



Equal Opportunity, Fair Treatment, Access and Equity Policy and Procedure

RTO Code 21837

Partners in Training Australia (RTO Code 21837) fosters positive relationships in an environment of equal opportunity, free of harassment, bullying and unlawful discrimination. We aim to ensure that you have equitable access to the benefits of training and assessment irrespective of your circumstances, eligibility, entitlement, gender, age, race, religion, culture, linguistic background, marital status, geographic location, socioeconomic background, disability, sexual preference or political conviction.

The following sections of this Equal Opportunity, Fair Treatment, Access and Equity Policy and Procedure provides guidance for equal opportunity, fair treatment, access and equity, which applies to all students and potential students of Partners in Training.

Partners in Training reserves the right to amend this Equal Opportunity, Fair Treatment, Access and Equity Policy and Procedure at any time and will notify you by posting an updated version of this policy on our website.

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VERSION CONTROL

Date	Summary of amendments
March 2014	Original version
May 2016	Branding updates; adjustments to wording with same effect
February 2017	Update to governing bodies
December 2018	Inclusion of VET Student Loans information
October 2019	General Content Review
Jan 2022	General Content Review

1. Principles

The broad principles of equal opportunity, fair treatment, access and equity are “social justice” and “diversity”. “Social justice” refers to equity, access, participation and basic rights. Diversity refers to social, cultural and linguistic diversity.

1. Equity – that action is taken to redress disadvantage caused by unequal access to education.
2. Access – that access to conditions and benefits of education for all students is fair and equitable.
3. Participation – that students (individuals and/or groups) are directly involved in decisions affecting their study.
4. Basic rights – the basic rights of equal access to education and freedom from discrimination are protected.
5. Diversity – that the social, cultural and linguistic diversity of our learning community is recognised, valued and respected.

2. Application

All Partners in Training employees must treat all current and potential students in the same manner and apply the same Partners in Training policies and procedures, regardless of a student’s or potential student’s background, circumstances, eligibility and/or entitlement.

This includes:

- Applying the same policies and procedures to all students and potential students.
- Applying fairness in the treatment of all students and potential students in line with Partners in Training’s policies and procedures. This does not require that all students and potential students are treated the same because students have varying circumstances which may result in them being treated differently, provided the treatment applies the same Partners in Training policies and procedures.
- Creating a learning environment which is free from harassment and discrimination, where all people, regardless of position or status, are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect.
- Implementing training and awareness raising strategies to ensure that all employees are aware of students’ rights and responsibilities; and students are aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- Encouraging the reporting of behaviour which breaches equal opportunity and, where such behaviour occurs, providing a fair, effective and timely resolution process based on the principles of confidentiality and natural justice.
- Promoting and modelling appropriate standards of conduct at all times.
- Facilitating individuals to access appropriate training services, and in the event that Partners in Training is not able to enrol individuals in its courses, facilitate access to appropriate alternatives.

3. Higher Education Support Act 2003 and Higher Education Support (VET) Guideline 2015

Partners in Training treat all current and potential students in a fair and equitable manner, regardless of their entitlement. This requirement of “fairness” is a basic underlying principle of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* and Higher Education Support (VET) Guideline 2015.

In this section, the following definitions apply:

- “the Act” means the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.
- “student” means all persons enrolled in a unit of study.

“potential student” means all persons seeking to enrol in a VET unit of study

The fairness requirements include:

1. Fair treatment – Schedule 1A, clause 18 of the Act and section 5 of the Higher Education Support (VET) Guideline 2015

Partners in Training has open, fair and transparent procedures that are based on merit for making decisions about students undertaking, and potential students applying to undertake, training with Partners in Training.

The same policies and procedures are applied to all students and potential students regardless of their background, circumstances, eligibility for funding and/or entitlement. However, the application of fair treatment does not require that all students or potential students are treated the same. Fairness is considered in the context of all the relevant circumstances. There will be situations in which the fair treatment of students or potential students may result in students in varying circumstances being treated differently, provided the treatment of the student or potential student applies the same Partners in Training policies and procedures.

2. Equal benefits and opportunities – Schedule 1A, clause 18 of the Act and section 5 of the Higher Education Support (VET) Guideline 2015

Partners in Training must treat equally and fairly all students enrolled in, and potential students seeking to enrol in, a VET unit of study with Partners in Training.

Partners in Training have open, fair and transparent procedures, based on merit for making decisions about:

- a. The selection of persons (potential students) who seek to enrol with Partners in Training in a VET course of study. Potential students who are seeking enrolment into a VET qualification or unit of study with Partners in Training are assessed through the same pre-enrolment and enrolment procedures /entry to study requirements process regardless of their background, circumstances, eligibility for funding or entitlement.
- b. The treatment of VET students undertaking a VET course of study (students). Students undertaking training with Partners in Training are subject to the same delivery and assessment processes, regardless of their background, circumstances, eligibility for funding or entitlement.

This does not prevent Partners in Training taking into account, in making decisions about students and potential students:

- education disadvantages that a particular student or potential student has experienced; or
- the fact that the student or potential student may be enrolled via a VET restricted access arrangement.

Partners in Training do not apply an income test when making decisions about which potential students are eligible for VET Student Loans.

Partners in Training may provide a particular benefit to a VET student in order for that VET student to receive equal and fair treatment (for example a scholarship). Provision of such a benefit does not amount to a breach of this policy.

3. Student grievance and review procedures, including requirement to appoint review officers – Schedule 1A, clauses 19, 21 and 22 of the Act and section 5 of the Higher Education Support (VET) Guideline 2015

Partners in Training provide student grievance procedures to deal with complaints and appeals against decisions about:

- academic matters; and
- non-academic matters from both Partners in Training's current students and potential students.

Please refer to Partners in Training's Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure available on our website for more information.

4. Tuition assurance – Schedule 1A, clause 20 of the Act

Partners in Training affects the tuition assurance required under the Act as set out in Partners in Training's Student Fees and Charges Policy and Procedure available on our website.

5. Personal information procedures – Schedule 1A, clause 23 of the Act

Partners in Training maintain personal information procedures in accordance with the Act as set out in the Partners in Training Privacy Policy and Procedures available on our website.

4. Complaints and appeals

Partners in Training employees, students and other stakeholders can make a formal complaint in relation to equal opportunity, fair treatment, access and equity to complaints@pta.edu.au.

Please refer to Partners in Training's Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure available on our website for more information.

5. Your feedback

We are committed to providing you with the highest possible quality while you achieve your learning outcomes with Partners in Training Australia. To assist with this, we will frequently ask for your feedback on different aspects of your course, either through surveys or in group discussions.

We appreciate your honest and constructive comments and will ensure your privacy is protected at all times.

You are encouraged to provide feedback anytime to your Trainer/Assessor or Training Coordinator or in writing to quality@pta.edu.au.