



IONA COLLEGE
TRINITY

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Student Diversity and Equity Policy

Approved by the Board of Directors on 28 April 2022

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1. Purpose

This Policy:

- Confirms the commitment of Iona Trinity College of Higher Education (**the College**) to inclusion, equity and diversity where it seeks to create equal opportunities for academic success and to promote a learning culture that values inclusion, equity and diversity.
- Explains the approach that the College will adopt to accommodate diversity and equity in its student population, including how students from disadvantaged or under-represented backgrounds will be supported through their studies.

For the purposes of this Policy, students from disadvantaged or under-represented backgrounds include the following groups:¹

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- People from low socio-economic backgrounds
- People with a disability
- People from rural, remote, or isolated areas
- People who are the first in their family to participate in higher education
- People from non-English speaking backgrounds, and
- People from the LGBTQIA+ community.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to:

- all students and staff of the College
- members of the College's Governing Bodies, and
- individuals engaged in providing services to the College, such as contractors and consultants.

3. Policy

The College is a bi-lingual (Korean and English) institution established to educate and prepare students for lifelong learning in the fields of theology and counselling. The creation of an inclusive environment free from discrimination and which embraces these two diverse languages and diverse cultures amongst the student and staff population is an integral part of the College's ethos.

Processes are established to ensure all students, including those who come from historically disadvantaged or underrepresented backgrounds, have equivalent opportunities for academic success.

¹ List adapted from TEQSA 2023, *Guidance Note: Diversity and Equity*, Version 1.3, 8 June (under consultation)

3.1 Principles

This Policy is based on the following principles:

- to broaden access, address perceived disadvantage, and assist students with special needs
- to prevent discrimination across the College's operations, including those of its related entities
- to ensure that management is aware of its responsibilities with regard to the implementation of processes for creating and maintaining equal opportunities for all students
- to ensure staff members and students are aware of the College's expectation that they will not discriminate, harass or victimise any person
- to encourage students and staff to report instances of discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- to enable students to participate, progress, and complete on the same basis as other, non-disadvantaged, students, and
- to encourage students to disclose to the College if they identify as a member of groups protected in equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation.

Australian anti-discrimination legislation, which currently prohibits direct or indirect discrimination on the following grounds:

- age
- disability
- employment status
- gender identity and expression
- marital and relationship status
- parental or carer status
- physical attributes
- political beliefs or activity
- pregnancy
- race
- religious belief or activity, and
- sexual orientation.

4. Strategies

Key strategies for creating and maintaining an inclusive environment for students are outlined below.

4.1 Discrimination, harassment and victimisation prevention

Culture A culture of respect of equity and diversity will be created and maintained through a process of awareness, training, benchmarking, and monitoring.

Leadership: Senior staff will demonstrate a high level of commitment to the College's approach to equity and diversity, and are equipped via training with the skills and knowledge to promote and model cultural safety.

Understanding of diversity: The College will understand the characteristics and mix of both prospective and enrolled students through data collection and analysis.

Understanding of barriers: The College maintains an understanding of common barriers to access and participation in education, including differences in culture, language, or lack of support.

Staff awareness: All College staff will have a general awareness of anti-discrimination laws. Staff induction includes a component on equity and diversity. In particular, staff members will be made aware of the need to be sensitive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and cultures through the provision of cultural awareness training.

Student awareness: Students receive regular communications, including an awareness session at orientation, on equity and diversity and their rights and responsibilities in maintaining an environment free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Third-party compliance: Where services are provided by third parties on the College's, all reasonable precautions will be taken to ensure that services are delivered in compliance with anti-discrimination laws and the College will respond promptly and effectively to any report of non-compliance.

4.2 Admission

Information: Information on admission processes and entry requirements is easily accessible and available in a range of formats and supports informed decision-making about studying at the College.

Proficiency assessment: For each prospective student, academic preparation, proficiency in English, and any impediment to participation and progress are assessed during the admission process. Adjustment to admission criteria will be considered for applicants from disadvantaged or under-represented backgrounds, as defined in Section 1 of this Policy.

Needs assessment: The particular needs and preparedness of commencing students are individually assessed during the admission process.

4.3 Participation

Transition: Commencing students receive transition support, including education sessions on expectations with regard to academic integrity and progress.

Facilities and resources: Facilities and resources are easily accessible and available. In particular, access to learning resources will not present unexpected barriers, costs or technology requirements.

Special consideration: Special consideration will be given, and reasonable adjustments made, if fair and practicable, to remove any impediments to participation for students from disadvantaged or under-represented backgrounds, as defined in Section 1 of this Policy.

Learning support: Learning support is tailored to the particular mix of students and consistent with the requirements of the course.

4.4 Course design

Curriculum: The curriculum, teaching and study materials, and equipment requirements for the course are selected and reviewed to confirm that they do not present unnecessary barriers to any students including for those with diverse backgrounds.

Delivery modes and activities: The delivery modes and learning activities of the course take account of intended learning outcomes and the learning capacities and needs of all students.

Assessment: Assessment procedures and methodologies for the course are designed to enable students from all backgrounds to demonstrate the knowledge, skills or competencies being assessed.

4.5 Support services

Training: Staff members are aware of the services available for the particular mix of students and are trained to assist students from a variety of backgrounds to access the services as and when needed.

Service provision: Support services, including health and wellbeing services, are adequate considering the particular mix of students and their needs.

5. Reporting Incidents

Reporting incidents plays a crucial role in:

- preventing further discrimination or victimisation, and
- promoting and maintaining a culture of respect for diversity.

Therefore, the College will ensure any person reporting incidents of discrimination or harassment will not be victimised and that all parties to the complaints are:

- provided with appropriate guidance and support
- treated fairly, impartially and within the principles of natural justice
- informed of their rights and obligations
- kept informed during any investigation
- given the opportunity to respond to any allegations that may be made against them, and
- informed of the result of any investigation.

5.1 Process

Any student who experiences discrimination, bullying or harassment (except sexual harassment – see *Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Prevention Policy and Procedure*) or vilification should initially discuss their concerns with the perpetrator, if appropriate and safe to do so, or discuss their concerns with Student Services staff.

Student Services staff will provide support for any student who has been a victim of behaviour considered a breach of this Policy. Where necessary students will be referred to specialist support or advocacy services.

Students may also choose to lodge a complaint at any time following the steps outlined in the *Student Grievance Policy and Procedure*.

Confirmed breaches of this Policy will be addressed under the provisions of the *Student Misconduct Policy and Procedure* or the *Human Resource Management Policy and Procedure* depending on whether the alleged perpetrator is a student or staff member respectively.

Where a staff member witnesses alleged discrimination or victimisation of a student, they should first encourage the student to seek support and lodge a complaint as outlined above. Where appropriate the staff member may make a report to the Principal who may take action under the *Student Misconduct Policy and Procedure* or the *Human Resource Management Policy and Procedure*.

6. Monitoring and Improvement

Data on the participation, progress, and completion of identified student groups will be collected to:

- monitor trends in admission, participation, retention, and completion rates, and
- improve its anti-discrimination and equal opportunity strategies, and support services to students from disadvantaged and/or under-represented backgrounds.

In addition to the above, student feedback is sought on their experience of diversity and equity at the College, including access to support services.

Outcomes from the data analysis will be benchmarked against relevant sector data and assist the College in establish targets, as appropriate.

The Board of Directors will receive an annual report on the adequacy and effectiveness of its diversity and equity strategies considering the particular mix of student subgroups and appropriate adjustments to strategies will be made, as required.

7. Accountabilities

All students are accountable for:

- ensuring their behaviour and conduct always reflect the College's standards as expressed in the *Student Code of Conduct*
- reporting instances of discrimination or victimisation promptly.

All staff are accountable for:

- implementing the diversity and equity strategies set out in this Policy, as appropriate
- compliance with anti-discrimination and equal opportunity laws at all times in carrying out their duties, including the obligation not to discriminate, harass or victimise any person
- ensuring their behaviour and conduct always reflect the standards of diversity and equity set out in this Policy
- any unfavourable action taken against a person that has reported alleged discrimination, and will be penalised accordingly, and
- reporting instances of discrimination or victimisation to the Principal promptly or supporting students who wish to make a complaint.

The Principal's accountabilities include:

- managing complaints under this Policy
- implementing the diversity and equity strategies set out above, and

- reporting annually on the implementation of diversity and equity strategies to the Board of Directors.

8. Definitions

For the purposes of this Framework, the following terms are defined as follows:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	A person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives
Discrimination	Treating or proposing to treat a person less favourably than, in circumstances that are the same or are not materially different, the discriminator treats or would treat another person because of a personal characteristic protected by the law, such as sex, age, race or disability
Diversity	Means the variety of backgrounds, cultures, ages, abilities, religions, or characteristics
Equity	Provision of similar opportunities to participate in education
Governing Bodies	Members of the Board of Directors, and its sub-committees, and the Academic Board and its sub-committees
Victimisation	Subjecting or threatening to subject someone to a detriment because they have asserted their rights under equal opportunity law, made a complaint, helped someone else make a complaint, or refused to do something because it would be discrimination, harassment or victimisation

9. Version history

Version #	Changes	Approval Body	Approval Date
1.0	Original version	Board of Directors	28/04/22
1.1	Identify student sub-groups	Board of Directors	27/07/23

10. Additional Information

Policy Status	Approved
Policy Owner	Principal
Next Review Date	3 years from Approval Date
Associated Documents	Admission Policy and Procedure

	Human Resource Management Policy and Procedure
	Student Code of Conduct
	Student Misconduct Policy and Procedure
	Template – Student Performance Reporting
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021	Standards 2.2.1 to 2.2.3
National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018	No relevant standards
Other Applicable Legislation and Instruments	Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth) Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW) Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth) Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth)

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