

Equity and Diversity Policy

Institution	Vigil English College
Policy Governance	PEO
Date of Approval	25 October 2021
Review Date	31 December 2022
Version No.	1.0
Reference to Standards	National Code 2018 – Standard 6

1. PURPOSE

Vigil English College (referred to as “The College” within this document) is committed to achieving equal opportunity and diversity in education and employment. This policy provides the framework to ensure that The College is guided by the principles of equal opportunity, respect and inclusion and complies with the spirit and intent of federal and state legislation.

2. DEFINITIONS

Victimisation: The less favourable treatment of a person or persons for their participation in making, supporting or resolving a complaint of discrimination, harassment or vilification, whether that participation was actual, intended or presumed. This includes a person or persons who have agreed to be witnesses in relation to a complaint.

Vilification: A public act that could incite others to hate, have serious contempt for, or severely ridicule a person or a group of people because on the basis of certain characteristics as determined by legislation.

Adverse Action: Discrimination on the basis on certain characteristics as defined under legislation.

Characteristics which Federal and state legislation prohibit discrimination and harassment on:

- Age
- Breastfeeding
- Disability
- Family or carer's responsibilities
- Marital or relationship status
- Political conviction
- Pregnancy or potential pregnancy
- Race, colour, descent, nationality, ethnic, ethno-religious or national origin
- Religion
- Sex
- Sexual orientation or preference
- Transgender status

Diversity: Ways in which people and groups of people are both alike and different.

Equal Opportunity: Refers to everyone having equal access to opportunities in work and study.

Equality: The creation of opportunities for equal access and success in Australian higher education among historically underrepresented student populations.

Unlawful behaviour: Refers to unlawful discrimination, unlawful harassment, victimisation, vilification and unlawful adverse action.

Unlawful Discrimination: Occurs when a person, or a group of people, is treated less favourably than another person or group on the basis of characteristics as determined by Federal and state legislation. Unlawful discrimination can be direct or indirect.

Unlawful Harassment: When a person is made to feel intimidated, insulted or humiliated on the basis of certain characteristics as determined by Federal and state legislation.

Special Measures: Acts which The College can take to enable substantive equality for individuals who belong to groups which have experienced past disadvantage, because of laws and rules, stereotypes and attitudes.

3. POLICY

The College does not discriminate against people on the basis of age, race, colour, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status or physical or intellectual disability in the recruitment of staff, students, contractors or the implementation of its policies, procedures and activities. Sexual harassment is prohibited.

The College is committed to ensuring the integration of the principles of equal opportunity for all staff and students in The College's policies, procedures, decisions and operations. The College activities are underpinned by the principles that:

- 3.1.** All members of The College have the right to be treated fairly and equitably;
- 3.2.** There is equitable access to education for students and equitable access to conditions and benefits of employment for all staff;
- 3.3.** All members of The College are entitled to a work and/or study environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, vilification, bullying or other adverse and inappropriate behaviours;
- 3.4.** Diversity is respected and appreciated as contributing to the richness of the teaching and learning environment;
- 3.5.** An inclusive and flexible environment, including the implementation of special measures when required, provides the best outcomes for the varied needs of the College's diverse staff and student community;
- 3.6.** Equal opportunity does not mean treating everyone in the same way and that to redress the past disadvantages of particular groups, special measures are needed to improve employment and educational opportunities for people from these groups. These groups include women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with a disability and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
- 3.7.** Staff and students have the right to raise complaints in good faith under The College's complaints procedure without fear of retaliation or victimisation.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

The PEO is responsible for the Equity and Diversity Policy. However, all staff members of The College have a responsibility to contribute to the achievement of an equitable working and learning environment and this policy applies to all staff of The College community including staff, students, contractors, visitors or individuals engaged in official relations with The College. All of The College policies and guidelines must comply with this framework.

5. PROCEDURE

The College will promote equal opportunity by:

- a) Endeavouring to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the working and learning environment is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, vilification, victimisation, bullying or other adverse and inappropriate behaviours.
- b) Implementing inclusive policies, practices and programs in all its activities and services to take account of the needs of The College community.
- c) Developing and implementing programs and special measures to improve access, participation, retention and success of students from under represented equity target groups (where possible).
- d) Developing and implementing programs and special measures to improve access and outcomes for staff from under represented equity target groups.
- e) Monitoring and reporting on The College's equal employment and diversity performance against identified College priorities and legislative requirements.
- f) Implementing training and awareness raising strategies to ensure that all staff and students know their rights and responsibilities.
- g) Providing an effective procedure for complaints based on the principles of natural justice.

5.1. Orientation (Students) and Induction (Staff)

All new students and staff will undergo an orientation/induction process on arrival at The College. This process will remind the individuals of their responsibility to also act equitably. In particular they will be reminded about their responsibilities in relation legislation against discrimination based on:

- Age
- Disability
- Colour
- Race
- Gender
- Religion
- Sexuality
- Family responsibilities
- where they live

5.2. Course Conduct and Assessment

All teaching and training activities will be conducted by staff who conduct the training equitably. This includes treating all students with equal status and courtesy.

Assessments will be graded, marked and reviewed based on the criteria for assessment laid down in the Course Curricula for the particular program using no other criteria.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to curricula to accommodate for any special needs of students, without compromising the integrity of the assessments.

5.3. Failure to provide an “Equal Access and Equity” environment

In the event that The College fails to act in an equitable manner, any candidate, student or staff member is encouraged to complete a Complaints Form to have the issue or event investigated. This will be conducted in line with the Complaints and Appeals Policy. The result will be communicated to the complainant.

The outcome of any complaint will be entered into the Continuous Improvement Register and the necessary changes will be enacted to remove the prejudice.

Complaints may also be made externally to the Australian Human Rights Commission, state Anti-Discrimination Boards or to the Federal Fair Work Ombudsman or the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency.