

DIVERSITY AND EQUITY POLICY

1. Overview

This policy sets out Astra Institute of Higher Education's ("the Institute") commitment to diversity and equity in all its dealings with individuals. This commitment also reflects the intent of Standard 2.2 of the Threshold Standards (2021).¹

Diversity is about the quality and practise of recognising, understanding, and valuing individual differences, attributes, and characteristics. Equity means making sure that people are treated fairly and have equal access to services.

To achieve this commitment the Institute will provide an inclusive and supportive environment in which all individuals are:

- i. treated with respect and dignity;
- ii. treated fairly with regards to all our procedures;
- iii. encouraged and have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

2. Responsibility

Australian anti-discrimination legislation identifies several protected attributes on the basis of which direct or indirect discrimination is prohibited by Australian federal, state, or territory law. These include and are not limited to:

- i. age
- ii. disability
- iii. employment status
- iv. gender identity and expression
- v. marital and relationship status
- vi. parental or carer status
- vii. physical attributes
- viii. political beliefs or activity
- ix. pregnancy
- x. race
- xi. religious belief or activity
- xii. sexual orientation

¹ Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
<<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2021L00488>>.

- xiii. personal relations with an individual(s) identified by reference to any of the above attributes.

All of the Institute's stakeholders have a responsibility to apply the principles of diversity and equity in policies, practices and behaviours. Furthermore, the Institute has a responsibility to provide guidance and training on diversity and equity to both students and staff.

In summary the Institute will make sure that:

- i. policies, practices and behaviours are fair for everybody;
- ii. staff treat everyone fairly and are appropriately trained on what they need to do;
- iii. practices and procedures do not disadvantage anybody and are reviewed regularly for fairness.

3. Putting the policy into practice

The Institute will put this policy into practice through embedding the principles of diversity and equity into relevant policies and procedures as follows:

3.1 Student & staff conduct

Related documents:

- i. *Student Code of Conduct*
- ii. *Staff Induction*

Through these documents the Institute will encourage staff and students to:

- i. treat others with respect at all times, and promote an environment free of all kinds of bullying and harassment;
- ii. actively discourage discriminatory behaviours or practices; and
- iii. participate in training and learning opportunities that would enable them to adopt best practice.

3.2 Student selection and admissions

Related document:

- i. *Student Selection and Admissions Policy and Procedure*

Through this policy the Institute promotes a fair, open and transparent procedure for the recruitment of students.

This policy also provides for special consideration in relation to the recruitment and admission of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

3.3 Student assessment and progression

Related documents:

- i. Student Assessment Policy and Procedure*
- ii. Student Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure*

Through these policies the Institute promotes fair and transparent procedures for student assessment, progression and attainment of awards.

These policies also provide for special consideration for the assessment and progression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

3.4 Student grievances and appeals

Related document:

- i. Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure*

Through this policy the Institute ensures that the views of each complainant and respondent are respected and that any party to a grievance is not discriminated against nor victimised.

3.5 The learning environment

Related documents:

- i. Teaching and Learning Plan*
- ii. Quality Assurance Framework [section 6.2 - Statistical Data]*

The Institute will ensure that approaches to teaching and learning are designed to accommodate student diversity, including the under-representation and/or disadvantage experienced by identified groups, and create equivalent opportunities for academic success regardless of students' backgrounds.

Data will be collected about participation, progress, and completion by identified student subgroups, analysed, monitored and the findings will be used to inform admission policies and improvement of teaching, learning and support strategies for those subgroups.

3.6 Staff recruitment

Related document:

- i. *Staff Recruitment, Induction, Professional Development, Appraisal and Promotion Policy and Procedure*

Through this policy the Institute:

- i. promotes a fair, open and transparent procedure for the recruitment of staff; and
- ii. provides fair and accessible opportunities for professional development and promotion of staff.

3.7 Policy and communications generally

When developing or reviewing policies and procedures the Institute will:

- i. ensure that any new or updated policies and procedures are analysed for any adverse impact they might have on diversity and equity, and take any necessary action to mitigate this; and
- ii. promote the use of inclusive language and avoid the use of words or phrases which are discriminatory or exclusive in all publications and correspondence.

4. Publication

To publicise and raise awareness of the Institute's Diversity and Equity Policy this document will be published on the Institute's website: www.astra.edu.au/policies so that it is available to all individuals.

5. Related documents

- Quality Assurance Framework
- Staff Recruitment, Induction, Professional Development, Appraisal and Promotion Policy and Procedure
- Staff Induction
- Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures
- Student Assessment Policy and Procedure
- Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure
- Student Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure
- Student Selection and Admissions Policy and Procedure
- Teaching and Learning Plan

6. Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Executive Management Committee	6 September 2021	Document creation
1.1	Executive Management Committee	20 September 2021	Administrative updates
1.2	CEO	3 March 2023	Administrative updates

Document owner: CEO

Listed: Public document