Requirements:

In line with this Policy and Procedure, AIF ensures that it provides for all applicants all reasonable opportunity to enrol and undertake learning opportunities and outcomes in an environment free from discrimination and harassment. AIF will never discriminate between applicants when accepting enrolment for approved Smart and Skilled qualifications and subsidised places.

Through both its LLN and Other Learner Needs Policy and Procedure and its Student Support and Progression Policy and Procedure, AIF articulates how it makes all reasonable efforts to support the additional needs of students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with a disability as well as individuals who are long term unemployed. These Policies and Procedures also outline how AIF identifies additional need for support on an individual Student basis as well as how the strategies are put in place and monitored to enable success/or adjustment of these interventions.

VET Student Loans (VSL) - Additional Requirements:**Open and Available Information to All**

AIF is committed to making all reasonable efforts to ensure Students are aware of their responsibilities, obligations, and rights concerning their VSL and that they understand what they are agreeing to. AIF ensures that all students who are eligible for funding under the VSL Program are advised of this at the time of application for entry through the 'Success Planning Session' with an AIF designated Career Guru. Applicants will neither be advantaged or disadvantaged by their eligibility for any loan scheme.

AIF has open, fair and transparent procedures for making on merit decisions about the selection of Students, which are based on the clearly defined entry requirements that Students are selected on, for example, previous industry experience both paid and voluntary or an individual can be assessed on a case by case basis. This includes students who are, or would be, entitled to VSL assistance.

AIF has in place fair, easily understandable policies and procedures relating to every aspect of the student experience, including but not limited to course enrolment, loan applications and fees and refunds, with specific detail about the application of VSL rules (refer to AIF's Policy and Procedure Master List). All AIF policies and procedures are reviewed at least on an annual basis and/or through any audit set against AIF's internal audit schedule (refer to AIF's Commitment to Quality policy and procedure)

Fair and Equal Treatment of All Students

Make all reasonable efforts to tailor communications to meet the needs of students who are vulnerable or require special assistance, demonstrated through this Policy and Procedure and AIF's related policies and procedures, including its Student Support and Progression policy and procedure.

Through its Student Support and Progression policy and procedure, AIF outlines how it provides accurate information about the resources and support services that are available and will be provided to assist with those needs for all Students, including those with a VSL supported place.

VET in Schools (VETiS) Additional Requirements:

Nil

Publication: This policy and procedure is available through publication on the website, www.fitness.edu.au and in summary form within the Student Handbook.

Related documents: Code of Conduct
Student Handbook
Team Handbook

Associated Policies and Procedures: Marketing policy and procedure
Application and Enrolment policy and procedure
Complaints and Appeals policy and procedure
LLN and Other Learner Needs policy and procedure
Student Support and Progression policy and procedure
Duty of Care policy and procedure (inc Child Safety)
Quality Training and Assessment policy and procedure
Commitment to Meeting all Legislative and Regulatory Requirements policy and procedure
Commitment to Quality policy and procedure
Academic Misconduct policy and procedure

Amendments:

Version	Date	Descriptor
3	30 August 2021	Expands on AIF's commitment and underpinning principles which support access and equity practices.
3.2	24 March 2023	Updated to reflect AIF Business Structure

Authorised by: **Title:** Head of Training
Date Authorised: 324 March 2023