



ACCESS AND EQUITY
POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Document ID	Access and Equity Policy and Procedures
Related Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student Selection and Enrolment Policy and Procedures - Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures; - Course Progress and Intervention Policy and Procedures; - Completion within Expected Duration Policy and Procedures; - Student Code of Conduct; - Behaviour and Misconduct Policy and Procedures; - International Student Fees and Refunds Policy and Procedures; - Student Support Services Policy and Procedures; - Deferral, Suspension and Cancellation Policy and Procedures; - Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) Policy and Procedures; - Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Policy and Procedures; - Critical Incidents Management Policy and Procedures; - Privacy and Data Protection Policy and Procedures.
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ACCESS AND EQUITY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

I Purpose

- 1.1** Hallmark Institute ('The Institute') is committed to providing all learners with equal opportunities to pursue their training and development goals.
- 1.2** The purpose of this Policy and Procedures is to provide a frame of reference in maintaining training services that reflect fair and reasonable opportunity for all clients, regardless of their diversity; allowing everyone to freely participate in the learning environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and vilification.
- 1.3** The policy and procedures ensure compliance with:
 - a) The relevant standards of National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 ('the National Code 2018');
 - b) The relevant standards of the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015.

2 Scope

This policy and its related procedures apply to:

- 2.1** All enrolled students of the Institute;
- 2.2** All staff members and stakeholders of the Institute;
- 2.3** It should be noted that the procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other policies or under statute or any other law;
- 2.4** This document should be read in conjunction with other related policies.

3 Policy Statement

- 3.1** The Institute acknowledges that Students come to our programs with a wealth of personal knowledge and life experiences. It provides an entry point to further vocational education by offering accredited courses and culturally appropriate teaching resources that are relevant to student needs and circumstances. Students will be encouraged to be involved in their own feedback and the decision-making processes regarding realistic goals and progress.
- 3.2** The Institute promotes, encourages and values equity and diversity. The Institute will ensure services offered are provided in a fair and equitable manner and free from bias.
- 3.3** The Institute is committed to providing flexible learning and assessment options, allowing clients alternatives which recognise the diversity of their individual needs and circumstances aiding them in achieving their learning goals.
- 3.4** The Institute will ensure:
 - a) All training and assessment policies and procedures incorporate access and equity principles;
 - b) All learners 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;

- c) 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
- d) All learners have equitable access to training resources, facilities, equipment, support services, information, training and assessment personnel, materials, assessment opportunities, training opportunities.

4 General Principles of Access and Equity

- 4.1** The Institute abides by access and equity principles.
- 4.2** The Institute will respect a client's right to privacy, confidentiality and will be sensitive to client needs.
- 4.3** Students will have every opportunity to maximise their training and learning experience.
- 4.4** Where there is perceived difficulty in achieving learning goals, discussion with the student will be encouraged.
- 4.5** Information will be provided about possible alternative pathways to achieve goals, options/choices to overcome barriers and ways to access a supportive network. This information will vary according to the individual needs of the student.
- 4.6** The Institute provides equal opportunity for all learners and is responsive to the individual needs of clients 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.
- 4.7** At enrolment, students will be asked to identify personal needs or circumstances that may exist and for which they may require additional support as per Student Selection and Enrolment Policy and Procedures.
- 4.8** The Institute will ensure that all staff, employees, and contractors have access to the information and support needed to prevent discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying and violence, victimisation, and vilification and how to deal with it appropriately if it occurs.
- 4.9** The Institute seeks to create a learning environment where all students are respected and can develop to their full potential.
- 4.10** All learners are given fair and reasonable opportunity to attend and complete training.
- 4.11** 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.
- 4.12** 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.
- 4.13** All perceived deficiencies in the Access and Equity Policy are to be documented, assessed, and reviewed by the Institute Principal.
- 4.14** The Institute will demonstrate its commitment by:
 - a) Selecting students according to a fair and non-discriminatory process;
 - b) Making its training 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.
- 4.15** Assessment is confidential and focuses on the learner's strengths.

- 4.16 Assessment is flexible, uses a variety of tools and includes suggestions and negotiation about future goals and development.
- 4.17 Open and honest communication enables growth in self-esteem and self-concept.

5 Policy

- 5.1 The Institute acknowledges its legal obligations under State and Federal equal opportunity laws that include:

- a) The Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Cth)
- b) Racial Discrimination Act 1975;
- c) The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- d) The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- e) Disability Standards for Education 2005
- f) Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Act 1986;
- g) The Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic)
- h) The Privacy Act 2000(Cth)

- 5.2 Fair treatment and equal benefits and opportunities

- a) The Institute has open, fair, and transparent procedures that are based on set criteria for making decisions about the selection of learners who seek to enrol in a course at the Institute and the treatment of learners undertaking a course of study at the Institute.
- b) The Institute will ensure that adjustments are made for learners, and potential learners, who have disabilities or other reasons as to why they may have difficulties with some aspects of the training and assessment. For example, people with linguistic and/or numeracy problems will be provided with additional support to overcome these difficulties. The Academic Manager may decide to allow such learners who may have difficulties in submitting assessments on time, additional time to complete the course.
- c) The Institute will also make adjustments, where possible, for international students who, although they have the appropriate IELTS score, have difficulty in preparing assessments and understanding some aspects of the course. Any adjustments will, however, have to be consistent with the requirements of the Course Progress and Intervention Policy and Procedures.
- d) The Institute will take steps to encourage people from culturally and linguistically diverse background, people with diverse academic, work and life experiences to enrol in a course at the Institute.
- e) The Institute ensures that all relevant information for students to make informed decisions is available on the website, in the student handbook and the course brochures.
- f) The Institute has the following policies and procedures in place in order to treat all current and prospective students in a fair and equitable manner with all academic and non - academic matters and provide equal benefits and opportunities:
 - I. Access and Equity Policy and Procedures;
 - II. Behaviour and Misconduct Policy and Procedures;
 - III. Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures;
 - IV. Course Completion Within Expected Duration Policy and Procedures;
 - V. Course Progress and Intervention Policy and Procedures;
 - VI. Critical Incidents Management Policy and Procedures;
 - VII. Deferral, Suspension and Cancellation Policy and Procedures;
 - VIII. Disability and Special Needs Policy and Procedures;
 - IX. International Education Agent Management and Engagement Policy and Procedures;

- X. International Student Fees and Refund Policy and Procedures;
- XI. Student Induction and Orientation Policy and Procedures;
- XII. Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) Policy and Procedures;
- XIII. Marketing and Advertising Policy and Procedures;
- XIV. Student Plagiarism Policy and Procedures;
- XV. Privacy and Data Protection Policy and Procedures;
- XVI. Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Policy and Procedures;
- XVII. Student Selection and Enrolment Policy and Procedures;
- XVIII. International Student Transfer Between Registered Providers Policy and Procedures;
- XIX. Student Code of Conduct;
- XX. Student Support Services Policy and Procedures;

6 Procedure

6.1 Staff Responsibilities

- a) All employees are required to ensure all clients receive fair and equitable services within their scope of responsibility;
- b) All staff hold the responsibility to maintain a work and learning environment free from discrimination and harassment;
- c) Management is responsible for ensuring adherence to the Institute's policies and procedures that support this goal.

6.2 Client selection

- a) Students will not be denied access to services offered by the Institute where they are deemed eligible for the service.
- b) Students will be individually assessed on their eligibility for the service being provided and selection will comply with relevant equal opportunity legislation and the documented selection criteria for the service.
- c) Whilst practising an open access policy, it is recognised that student eligibility for services may be influenced by:
 - I. Course pre - requisites, and
 - II. Availability of services.
- d) Where limited places are available, client selection is on a first in, first served basis.

6.3 Equal Opportunity

- a) The Institute is an equal opportunity RTO and does not discriminate against or favour target groups, as defined in the above in either recruiting or training.

6.4 Special Needs/Considerations

- a) Clients intending to enrol for training with the Institute are requested prior to enrolment to advise the Institute if they have any disability, physical or other impairment which may adversely affect their ability to successfully undertake training and assessment.

- b) Clients are encouraged to discuss with the Institute 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.
- c) The Institute, in collaboration with the learner, will assess the potential for the learner to successfully complete the training which may include flexible training and assessment options to optimise the ease and benefit of the learner's study. However, no compromise to the integrity of the assessment against competency will be allowed.
- d) Learners 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.

6.5 Language, Literacy and Numeracy

- a) Each Training Package sets a minimum requirement in language, literacy, and numeracy skills of learners, with which the Institute must abide.
- b) The Institute makes appropriate concessions for language, literacy, and numeracy challenges of learners where these concessions do not compromise the requirements of the relevant Training Package and the integrity, equity, and fairness of assessment.
- c) Where a learner 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 of the Training Package, the Institute will provide appropriate advice and support to the learner regarding further learning options.
- d) At times, further language or literacy development or remedial assistance may be required to be completed prior to the continuation or completion of the learner's course of study.

6.6 Harassment

- a) Harassment will not be tolerated at the Institute.
- b) 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.
- c) Serious cases of harassment may constitute a criminal offence.

7 Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The Institute's Responsibilities

- a) The Institute 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.
- b) The Institute will:
 - I. Maintain policies and procedures for equal opportunities for all staff, contractors and learners;
 - II. Disseminate policies and procedures to staff, contractors and learners;
 - III. Examine all policies and practices, as they affect staff, contractors and learners to ensure the elimination of discrimination and harassment;
 - IV. Ensure that there is no discrimination against any individual learner or group of learners 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 learners;
- VII. Establish and maintain mechanisms to deal with complaints.

7.2 Principal's Responsibilities

- a) The Institute Principal and Heads of Departments are responsible for learner equity.
- b) The Principal will not condone nor engage in discriminatory/harassing behaviour.
- c) The Principal is responsible for ensuring that all staff are aware of this policy, and its related procedures, and that complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the terms of the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures.
- d) The Principal and Heads of Departments are to ensure staff act according to this policy and its related procedures and all learners are made aware of their rights and responsibilities pursuant to this policy and its related procedures.

7.3 Staff, Contractors, and Learners Responsibilities

The Institute's staff, contractors and learners have the responsibility to:

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

8 Confidentiality

- 8.1** All information relating to Access and Equity will be treated as confidential and in accordance with the Institute's Privacy and Data Protection Policy and Procedure.
- 8.2** The Institute will maintain confidentiality to ensure that:
 - a) No information will be released without the agreement of the individual or group involved.

9 Appeals

- 9.1 If the student is not satisfied with any decision relating to Access and Equity, the student has the right to appeal the decision.
- 9.2 An appeal must be lodged in writing to the Institute Principal within 20 working days from the date of the decision was taken.
- 9.3 The appeal should include the following details:
 - a) the student's full name (family/surname and first name), and contact details,
 - b) the nature of the decision or matter being appealed,
 - c) the basis for the appeal,
 - d) details of the specific outcome sought by the student, and
 - e) copies of all relevant documents.

10 Further Information and Assistance

- 10.1 Students should seek clarification on any aspects of this Policy and its related Procedures prior to accepting an offer of admission made by the Institute.
- 10.2 Student assistance is available by contacting Institute Reception or Student Support.
- 10.3 Students may make an appointment with the Student Support Manager for assistance with their request relating to this Policy and its related Procedures.
- 10.4 Contact details for the Institute are outlined as follows:

Phone: +61 2 9066 6903

Address: Suite 603, Level 6,
2 Meredith Street,
BANKSTOWN NSW 2200

Email: admin@hallmarkinstitute.edu.au

NOTE: For definitions and explanation of the terms used in this policy and procedures, please refer to the document titled '**Glossary of Terms.**'