

# Equity and Diversity Policy

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| Version number   | 1                          |
| Approved by      | Corporate Governance Board |
| Date of approval | 13/11/2017                 |

## Purpose

Sydney Institute of Higher Education (SI) recognises the importance of fostering a learning environment in which diversity is actively encouraged and supported through all aspects of program delivery. SI will demonstrate a commitment to diversity through admissions, teaching and learning, marketing, and workforce management processes, in addition to ensuring that measures are in place to provide all students with equivalent opportunities to succeed.

The *Equity and Diversity Policy* articulates SI's commitment to accommodating student diversity, with particular attention on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. It outlines a framework of policies and procedures that are in place at SI to support students from under-represented and/or disadvantaged groups during their studies. In addition, it establishes a set of guidelines for expected conduct by anyone at SI, designed to ensure that the learning and teaching space at SI remains inclusive and welcoming to all.

## Scope

This policy applies to all staff, students, and stakeholders, including anyone who is on SI premises, attending a SI event, or representing SI in any way, including through work-integrated learning or online activities.

## Principles

SI is dedicated to implementing policies, practices and approaches to the provision of higher education course offerings that are designed to accommodate student diversity and facilitate students to achieve equivalent academic outcomes regardless of their backgrounds.

SI must facilitate access to all processes including admissions, teaching and learning, and student support, with a focus on ensuring that those from underrepresented and/or disadvantaged groups have full access, including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Students who are part or full-time carers
- Students with disabilities
- Students experiencing mental or physical health concerns
- Mature-age students

- Students who are single parents
- International students
- Students for whom English is a second language

SI acknowledges its legal obligations under the following Australian legislation and regulatory frameworks:

- *Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) 2015*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Commonwealth [Cth])*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)*
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)*
- *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth)*
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)*

SI takes a zero-tolerance approach to harassment or discrimination against any person. This includes online behaviour.

The accessibility, integrity, and comprehensiveness of the information provided to current and potential students are integral to ensuring that diversity is supported and encouraged.

## Procedures

### *Admissions process*

SI will accommodate student diversity in the admissions process by:

- Providing alternative entry pathways
- Providing comprehensive information about SI programs to all prospective students, including information regarding:
  - Program requirements
  - SI Facilities
  - Teaching and learning resources
  - Support services
  - Accessibility arrangements
- Supporting the recruitment and admission of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- SI will ensure that all applicants have the capacity to fulfil the requirements of the program.

See *Admissions Policy* and *Information For Students Policy* for more information.

### *Learning and Teaching*

SI will accommodate student diversity through learning and teaching practices including:

- Establishing transition support measures for commencing students, with a focus on supporting under-represented and disadvantaged groups within the student cohort

- Taking student diversity into account while determining program requirements.
- Engaging in the ongoing development of learning materials and support services to ensure that the diverse needs of the student cohort are addressed
- Establishing an ongoing academic skills support program for all students
- Ensuring that student progress is monitored and support is provided where necessary
- Engaging a diverse range of industry experts and academics for academic matters
- Integrating knowledge and case studies from outside Australia into the program
- Ensuring that learning and teaching materials align with SI standards of inclusivity and respect for diversity
- Ensuring that where offensive material must be used, academic staff discuss with students the offensive aspects of the material
- Ensuring that teaching and learning materials and methods are sensitive towards and show respect for the cultures and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

See *Learning and Teaching Policy* and *Students at Risk and Unsatisfactory Progress Policy* for more information.

### ***Accessibility***

SI will implement measures to ensure that all students have full and comprehensive access to all aspects of program delivery and associated activities at SI, including online activities.

SI will design all aspects of program delivery and associated activities with accessibility as a priority. Reasonable adjustments will be granted to students as required.

Accessibility is embedded in various policies, including the *Disability Support Policy*, *IT Resources and Online Conduct Policy*, *Library and Information Resources Policy*, and *Information For Students Policy*.

### ***Student support***

SI will accommodate student diversity through the following student support measures:

- Transition support programs including orientation
- Academic support services, including academic intervention programs and consultation hours with academic staff
- Non-academic support services, including counselling

Student administration staff available to provide referrals and support during business hours.

### ***Student information and participation***

SI will accommodate student diversity by providing a range of opportunities for students to participate in decision-making and understand their own rights to be respected. SI will ensure that:

- All students have full access to SI policies and procedures
- All students have full access to the *Student Code of Conduct*
- All students are fully informed of their rights and responsibilities
- All students are fully informed of and have full access to, the student complaints and an appeals mechanism

- Students are given opportunities to participate in and contribute to SI decision-making.

See the *Academic Language and Learning Support Policy*, *Students at Risk and Unsatisfactory Progress Policy*, *Student Welfare Policy*, *Information For Students Policy*, *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy*, and *Student Feedback Policy*.

### ***Workforce considerations***

SI will accommodate and encourage diversity in the workplace by:

- Implementing merit-based and unbiased hiring practices
- Establishing flexible work arrangements
- Implementing a comprehensive workplace anti-bullying policy
- Ensuring that all staff undergo periodic professional development activities that cover sensitivity and required behaviour.

See the *Workforce Policy*, *Staff Wellbeing Policy*, and the *Academic Staff Supervision and Performance Review Policy*.

### ***Inclusive Language***

SI written documents will use inclusive language. This includes any kind of correspondence such as marketing materials, program and unit materials, and updates to students and stakeholders. In addition, staff are expected to use inclusive language in their speech while they are representing SI.

The SI guide for inclusive language, which staff will be trained to implement at all times, is detailed below. “Audience” in this context refers to a group of people or an individual who is listening to or reading content from SI or an SI representative.

In all cases, SI and representatives of provider will refrain from making assumptions about the audience or making unnecessary reference to perceived differences.

See below for more specific guidelines that may be applied in general areas.

### ***Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples***

Do:

- When referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, use the terms “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders,” “Aboriginal people(s),” and/or “Indigenous Australians” as appropriate.
- Use the name of the specific group and nation where relevant.
- Always capitalise the words “Aboriginal” and “Indigenous.”
- In the case that an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander individual requests the use of specific terms that differ from this guide, respect their request.

Do not:

- Do not refer to an individual person as “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.” Torres Strait Islander peoples are culturally and linguistically distinct to Aboriginal peoples.
- Do not make assumptions about where a person lives or what they are interested in based on

their identity as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.

### ***Culture, race, and ethnicity***

**Do:**

- Be specific when referring to other countries and nationalities. E.g. do not refer to “Asia,” instead refer specifically to the relevant countries and nations within Asia.

**Do not:**

- Do not assume the culture, race, and/or ethnicity of the audience

### ***Disability***

**Do:**

- Use phrases that centre the individual, not the disability. E.g. “person with...” or “person who...”
- When referring to disabilities, use accurate language, avoiding euphemisms.
- Refer to accessibility measures as “the accessible [ramp/parking lot/bathroom].”
- In the case that an individual with a disability requests the use of specific terms that differ from this guide, respect their request.

**Do not:**

- Do not use phrases that equate a person with a disability.
- Do not refer to accessibility measures as “disabled [ramp/parking lot/bathroom].” These measures benefit everyone such as people who may be temporarily injured, not only people with disabilities.
- Do not refer to people with disabilities as suffering victims, or heroes or inspirations for carrying out daily tasks.

### ***Gender and sexuality***

**Do:**

- Use the pronouns “they” and “them” instead of “she/he” and “her/him”
- Use “partner” instead of gender-specific terms like “boyfriend /girlfriend/wife/husband”
- Use gender-neutral word where possible. E.g. police officer instead of policeman, Chair instead of Chairman.
- Do not:

**Do not:**

- Describe adult women as “girls” or “ladies”
- Assume the gender or sexuality of the audience
- Assume the relationship or marital status of the audience.

### ***Socio-economic circumstance***

**Do:**

- Remain aware that socio-economic circumstance can restrict the options available to people.

**Do not:**

- Do not use derogatory terms that are based on socio-economic circumstances.

**Data collection**

SI collects data to monitor the participation, progress, and completion rates of students from under-represent and/or disadvantaged groups, with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

This data enables SI to respond to specific needs of priority groups as they arise. Further, it highlights areas in which improvements should be made that will benefit the whole student cohort. This may include implementing improvements to teaching and learning and support strategies.

Data will be collected with the permission of students on enrolment. Students will be informed of their rights to privacy and how their data may be used as outlined in the *Privacy Policy*.

## Policy Implementation and Monitoring

The *Corporate Governance Board* delegates responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of this policy to the [Dean](#) and staff with supervisory and student-facing responsibilities.

## Definitions

**Corporate Governance Board:** the governing body responsible for oversight of all higher education operations, including the ongoing viability of the institution and the quality of its higher education delivery. The *Corporate Governance Board* guides Management and delegates responsibility for academic matters to the Academic Board.

**Discrimination:** negative treatment of an individual or group on the basis of race, sexual orientation, gender, religion, or other factors.

**Diversity:** The differences and similarities among individuals and groups of people.

**Equity:** the creation of opportunities for equal access and success among all students, including those from under-represented and/or disadvantaged groups.

## Review schedule

This policy will be reviewed by the *Corporate Governance Board* every three years.

| Version History |              |                |                 |                   |
|-----------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Version number: | Approved by: | Approval date: | Revision notes: | Next review date: |

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|   |                            |            |  |            |

### ▲ Related Documents

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| <a href="#">↗ Academic Governance Policy</a>                               |
| <a href="#">↗ Academic Language and Learning Support Policy</a>            |
| <a href="#">↗ Academic Staff Supervision and Performance Review Policy</a> |
| <a href="#">↗ Admissions Policy</a>  |
| <a href="#">↗ Anti-Discrimination Policy</a>                               |
| <a href="#">↗ Benchmarking Policy</a>                                      |
| <a href="#">↗ Corporate Governance Policy</a>                              |
| <a href="#">↗ Disability Support Policy</a>                                |
| <a href="#">↗ Workforce Policy</a>   |
| <a href="#">↗ Information For Students Policy</a>                          |
| <a href="#">↗ IT Resources and Online Conduct Policy</a>                   |
| <a href="#">↗ Learning and Teaching Policy</a>                             |
| <a href="#">↗ Library and Information Resources Policy</a>                 |
| <a href="#">↗ Student Complaints and Appeals Policy</a>                    |
| <a href="#">↗ Student Feedback Policy</a>                                  |
| <a href="#">↗ Student Welfare Policy</a>                                   |
| <a href="#">↗ Students at Risk and Unsatisfactory Progress Policy</a>      |
| <a href="#">↗ Staff Wellbeing Policy</a>                                   |
| <a href="#">↗ Privacy Policy</a>   |

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