

Access & Equity Policy and Associated Procedures

Policy Area:	Governance / Student Support and Inclusion
Standards Reference:	Standards for RTOs 2025 – Outcome Standards 1.1, 1.2, 1.6, 1.7, 2.1 & 2.2
Responsibility:	CEO, RTO Manager, Trainers and Assessors, Student Support Officer, Administrative Staff
Classification:	Internal Governance Policy – Student Access, Equity, Inclusion and Support

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Access & Equity Policy and Associated Procedures is to affirm the commitment of the Institute of International Studies (IOIS) to ensuring that **all individuals have fair, inclusive, and equitable access** to its education and training programs, services, and facilities.

This policy seeks to **identify and eliminate barriers** that may restrict participation in vocational education and training and to ensure that every learner, regardless of personal, cultural, social, educational, or physical background, is provided with a reasonable opportunity to engage, progress, and achieve successful learning outcomes.

IOIS promotes **diversity, inclusion, and social justice** by embedding access and equity principles into enrolment practices, training and assessment delivery, student support services, and organisational decision-making. Learner needs are considered holistically, and reasonable adjustments and targeted support are provided where required, without compromising the integrity of training products or assessment outcomes.

This policy aligns with the **Standards for RTOs 2025**, specifically **Standards 2.1, 2.3, and 3.1**, which require RTOs to support the diverse needs of learners, ensure staff capability, and maintain effective systems that promote fairness, integrity, and learner protection across all operations.

Please advise the **next section** you would like to develop (e.g. **Scope, Definitions, Policy Statements, or Procedures**), and I will continue accordingly.

2. SCOPE

This Access & Equity Policy and Associated Procedures apply to all aspects of the Institute of International Studies (IOIS) operations and service delivery.

- The policy applies to **all IOIS students**, including prospective, current, and past learners, ensuring equitable treatment and access throughout the learner lifecycle from enquiry and enrolment through to completion and post-study engagement.
- It applies to **all IOIS staff**, including trainers, assessors, academic and administrative staff, contractors, and any **third-party representatives** engaged by IOIS to deliver or support education and training services on its behalf. All personnel are required to uphold the principles of access and equity in their roles and interactions with learners.
- This policy applies across all IOIS campuses and online learning environments, ensuring that access and equity principles are applied consistently for all learners regardless of location or delivery mode.

- The policy covers **all IOIS services**, including enrolment and admissions, training delivery, assessment practices, student support services, complaints and appeals, and administrative and governance functions, ensuring fairness and inclusivity across all operational areas.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

IOIS is committed to providing a **safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment** that is free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and exclusion. All individuals engaging with IOIS are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness.

IOIS ensures that **no individual is disadvantaged** on the basis of gender, age, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, cultural or linguistic background, marital status, political affiliation, or socio-economic background. Decisions relating to access, participation, progression, and completion are based on individual capability, readiness, and merit, supported by appropriate and reasonable adjustments where required.

Access and equity principles are **embedded across all IOIS operations**, including marketing and recruitment practices, enrolment processes, training delivery, assessment methods, student support services, and administrative decision-making. Information is provided clearly and accessibly to support informed participation by all learners.

IOIS strives to:

- **Ensure equality of opportunity** for all learners to access and succeed in education and training.
- **Provide flexible learning and assessment options**, where reasonable, to accommodate diverse learner needs and circumstances.
- **Identify, minimise, and remove barriers** that may hinder learner participation, engagement, or achievement.
- **Promote inclusive, respectful, and ethical behaviours** among staff, students, and third parties.
- **Uphold compliance** with relevant Australian legislation and the **Standards for RTOs 2025**, ensuring fairness, integrity, and learner protection across all services.

4. PRINCIPLES

- **Equitable Access:** All applicants and students are provided with equal opportunity to participate in training and assessment services. Entry, participation, and progression decisions are based on suitability and readiness, not on personal or social characteristics unrelated to the requirements of the training product. IOIS will **not impose conditions that are discriminatory** or that create unnecessary or unreasonable barriers to access, participation, or completion. IOIS will not impose conditions that are discriminatory or create unnecessary barriers to access.
- **Fair Treatment:** Every student is treated with **fairness, courtesy, and dignity** in all interactions with IOIS staff and representatives. Complaints or appeals relating to unfair treatment, discrimination, or inequitable practices are addressed promptly, objectively, and transparently in accordance with the Complaints and Appeals Policy.
- **Inclusive Practices:** IOIS adopts **inclusive teaching, learning, and assessment practices** that recognise and accommodate diverse learner needs. This includes needs related to disability, language, literacy, numeracy, digital capability, cultural background, or prior educational experience.

- **Reasonable Adjustment:** IOIS provides **reasonable adjustments** to learning and assessment activities to support students with identified needs. Adjustments are implemented in a way that supports participation and success while **maintaining the integrity of the qualification, unit requirements, and competency outcomes**.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** IOIS acknowledges and respects **Australia's cultural diversity** and promotes cultural awareness, mutual respect, and sensitivity across all training and assessment environments. Cultural differences are recognised and considered in communication, delivery approaches, and learner support.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Feedback from students, staff, and stakeholders is actively sought and analysed to enhance access and equity strategies. Improvement actions are recorded and monitored to ensure that access and equity practices remain **effective, relevant, and responsive** to learner needs over time.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibilities
CEO	The CEO is responsible for ensuring organisation-wide compliance with relevant anti-discrimination and equity legislation and for endorsing and approving access and equity initiatives. The CEO provides strategic oversight to ensure that equitable practices are embedded in IOIS governance, resourcing, and continuous improvement activities.
Academic / RTO Manager	The Academic (RTO) Manager oversees the implementation of this policy, monitors compliance with access and equity requirements, and ensures that staff and third parties uphold inclusive practices. This includes reviewing access and equity risks, ensuring reasonable adjustments are appropriately implemented, and addressing any identified non-compliance.
Trainers and Assessors	Trainers and assessors are responsible for applying inclusive teaching, learning, and assessment methods in line with this policy. They identify learners who may require additional support or reasonable adjustments and work collaboratively with Student Support Officers to implement appropriate strategies while maintaining assessment integrity.
Student Support Officers	Student Support Officers facilitate reasonable adjustments, provide academic and wellbeing support, and coordinate internal or external referrals for counselling, disability services, or other specialised support where required. They ensure that support arrangements are documented, reviewed, and communicated appropriately.
Students	Students are responsible for participating in training and assessment activities respectfully, communicating their individual needs in a timely manner, and adhering to the IOIS Code of Conduct, which promotes inclusivity, respect, and equitable treatment for all members of the learning community.

6. PROCEDURES

6.1 Recruitment and Enrolment

IOIS ensures that recruitment and enrolment practices promote equitable access and informed participation in education and training.

- All **marketing and promotional materials** are developed and reviewed to ensure they are free from bias, misleading statements, or discriminatory language and clearly reflect IOIS's commitment to **equity, diversity, and inclusion**.
- **Enrolment procedures** are transparent and consistent, with clearly published entry requirements that relate solely to the **competencies, skills, and readiness required for the qualification or unit of competency**. Selection decisions are based on suitability and preparedness for training, not on personal characteristics unrelated to the training product.
- IOIS does **not discriminate** against applicants on the basis of gender, ethnicity, age, disability, cultural background, or other protected attributes during recruitment or enrolment. Where individual needs are identified, reasonable adjustments and support options are considered to facilitate participation.
- All applicants are provided with **clear pre-enrolment information**, including:
 - Available **student support services**.
 - **LLND and digital literacy assessment** requirements and processes.
 - The availability of **reasonable adjustments** and how to request them.

This information enables applicants to make informed decisions and supports early identification of learner needs.

6.2 LLND Assessment and Support

- IOIS uses **Language, Literacy, Numeracy and Digital (LLND) assessments** as a diagnostic and support-planning tool to promote learner success and equitable participation.
- During the enrolment process, **each student completes an LLND assessment** appropriate to the requirements of the qualification. The assessment is conducted in a fair and accessible manner and is aligned to course benchmarks as documented in the Training and Assessment Strategy.
- LLND assessment outcomes are used to **identify individual support needs**, inform learning and assessment strategies, and plan reasonable adjustments. LLND results are **not used to exclude applicants**, except where minimum entry requirements mandated by the training product or licensing outcomes cannot reasonably be met, even with support.
- Where LLND support needs are identified, IOIS implements **targeted support strategies**, which may include:
 - Additional tutoring or **one-on-one academic assistance**.
 - Modified, scaffolded, or **simplified learning materials**, where appropriate.
 - **Digital literacy workshops** or guided support in the use of learning technologies.
 - **Additional time** for assessment completion or alternative assessment methods, where reasonable.

- All LLND assessment results, support plans, and progress notes are **securely stored in the Student Management System (SMS)** and managed in accordance with IOIS privacy and recordkeeping requirements.

6.3 Reasonable Adjustment Process

- IOIS applies a structured and confidential process to implement reasonable adjustments that support equitable participation while maintaining the integrity of training and assessment outcomes.
- A student may **voluntarily disclose** a disability, medical condition, learning difficulty, or other circumstance requiring adjustment **during enrolment or at any stage of their studies**. Disclosure is not mandatory; however, adjustments can only be implemented where needs are identified.
- Upon disclosure, the **trainer, assessor, or Student Support Officer** engages in a **confidential discussion** with the student to explore suitable adjustment options, taking into account the student's needs, course requirements, and assessment conditions.
- Where an adjustment is agreed, a **Reasonable Adjustment Plan** is developed. The plan clearly outlines:
 - The student's identified needs.
 - The agreed adjustments or modifications.
 - Roles and responsibilities of the student and IOIS staff.
 - Review timeframes.
- The Reasonable Adjustment Plan is **signed by both the student and the trainer/assessor** (or Student Support Officer, where applicable) and is **stored securely in the student's file** within the Student Management System, in accordance with privacy requirements.
- Adjustments are **reviewed regularly** to ensure they remain appropriate, effective, and aligned with course progression and assessment requirements. Adjustments may be modified or discontinued where circumstances change.

Examples of reasonable adjustments may include, but are not limited to:

- Providing learning and assessment materials in **larger font or alternative formats**, such as audio or electronic versions.
- Allowing **oral assessment** in place of written assessment, where competency outcomes permit.
- Supporting the use of **assistive technologies**, such as screen readers or speech-to-text software.
- Allowing **additional breaks** or adjusted session lengths for students with medical or health-related conditions.

6.4 Preventing Discrimination and Harassment

- IOIS maintains a **zero-tolerance approach** to all forms of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and discrimination. A safe, respectful, and inclusive environment is fundamental to effective learning and engagement.
- All **staff, students, contractors, and third parties** are expected to conduct themselves professionally and respectfully at all times and to comply with the requirements of the **IOIS Code of Conduct**. Behaviour that undermines dignity, equity, or inclusion is not acceptable in any learning, work, or online environment associated with IOIS.

- Any complaint relating to **discrimination, harassment, or unfair treatment** is managed in accordance with the **IOIS Complaints and Appeals Policy**, ensuring confidentiality, procedural fairness, and timely resolution.
- Where breaches of this policy or the Code of Conduct are substantiated, IOIS may take **disciplinary action** proportionate to the severity of the behaviour. Actions may include formal warnings, mandatory training, suspension, or dismissal/withdrawal, in line with relevant IOIS policies and procedures.

6.5 Learning and Assessment Practices

- IOIS ensures that learning and assessment practices are **inclusive, flexible, and responsive** to the diverse needs of its learner cohort.
- Trainers and assessors are required to **design, contextualise, and deliver learning and assessment materials** that accommodate a range of learning styles, abilities, and cultural contexts. Delivery approaches are adapted, where reasonable, to support effective engagement and understanding for all learners.
- Assessment methods are selected and implemented to allow **appropriate flexibility**, while still meeting unit requirements and the principles of assessment. Where suitable, assessment approaches may include a combination of:
 - Oral questioning or interviews.
 - Practical demonstrations or simulations.
 - Written responses or projects.
 - Observations in structured or simulated environments.
- All **feedback provided to students** is constructive, timely, respectful, and culturally appropriate. Feedback is focused on supporting learning, clarifying expectations, and guiding improvement without bias or judgement.
- Learning and assessment materials are reviewed to ensure they **avoid stereotypes, discriminatory language, or culturally insensitive content**. Materials are updated as required to reflect contemporary practice, inclusivity, and respect for cultural diversity.

6.6 Access to Facilities and Technology

- IOIS ensures that all students have **equitable access to appropriate learning environments and technology** required to participate effectively in training and assessment activities, regardless of delivery mode or location.
- IOIS provides or facilitates access to:
 - **Computer and internet connectivity** suitable for online and blended learning activities.
 - An **accessible Learning Management System (LMS)** that is user-friendly, supports diverse learning needs, and provides guidance and technical support to users.
 - **Digital accessibility tools**, where applicable, to support learners with additional needs, including compatibility with assistive technologies.

- Where students experience **technological or digital capability barriers**, IOIS provides targeted support to enable participation. This support may include structured **orientation sessions**, guidance on LMS navigation, and **digital literacy support or training** to build confidence and competence in using required systems and tools.
- Access to facilities and technology is reviewed regularly to ensure resources remain fit for purpose, inclusive, and aligned with learner needs and delivery requirements.

6.7 Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

- IOIS maintains an active approach to monitoring and improving access and equity practices to ensure they remain effective, compliant, and responsive to learner needs.
- The **RTO Manager** conducts **annual reviews of access and equity practices** as part of IOIS's Self-Assurance and Continuous Improvement Framework. These reviews assess the effectiveness of policies, procedures, and support strategies in promoting equitable access and participation.
- Data is collected and analysed from multiple sources, including **student feedback**, **LLND assessment outcomes**, **reasonable adjustment records**, and **complaints or appeals** related to access and equity. This data is used to identify trends, gaps, and areas for improvement.
- All identified improvement actions, findings, and outcomes are **documented in the Continuous Improvement Register (CIR)**. Responsibilities and timelines are assigned, and actions are monitored to completion to ensure that access and equity strategies continue to support inclusive and fair learning environments.

7. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

- Any individual who believes they have been treated unfairly or discriminated against has the right to lodge a complaint.
- Complaints are handled under the **IOIS Complaints and Appeals Policy**, ensuring confidentiality and non-retaliation.
- Students dissatisfied with an outcome may request a review or appeal as outlined in the same policy.

8. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Code of Conduct Policy
- Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Student Support Policy
- LLND Assessment Procedure
- Reasonable Adjustment Plan and Record Form
- Continuous Improvement Register
- Staffing Policy and Associated Procedures

9. LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This policy complies with the following legislation and standards:

- Standards for RTOs 2025
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)

Document Version Control

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1.0	New document	July 2025