

Policy Name	ACCESS AND EQUITY POLICY - STUDENTS
Policy Number	G001_PO (Governance)
Purpose	This policy outlines the commitment by Whitehouse Institute of Design, Australia (Whitehouse) to ensure that the structures and practices of the Institute uphold the principles of access and equity.
Scope	This policy applies to all students of Whitehouse across all campuses.
Policy Statement	Whitehouse as a dual-sector provider (VET and Higher Education), values fairness and ensures that: • Its information and services in relation to VET and higher education and learning and teaching are developed and delivered fairly to those who are eligible to receive them; and that, • Students enrolled in Whitehouse programs participate and benefit equally. • Promote diversity and equity, and is inclusive of students from specific equity groups, such as: - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people - people from lower socio-economic backgrounds - people with disability - people from remote, rural or isolated areas - people who are the first in their family to attend a university or other higher educational institution - people from non-English speaking backgrounds - persons from an LGBTQIA background. This student policy and its procedure provide a framework and a process to ensure that Whitehouse's practices are inclusive, non-discriminatory, reflect the ethics and values of Whitehouse, and comply with the diversity and equity principles of relevant legislation. This policy identifies the relevant legislation and a summary of Whitehouse's obligations as it relates to each one. Whitehouse is aware that anti-discrimination laws operate at a Federal and State level and that the Australian Human Rights Commission has statutory responsibilities under Federal legislation. Whitehouse also recognises that Commonwealth laws and the State Territory laws generally cover the same grounds and areas of discrimination. There are some 'gaps' in the protection that is offered between different States and Territories and at the Commonwealth level. In addition, there are circumstances where only the Commonwealth law would apply or where only the State law would apply. Whitehouse complies with Commonwealth and State legislation including and not limited to that which pertains to different forms of discrimination, human rights, equal opportunity and privacy.

Obligations of Whitehouse:

- **Australian Higher Education Support Act 2013** (Supported by Higher Education Provider Guidelines)
Subdivision 19-D—The fairness requirements: A higher education provider must treat fairly:
 - all of its students; and
 - all of the persons seeking to enroll with the provider.
- [National Code of Practice, 2018](#)
 - Part A, Standard 1 Promoting Australia’s international education industry
 - Part B, Standard 1 Marketing information and practices; Standard 6 Overseas student support services.

Whitehouse will comply with these Acts and relevant regulations.

1. Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESF)

<https://www.teqsa.gov.au/how-we-regulate/higher-education-standards-framework-2021>

Whitehouse will comply with relevant legislation included in this policy and follow the HESF guidelines and provide students with fair access to:

- a) Student participation and attainment
- b) Learning environment
- c) Teaching
- d) Research and Research Training (not applicable to Whitehouse)
- e) Institutional Quality Assurance
- f) Governance and Accountability
- g) Representation, Information and Information Management

2 Australian Standards Quality Agency (ASQA)

<https://www.asqa.gov.au/rtos/2025-standards-rtos>

2.1 Information: Standard 2.1 Outcome Standard 2.1 (1) *“VET students have access to clear and accurate information concerning the organisation, the relevant training product, and students are made aware of any changes that may affect them”*

2.2 Diversity and Equity: Standard 2.5 Outcome Standard (1) *“The learning environment promotes and supports the diversity of VET students”*

2.3 Whitehouse will comply with ASQA’s relevant RTO Standards, 2025 and the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator’s (Outcome Standards for RTOs) Instrument, 2025 <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2025L00354/asmade/text>

3 State/territory legislation

3.1 NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (as amended 2007)

3.1 Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (as amended 28 April 2010)

3.3 Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (current as of April 2024)

Also, refer Whitehouse’s *Bullying Harassment and Discrimination*, and *Sexual Assault Sexual Harassment Policies and Procedures*.

Under these Acts it is unlawful for Whitehouse to discriminate against any of the following:

- age
- gender identity
- impairment
- industrial activity
- employment activity
- lawful sexual activity
- marital status
- parental status or status as a carer
- physical features
- political belief or activity
- pregnancy
- breastfeeding
- race
- religious belief or activity
- sex
- sexual orientation
- personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes

It is unlawful for Whitehouse to discriminate against a person on the basis:

- that the person has or at any time had any of the attributes outlined above, whether he or she had it at the time of the discrimination
- of a characteristic that a person with an attribute, as outline above, generally has
- of a characteristic that is generally imputed to a person with an attribute, as outlined above
- that a person is presumed to have an attribute, as outlined above, or to have had it at any time.

4 Commonwealth Government Legislation

4.1 Age Discrimination Act 2004 (as amended 2010)

An Act relating to discrimination on the ground of age.

Under this Act it is unlawful for Whitehouse to discriminate against someone on the ground of age in respect of the following (except for provisions as allowed in the Act):

- employment and related matters
- education
- access to premises
- provision of goods, services and facilities
- provision of accommodation
- disposal of land
- administration of Commonwealth laws and programs

- requests for information on which age discrimination might be based.

4.2 Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) (as amended 2009)

An Act relating to discrimination on the ground of disability. Section 22 details the specific requirements for educational providers.

It is unlawful for Whitehouse to discriminate against a person on the ground of the person's disability or the disability of any of the other person's associates by:

- developing curricula or training courses having content that will either exclude the person from participating or subject the person to any other detriment; or
- accrediting curricula or training courses and learning materials that have such content
- refusing or failing to accept the person's application for admission, or in the terms or conditions on which it is prepared to admit the person as a student
- denying or limiting student's access to any benefit provided by Whitehouse while they are studying, or by expelling them
- denying the student support services or subjecting them to any other detriment.

Whitehouse complies with the requirements of the act, with the exception where:

- the requirements impose unjustifiable hardship on the Institute
<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/quick-guide/12105>
- the student cannot meet the course completion requirements, even with reasonable adjustments.

4.2 National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

- The NDIS operates under the key principle that individuals with a disability have an equal right of access to services.
- The NDIS does not replace the obligations of mainstream services, including educational services or reasonable adjustment, so Whitehouse is obligated to support students with disabilities, as specified in relevant legislation.

5 ESOS Act 2000 (as amended 2008)

An Act to regulate education services for overseas students and for related purposes.

The provision of education services to overseas students studying in Australia on student visas is regulated through both Commonwealth and State law. It is administered through a cooperative regulatory model between the Australian Government and State and Territory Governments.

There are four pieces of law which make up the ESOS legislative framework:

- education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 as amended in 2005
- education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Regulations 2001
- the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (National Code) 2007 and
- education Services for Overseas Students (Registration Charges) Act 1997.

As a provider on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS), the Institute is required to comply with the Code's requirements and meet minimum standards.

The National Code defines and details providers' responsibilities in the following areas to maintain their registration on CRICOS. Provision of the following information is required:

- details of the provider, including legal entity name, ABN, trading name etc
- course duration
- work-based training
- mode and place of study
- arrangement with other providers
- inspection of premises
- maximum number of students.

The standards for registered providers set out the obligations on registered providers in delivering education and training to overseas students. The 15 Standards detail the specific requirements registered providers must meet to comply with their obligations: These include provision of information on marketing:

- student engagement before enrolment
- formalisation of enrolment
- education agents
- younger students
- student support services
- transfer between providers
- complaints and appeals
- completion within expected duration
- monitoring course progress
- monitoring attendance
- course credit
- deferring, suspending or cancelling student enrolment
- staff capability, education resources and premises
- changes to registered providers' ownership or management.

Relevant Legislation

- Australian Standards Quality Agency (ASQA) RTO Standards, 2025
<https://www.asqa.gov.au/rto/2025-standards-rto>
(Standards 2.1, and 2.5)
- Australian Standards Quality Agency (ASQA) RTO Standards, Act 2025 :
<https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2025L00354/asmade/text>
- TEQSA Threshold Standards (2021): <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/how-we-regulate/higher-education-standards-framework-2021>
(Standards 2.2.1 Diversity and Equity; 2.3.3 Wellbeing and Safety; 3.3.3 and 3.3.4 Learning Materials and Educational Support)
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act 2011):
<https://www.teqsa.gov.au/how-we-regulate/acts-and-standards/teqsa-act>

	• Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS) Commonwealth Anti-Discrimination Legislation • Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 • Age Discrimination Act 2004 • Disability Discrimination Act 1992 https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005 • Racial Discrimination Act 1975 • Sex Discrimination Act 1984 • Privacy Act (Cwlth) 1988 State Anti-Discrimination Legislation • Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW) • State Records Act 1998 (NSW) • Crimes Act 1900 (NSW) • NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 • Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (current as of April 2024) • Queensland Privacy legislation • Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Victoria) • Information Privacy Act 2000 (Victoria)
Key Related Documents	• Selection and Admission Policy and Procedure • Course Development and Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedure • Privacy Policy and Procedure • Code of Conduct (Students) • Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy and Procedure • Wellbeing and Support Services Policy and Procedure • Supporting Students Policy and Procedure • Assessment Policy and Procedure • Student Grievances and Complaints Resolution Non-Academic Policy and Procedure • Student Grievances and Complaints Resolution Academic Policy and Procedure • Student Course Handbooks • Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training: https://www.adcet.edu.au/
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer

Approval Authority/ Authorities	Board of Governors
Date Approved	20/12/2023
Date of Commencement	21/12/2023
Date for Review	21/12/2026
Documents superseded by this Procedure	Access and Equity Policy and Procedure Dec 2012 Admission Policy and Procedure (06/02/2013)
Amendment History	08/2025 - Updated various sections and clauses vis Diversity and Equity, in response to Recommendation 21.a of the 2024 External Governance Review of Whitehouse, and relevant legislation. - Added a new Section #2 vis the VET regulator, ASQA and reference to relevant 2025 RTO Standards on Diversity and Equity (Standards 2.1 and 2.5), and reference to the revised 2021 TEQSA Standards (Part A, Section 2.2 and Guidance Note on Diversity and Equity, and related standards). - Checked and updated URL links and Key Related Documents 12/2023 Edited and updated all section text. Re-organised sequence of text and formatting. Checked and updated URL links and Key Related Documents 08/2019 Removed material related to 'staff' for a separate policy Updated Policy statement related to Disability and the NDIS Checked and updated URL links and Key Related Documents 05/2018 Re-branding – Header & Footer only 12/2016 Policy and Procedures separated. Updated formatting and minor amendments Changed formatting Updated hyperlinks 12/2016 Document Minor adjustments and inclusions to policy wording 09/2015

Signed and dated
for Whitehouse
Institute Pty Ltd



Leanne Whitehouse

20 12 2023

Signature

Name

Date

INFORMATION FOR PUBLISHING ON POLICY REGISTER

Category	Governance
Stakeholders	Board of Governors Academic Board Executive Management Academic Staff Administration Staff Applicants to Programs Students