



Document Name	<b>Access &amp; Equity Policy</b>
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Comment	It is the responsibility of the recipient to identify/control superseded documents

## Introduction

Workright® Australia aims to have fair and equitable teaching practices and to attempt to overcome any barriers to participation in its education programs. We try to do this by:

- Taking reasonable steps to ensure that customers and students with physical disabilities are not disadvantaged in their access to facilities and services
- Ensuring that all staff who are in contact with clients are given cultural awareness training
- Establishing and sponsoring programs that are accessible and available to people in remote locations
- Establishing and sponsoring programs that reflect cultural diversity
- Collecting and analysing data on participation in Workright® Australia programs, and using this data to take action to address inequalities in access to multimedia and online technologies.

The following is a nationally recognised definition for Access and Equity:

“Access and Equity refers to the policies and approaches that ensure that any vocational education and training (VET) is responsive to the diverse needs of all clients. Through the implementation of these policies and approaches, the benefits of participating in vocational education and training are available to everyone on an equitable basis.....”

The two main groups recognised as particularly under-represented in some areas of VET are (1) indigenous peoples and (2) people with a disability. Other groups that may experience particular difficulties include:

- People with few financial resources
- People with low socio-economic status
- People with low literacy and numeracy skills
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Women where they are under-represented
- Mature aged people
- People from rural and remote regions
- Offenders and ex-offenders

At Workright® Australia, we believe that access to relevant, quality, appropriate skill development opportunities is a practical and effective way for Australians to overcome disadvantage. Therefore, we provide products and services that respond to the diverse needs of all training clients, including those from disadvantaged groups as above.

We deliver high quality training that can be characterized as having the following three distinct and interlinking features, which assume even more importance when working with learners who may experience barriers to learning:

1. A LEARNER-CENTRED APPROACH – focusing on the needs and learning styles of learners with the teacher or trainer as facilitator
2. WORKPLACE RELEVANCE – focusing on teachers and trainers with good industry links, knowledgeable about work practices and able to contextualize learning experiences regardless of the context of learning
3. FLEXIBILITY AND INNOVATION IN TRANSLATING TRAINING PACKAGES INTO LEARNING EXPERIENCES – focusing on customized and integrated learning and assessment strategies.

As a Registered Training Organisation or RTO, Workright® Australia complies with all Australian Qualification Training Framework (AQTF) Standards, including those that apply to principles of access and equity for all learners. We also comply with the following Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation:

- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Commonwealth Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act 1986
- Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984.

### **Workright® Australia Equity Policies**

At Workright® Australia, we understand that equity does not mean treating everyone the same. It is about ensuring that all people and all groups of people participate, have the opportunity to reach their potential, make choices and receive responsive and appropriate products and services. In other words, the destination for all learners is the same but the journey may be different.

For example, some learners may gain qualifications through a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process; others may complete training before being assessed; and some learners may need more time than others, because of family responsibilities or because they are returning to learning after a long interval.

We aim to enhance equity by being flexible and responsive, avoiding a “one size fits all” solution to training and assessment and by identifying and responding to individual learning needs. We have also done our best to improve access to training opportunities by:

- Improving physical access to a training venue
- Ensuring that selection criteria do not discriminate against learners
- Adapting our marketing activities to encourage all learners

Workright® Australia’s equity strategies include:

- Providing a supportive learning environment
- Adjusting assessments to meet individual circumstances
- Implementing policies on fee reduction
- Developing and using “inclusive” training materials

Equity also refers to the capacity for all learners to achieve results in training and to receive training in an inclusive environment with inclusive materials. Inclusive environments and materials acknowledge and value the differences between people and cultures; they include rather than exclude.

### **Learner needs**

At Workright® Australia, we understand that everyone is different and that we all learn differently. Also, people have diverse personal characteristics, cultural backgrounds, levels of past education, family experiences, work and personal life experiences. And because of

this, our training needs are offered in flexible ways and with a range of support mechanisms.

### **Information needs**

At Workright® Australia, we provide learners and potential learners with information that is:

- Accurate and comprehensive
- Accessible
- Non-discriminatory

Along with information that also:

- Outlines entry requirements in terms of qualifications or competencies
- Shows the range of pathways to the qualification
- Covers fees, charges, refunds and exemptions
- Indicates available support services
- Outlines learning options and flexible learning and assessment arrangements
- Outlines the training including content and vocational outcomes from successful completion of nationally recognised training
- Outlines the possible vocational demands of current workplaces
- Covers information on the rights of learners and the responsibilities of the RTO towards their learners

We have also ensured at the enrolment stage that learners and potential learners experience:

- An accessible enrolment process
- Welcoming, aware and knowledgeable front line staff
- Flexible fee payment options
- Clear information about RPL processes and costs
- The opportunity to disclose their needs
- A friendly and accessible environment

### **Disclosing needs**

At Workright® Australia, we encourage all learners to disclose if they have a disability or any particular learning needs (eg. literacy needs). All our staff are trained and competent in working with diverse learners. For example, two of our senior Facilitator/Trainers hold Certificates in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL).

### **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

At Workright® Australia, we recognise that Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is potentially very beneficial for people returning to work after a career break or moving into a different industry after redundancy, as well as for migrants and for older learners. So we ensure that learners are not discouraged from applying for RPL by creating processes that are neither costly nor time consuming.

**Training needs**

In order to enhance equity and access, Workright® Australia delivers training that is:

- Delivered in a range of ways (eg. by distance learning, alternative format material, self-paced learning, face to face learning, work-based learning, classroom-based learning, learning in simulated environments)
- Offered in a mixed mode format, by combining training options
- Flexible in timing (eg. by being accessible on evenings, weekends, weekdays, within school hours, part time)

Our training also:

- Starts with a training and assessment plan developed in negotiation with the learner
- Meets their access needs
- Has appropriate support services
- Culturally appropriate
- Using qualified and experienced trainers
- Using collaborative arrangements with community agencies and employers

At Workright® Australia, we are aware of the range of cultural issues for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and indigenous peoples. These issues have been addressed through flexibility in training provision and by adopting specific measures to assist learners.

The cultural issues we have considered include:

- Learning preferences
- Issues arising from English being a second or third language
- Gender and cultural sensitivities
- The context of the community and availability of workplaces in more remote communities
- Issues related to trauma and displacement that migrants may experience
- Values and priorities (eg. where there may be a focus on community development not individual achievement, or a higher emphasis on family commitments than training schedules).

**Reasonable adjustment**

At Workright® Australia, we understand the concept of reasonable adjustment and how to ensure equity for learners with a disability. We have ensured reasonable adjustment by:

- Making training materials and methods accessible
- Adapting the physical environment and equipment
- Making time related changes
- Providing additional support for the learner

**Support**

Every learner has their own support needs; and we ensure that these are identified early in the training course and are met either by us or by another organisation. Obviously, the best way to find out what support a learner might require is to ask; so we have attempted to establish an environment where the learner feels safe enough to respond honestly.

**Assessments**

Learners need assessments that:

- Are based on the relevant Training Package or accredited course
- Allow them to demonstrate their competence when they are ready to do so
- Are valid, reliable, flexible and fair
- Can be based on a cluster of competencies that reflect a real work task
- Allow them to show a range of evidence
- Are clearly outlined in some form of assessment plan
- Are conducted fairly and adjusted according to their individual needs
- Include feedback and information on reassessment opportunities and appeals processes
- Are accompanied by a fair appeals process

**Fairness**

To provide fairness in our assessments, we provide for a variety of ways for learners to demonstrate competency over time. We recognize that VET learners are not in competition with each other, as for example they might be in systems which use examinations to rank learners for entry.

The concept of fairness in a competency-based system relates to individuals achieving competency, and learners are judged for their performance against the units of competency, not how their competency relates to the performance of others. This involves recognising that learners bring with them individual skills, knowledge and resources.

**Adjusting assessment for fairness**

A standardised task applied to all learners in all contexts is likely to be unfair to some of those learners. Standardised tasks are particularly problematic when the following factors are involved:

1. REMOTE LOCATIONS: For example, you can't assume all learners will be able to access exactly the same location and equipment
2. CUSTODIAL SITUATIONS: For example, you can't assume everyone will have access to the internet or be able to move around freely to collect particular types of evidence.
3. CULTURAL BACKGROUND: For example, you must consider sensitivities related to gender or religion. You can't assume certain knowledge in your assessment task such as an understanding of Anglo-Australian social conventions.
4. DISABILITIES: For example, a learner with a learning disability may need additional time for assessment; a learner with a sensory impairment may need additional lighting, translation or adaptive technology; a learner with an intellectual disability may be uncomfortable being assessed in an unfamiliar environment.

5. LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND NUMERACY: For example, assessment must not require language, literacy or numeracy skills beyond those outlined in the competencies being assessed.

At Workright® Australia, we also believe that Learners need:

- To be able to relate their training to their workplace (if employed)
- To be assisted with pathways and information on entry to other courses or institutions
- Assistance and support to find work placements and employment
- Support in their work place if they are an apprentice or trainee
- Opportunities to provide feedback to the RTO and a belief it will be valued
- Well promoted and effective complaints processes
- Opportunities to make input to RTO decision making.

### **Employment and Further Study**

At Workright Australia, we recognise that one of the reasons many people undertake vocational education is to improve their employment prospects. Therefore, we always attempt to assist learners into further study or employment.