P-1.18   ACCESS AND EQUITY POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that ECTARC Training Services (ETS) provides inclusive, equitable, and supportive learning environments that promote student success and wellbeing. This policy outlines ETS's commitment to removing barriers, offering tailored support, and fostering a culture of respect and inclusivity for all students.

Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled at ETS and covers all services provided by ETS employees, or anyone that represents ETS in the delivery of services.

This policy reflects the legislative requirements of the:

- 2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Disability Services Act 1986.

Definitions

Reasonable adjustments include any adjustments for a VET student with a disability made by an NVR registered training organisation in a manner consistent with the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Cth).

Reasonable adjustment refers to any modification made to the learning environment, training delivery or assessment method to ensure students with disability or ongoing ill health can access and participate in training and assessment. This could include, for example:

- Ensuring that course activities are sufficiently flexible.
- Providing additional support where necessary.
- Customising resources, activities or presentation mediums.
- Offering a reasonable substitute within the context of the course where a student cannot participate.

An adjustment is reasonable in relation to a student with a disability if it balances the interests of all parties affected.

Access and equity means ensuring that ETS is responsive to the individual needs of all students including those whose age, gender, cultural or ethnic background, disability, sexuality, language skills, literacy or numeracy level, unemployment, imprisonment or remote location may present a barrier to access, participation and the achievement of suitable outcomes.

Access and Equity principles include:

- Equity for all people through the fair and appropriate allocation of resources,
- Equality of opportunity for all people without discrimination,
- Access for all people to appropriate quality training and assessment services, and
- Increased opportunity for people to participate in training.

Disadvantaged groups include the following groups who traditionally have been under-represented in Vocational Education and Training:

- People with a disability
- Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders
- Women
- People from non-English speaking backgrounds
- People in rural and remote areas, and
- Long term unemployed.

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Cultural safety is about creating an environment that is safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This means there is no challenge or denial of their identity and experience. A culturally safe learning environment has benefits for all students and staff alike. It creates a positive setting where people are respected and feel comfortable being themselves.

Training support services means services and resources to support individual students to meet training product requirements and complete the training product in which they are enrolled.

Deployment

ETS is committed to providing equitable access to education and training, ensuring all students have the support they need to achieve their learning goals. ETS upholds the principles of access and equity, catering to the diverse needs of its students and fostering an inclusive and respectful environment.

ETS ensures students have reasonable access to training support services, teachers, trainers and assessors and other employees to support their progress through the training product.

ETS determines the training support services to be provided to each student and makes these available and informs students about how and when they can access trainers and assessors and other employees.

ETS fosters a learning environment that promotes and supports the diversity students, fostering a safe and inclusive learning environment for students, including a culturally safe learning environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

ETS ensures the wellbeing needs of student cohorts are identified as relevant to the training content, and appropriate wellbeing support services and strategies are identified to support these needs. Students are advised of the actions they can take, the employees they may contact and the wellbeing support services that are available.

ETS's approach to access and equity ensures that all students receive equitable access to education and training, fostering an inclusive, diverse, and supportive learning environment. By proactively addressing barriers that may prevent participation, this strategy ensures that individuals from all backgrounds, including those with disabilities, culturally diverse groups, and individuals facing socio-economic challenges, have the resources and support necessary to succeed. This commitment to inclusivity aligns with best practices in vocational education and training, promoting access, fairness, and tailored assistance for students who require additional support.

ETS acknowledges that student success is influenced by a range of factors, including wellbeing, academic support, and accessibility to services. The integration of targeted support mechanisms - such as study sessions, identifying appropriate counselling services, and technology support ensures that students are provided with structured guidance throughout their learning journey. This approach strengthens student retention, progression, and completion rates, ultimately contributing to a more skilled and capable workforce.

By implementing structured monitoring, evaluation, and feedback mechanisms, ETS assesses the effectiveness of its student support strategies and make data-driven enhancements. This commitment to quality assurance ensures that students receive the highest level of educational and support, reinforcing the organisation's dedication to fostering a learning environment that is inclusive, respectful, and responsive to diverse student needs.

ETS provides equitable access to all required training support services, so that no student is disadvantaged regardless of their mode of study or location. Where there may be limitations regarding access to these resources, ETS provides clear advice in pre-enrolment information so all clients can make an informed choice about which RTO and course of study best meet their needs.

ETS ensure that all employees acquire the knowledge and skills to relate to students without direct or indirect discrimination. All ETS employees are aware of, and know how to use, available ETS or external resources or be able to confidently refer students to appropriate support services.

All ETS employees continue to expand their knowledge or access and equity issues through a structured professional development on a regular basis (at least annually).

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Inclusive Learning

ETS manages a learning environment that promotes and supports the diversity of students including:

- Fostering a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students.
- Fostering a culturally safe learning environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

ETS recognises the need for affirmative measures to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to enrol, participate in and complete training and is about:

- Acknowledging the unique experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia,
- Recognising that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples do not always have the same level of access to VET as non-Indigenous Australians, nor the same positive experiences, and
- Actively addressing unconscious bias, racism and discrimination, and supporting self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

ETS:

- Engages with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and communities to help identify ways they can improve,
- Engages personnel or industry experts from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people communities to deliver or review training and assessment,
- Ensures all employees are culturally competent,
- Reviews learning materials and activities to ensure these are culturally safe and trauma aware.

Inclusive learning recognises that everyone has a right to learn, everyone can learn, but many people do not get fair access to learning opportunities.

Key Inclusive Learning Actions

Understand Differences in the Student Cohort - ETS ensures it understands the vocational aspirations and support needs of students prior to enrolment to ensure they are enrolled in the right level course and have the right mix of supports available to help them succeed. This includes the use of pre-enrolment LLN and Digital Assessments and guidance to students.

Access Skills and Expertise in Addressing Difference - Cultural competence in embedded in ETS employee induction programs and ongoing professional development on cultural competence and inclusive learning is supported.

Listening to the Student - ETS ensures it is collecting the perspectives of students, considering student views in the way courses are organised, and support is provided.

Help Students Choose an appropriate Learning Pathway - ETS provides students with flexible options, advice and guidance on the best pathway towards their vocational outcome and allows a diverse range of students to access the training. All Students are provided with information and guidance on course requirements and outcomes prior to enrolment.

Develop the Core skills of Students - All ETS trainers have the basic knowledge they need to identify and respond to foundation skills needs.

Celebrating Inclusion - ETS engages in opportunities to raise awareness, celebrate & engage with diverse communities and promote inclusion.

Respectful Learning Environment

ETS maintains a learning environment free from discrimination, harassment and vilification.
ETS has zero tolerance for behaviour that demeans, humiliates or intimidates individuals or groups based on:

- Race.
- Religion.
- Ethnicity.

- Cultural background.
- Gender.
- Sexuality.
- Disability.
- Nationality.
- Belief systems.

This includes behaviour directed toward Jewish people including antisemitism, or toward any other religious or cultural group.

Vilification may occur through:

- Verbal behaviour.
- Written communication.
- Online platforms.
- Images or symbols.
- Gestures or intimidation.

Any such behaviour is addressed through disciplinary and complaint processes.
Students must:

- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Avoid discriminatory or derogatory language.
- Respect cultural and religious identity.
- Avoid harassment in person or online.
- Contribute to safe and inclusive learning environments.

Breaches may result in:

- Disciplinary action.
- Removal from learning activities.
- Suspension or cancellation of enrolment.

Students who experience or witness discrimination, harassment or vilification can:

- Report concerns to their TDO, General Manager – Training Services or support personnel.
- Submit a complaint through the formal complaints process.
- Request confidential support through student wellbeing services.
- All reports are investigated promptly and handled sensitively.

ETS provides personnel with professional learning on:

- Discrimination and harassment prevention.
- Racism and religious discrimination.
- Respectful behaviour in learning environments.
- Supporting diverse student cohorts.

Student Support Services

ETS ensures students have access to a range of support services during their course program. ETS:

- Determines the student's support needs during their enrolment, and throughout their studies
- Determines relevant support services, providing access when needed by the student.

ETS ensures students have access to clear and accurate information, including to make informed decisions about the training product and ETS, and are made aware of changes that affect them. This includes the training support services and wellbeing support services that are available to students and how to access them.

ETS reviews prospective students' skills, ensure they have the necessary foundation skills to undertake the intended training.

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ETS ensures students have reasonable access to training support services, trainers and assessors and other staff to support their progress through their course and to address any academic issues. ETS provides adequate and timely technology support through Administration Officer – Student Support, the Administration team and training and Development Officers (TDOs). The terms of this service are communicated to students, so they can understand how issues will be handled if they arise.

Study Support

Students are encouraged to raise any queries and support needs at any stage with the Administration Officer – Student Support or their personal TDO or another available TDO or Administration Officer. ETS's Learner Study Guide provides additional and support.

Reasonable Adjustments

In assessing whether a particular adjustment for a student is reasonable, ETS has regard to all the relevant circumstances and interests, including the following:

- The student's disability,
- The views of the student or the student's associate,
- The effect of the adjustment on the student, including the effect on the student's:
    - Ability to achieve learning outcomes, and
    - Ability to participate in courses or programs, and
    - Independence,
- The effect of the proposed adjustment on anyone else affected, including ETS, employees and other students, and
- The costs and benefits of making the adjustment.

In assessing whether an adjustment to the program in which the student is enrolled, or proposes to be enrolled, is reasonable, ETS is required to maintain the academic integrity and other requirements of the program.

SP-8.16 Reasonable Adjustment Procedure is to be followed.

VERSION CONTROL	DATE RELEASED	NEXT REVIEW	APPROVED BY	AMENDMENT
Version 2	July 2025	July 2026	ECTARC Leadership	Updated to reflect the requirements of Standards for RTOs 2025
Version 3	March 2026	July 2026	ECTARC Leadership	Updated to include Respectful Learning Environment information including vilification and antisemitism information