

Document Name:	Access and Equity Policy	
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Regulatory Requirements:	This policy is informed by the requirements of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Education Standards Framework 2015; and • Disability Standards for Education 2005 	
Scope:	This policy refers to the operations of the organisation across all of its delivery locations.	

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SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

Academy of Information Technology Pty Ltd (AIT) is committed to a policy of fair and equitable access to services for all stakeholders and is committed to providing support to encourage equal educational opportunity. **AIT** will pursue this policy and these principles actively so that they may contribute to the fulfilment of its missions and goals.

This policy applies all AIT students across all of AIT’s delivery locations.

PURPOSE

This Access, Equity and Support Policy ensures fair and equitable access and support to our services.

SCOPE

This policy and procedure applies to all staff and students enrolled with **AIT**.

SECTION 2 – POLICY

PRINCIPLES

The Access, Equity and Support Policy and Procedure is committed to and guided by the principles of:

- Access
- Equity
- Fairness
- Support for disadvantage

POLICY

AIT will strive to meet the needs of individuals and the community as a whole through fair treatment and the integration of access and equity guidelines. Current principles of social justice, including the Disability Standards for Education 2005, will be appropriately addressed in all aspects of its operations. These operational areas include enrolment, participation, curriculum development, training delivery and assessment, student support services, and include elimination of harassment and victimisation.

It is important to note that **AIT's** access equity and support policy applies to all forums, chatrooms and correspondences within the Canvas student platform. Acts of bullying and harassment, criminal activity, and offensive and graphic content will not be tolerated.

We will ensure that equity principles for all people are implemented through the fair and reasonable allocation of resources and the right to equality of opportunity without discrimination. We will endeavour to provide opportunities for under-represented groups to participate in the vocational education and training system. This will be done through such means as the implementation of customer-oriented programs targeting the specific needs of market segments, and ensuring that the opportunities and benefits of Commonwealth assistance are made equally available to all eligible students.

AIT is committed to providing a fair environment for all students, with due consideration to the context of the circumstances applicable to that individual.

We will develop quality support services that enhance individuals' chances to achieve positive outcomes.

SECTION 3 – PROCEDURE

ONGOING ACTIONS

1. Ensure the establishment of non-discriminatory student selection procedures which uphold the principle that all applicants seeking to enrol are treated fairly and equitably and also encourage fair access for members of under-represented groups (such as people with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with a non-English speaking background, Australian South Sea Islanders, people with language, literacy and numeracy difficulties, and older people).
2. Ensure open, fair and transparent procedures for making decisions about the selection of students, which are based on the published clearly-defined entry requirements, and that students are selected on merit, based on those requirements and on an individual case by case basis.
3. Ensure access and equity issues are considered during development of training and assessment

strategies; attention will be given to provision of a mix of appropriate instructional and assessment modes, support provided for students with special needs, and reasonable adjustment will be available.

4. Provide access to staff development to assist staff who deliver training to under-represented groups.
5. Provide access to staff development to assist assessors meet the needs of a diverse range of clients.

ONLINE ETIQUETTE PROTOCOL

Student Guidelines: When communicating within the Canvas online learning system you are expected to follow the same standards of behaviour as you would in a classroom situation and obey the rules of online etiquette:

- Be respectful of your fellow students and **AIT** staff.
- Value the opinions of others. While you should feel free to disagree and present your own point of view you must do so in a manner that does not denigrate the opinions of others.
- Use appropriate language and never use language that could be found offensive.
- At no time attack others personally.
- Do not act in a way that could constitute harassment, bullying or discrimination.
- The use of offensive, violent and graphic content is prohibited.
- Be careful of using CAPITAL LETTERS when posting. The use of CAPS can be interpreted as shouting.
- Use humor or sarcasm very carefully as this can often be misinterpreted.

AIT regards sexual exploitation as a serious offense. Sexual exploitation can include solicitation of sexual material, any sexual content involving minors, threats to share intimate images and offers of sexual services. Where appropriate, **AIT** will refer this content to the relevant authority.

For the safety of our students, the Canvas Student Platform is moderated by **AIT** staff, including the Education and Student Services teams. **AIT** discourages the creation of external forums and sites by students for the purposes of between student academic dialogue. **AIT** is unable to monitor these sites and ensure student safety in these external environments. Where students wish to create additional forums **AIT** Student Services will assist with this process.

If you have any concerns or would like to report something you have viewed in Canvas, please contact Student Services.

IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIAL NEEDS

At the time of enrolment, every student is required to complete an Application for Enrolment, which is a contract between both parties for the delivery of education. Implicit within this contract is the corporate policy to assist learners to attain the best possible outcome from the training service provided.

LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND NUMERACY

Applicants or existing students identified with special needs in regard to language, literacy or numeracy will be provided with assistance to maximise the possibility of a successful outcome to the learning. It should be noted that special needs do not constitute a disability. Without the accompaniment of a disability, each is a disadvantage and is not addressed by the Disability Standards.

The Academic Services Coordinator will consult with each student in private. Discussion will focus on the student's need(s), view of the assistance required, and how best to address the need(s). Possible options could be additional English language classes, special tutoring, and/or outsourcing of specialised assistance.

DISABILITY

Each individual with a disability will have different needs, so it is not possible to implement a set of specialised services which will suit all students with disabilities. Instead the following process recommended within the Disability Standards will be employed:

- Step 1: Consultation with the student – regarding all relevant circumstances and interests, including the student's needs, the disability (if applicable) and views on the assistance required.
- Step 2: Consideration of whether a reasonable adjustment is necessary – would an adjustment be reasonable and to what extent would it achieve the aims?
- Step 3: Identification of a reasonable adjustment if it is necessary – is there any other reasonable adjustment that would be less disruptive and intrusive and no less beneficial for the student?
- Step 4: Making the reasonable adjustment – within a reasonable time according to the provision of relevant information in the student's possession about how they would be affected in relation to training.

This process must be repeated at regular intervals to ensure continuity in meeting the changing needs of the learner.

Further information on working with people with a disability and information on agencies provided support for people with disabilities can be obtained from the following national web site: <http://www.acrod.org.au/>

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT

It is expected that a person with a disability will be able to advise **AIT** in regard to what adjustments are needed to be able to participate in the training and assessment. If necessary, **AIT** will seek advice from government agencies or support organisations to determine what needs to be done to accommodate the requirements of the individual.

The following factors will be considered:

- the nature of the individual's disability.
- the information provided by, or on behalf of, the student about how the disability affects their ability to participate.

- the student's (or associate's) views about the adjustment.
- information provided by the student about their preferred adjustment.
- the effect of the adjustment on anyone else affected.
- the effect of the adjustment on the student, their ability to participate, achieve learning outcomes and operate independently.
- the costs and benefits of making the adjustment.

Reasonable adjustment activities could involve, but not be limited to:

- providing additional lighting.
- providing an adjustable workstation or special seating.
- modifying equipment or providing special adaptive technologies such as voice-activated computer software, special keyboard, large screen monitor or associated aids.
- providing special assistance such as an interpreter for deaf candidates and provision of paper-based materials in advance of face to face sessions.
- adapting the training methodologies, without impacting on the delivery of the essential skills, knowledge and understanding required for the relevant competencies.
- adapting the assessment methodologies, without impacting on the validity of the attainment of the relevant competencies. For example: allowance of extra time, varying question and response modalities (such as use of oral questioning rather than written, and audiotaped or videotaped answers instead of written answers).

The possibilities are considerable and staff members need to think laterally. For example: a learner with a physical impairment may not be able to physically undertake a certain activity, but they may be able to direct someone else to do so. In some cases, this will meet requirements

UNJUSTIFIABLE HARDSHIP

Once an adjustment is considered reasonable in the circumstances, balancing the interests of all parties affected, the next step is to consider whether it would nonetheless impose unjustifiable hardship on the provider.

Where a claim of unjustifiable hardship is made, AIT will take into account all the financial and other resources that are reasonably available for the purpose of making any necessary adjustments for the student, and the impact of those adjustments on their capacity to provide education of high quality to all students while remaining financially viable.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT

There are many sources of support in the employment, training and assessment of a person who has a disability; some of these are listed under the Related External Sources section of this document.

REPORTING

A student or staff member observing or experiencing behaviour, which may constitute a breach of this policy, whether by another staff member or by a student, must notify the Head of Compliance without delay.

SECTION 4 – REFERENCE AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

DEFINITIONS

Word/Term	Definition
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) total or partial loss of the person’s bodily or mental functions; orb) total or partial loss of a part of the body; orc) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; ord) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; ore) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person’s body; orf) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; org) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person’s thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in a disturbed behaviour; andh) includes a disability that presently exists or previously existed but no longer exists, may exist in the future, or is imputed to a person.
Reasonable adjustment	An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with a disability to participate in training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it takes into account the student’s learning needs and balances the interests of all parties affected, including the student, the provider, staff and other students.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document name	Document type	Location
Enrolment Policy & Procedure	Policy document	AIT website
Assessment Policy	Policy document	AIT website

SECTION 5 – GOVERNANCE

RELATED EXTERNAL REFERENCES

Sources of support for employment, training and assessment

There are many sources of support in the employment, training and assessment of a person who has a disability; some of these are listed below.

Association of Competitive Employment (ACE) National Network

ACE represents agencies who deliver open employment services for people who have a disability. Email: info@acenational.org.au

Website: www.acenational.org.au

Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET)

ADECT provides information about inclusive post-secondary education and training teaching, learning and assessment strategies and support services for people who have a disability.

Website: www.adcet.edu.au

Australian Association of the Deaf

Email: aad@aad.org.au

Website:

www.aad.org.au

Australian Federation of Deaf Societies

Ph: 02 8833 3615

TTY: 02 9893 8858

Blind Citizens Australia

Freecall: 1800 033 660

Email: bca@bca.org.au

Website:

www.bca.org.au

Brain Injury Australia

Email: bianational@apex.net.au

Carers Australia

Email: caa@carersaustralia.com.au

Website:

www.carersaustralia.com.au

Commonwealth Disability Services Program Contacts

<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au> or by

telephone: ACT: 02 6274 5206

New South Wales: 02 9263 3818

Northern Territory: 08 8946 3555

Queensland: 07 3360 2800

South Australia: 08 8236 6111

Tasmania: 03 6221 1411

Victoria: 03 9285 8523

Western Australia: 08 9346 5311

Deafness Forum of Australia

The forum coordinates the annual National Hearing Awareness Week, held in the last complete week of August.

Email: info@deafnessforum.org.au

Website: www.deafnessforum.org.au

Website: www.hearingawareness.org.au

Mental Health Foundation

Australia Email:

admin@mhfa.org.au Website:

www.mhfa.org.au

National Council on Intellectual Disability

Email: ncid@dice.org.au

Website:

www.dice.org.au

National Ethnic Disability Alliance

Website: www.neda.org.au

Physical Disability Council of Australia

Email: pdca@pdca.org.au

Website:

www.pdca.org.au

SANE Australia

Freecall: 1800 18 SANE

Email: info@sane.org

Email:

helpline@sane.org

Website: www.sane.org

SAI Global

Standards Australia publications

distributor. Email: sales@sai-global.com

Website: www.saiglobal.com

Standards Australia

Standards Australia develops standards and codes for building access. Email: mail@standards.org.au

Website: www.standards.org.au

Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA)

Email:

wwda@ozemail.com.au

Website: www.wwda.org.au