

Access & Equity Policy

Policy Statement

Industry Pathways acknowledges that to achieve best practice in the provision of vocational education and training is dependent on non-discriminatory access to services and comparable educational outcomes by all groups in society.

Industry Pathways seeks to be an organisation that reflects the rich diversity and supports the social values of the community in which we exist. We are committed to providing a stimulating environment free of discrimination and harassment in which staff and students have equal opportunity of access, participation and advancement in employment and education.

Purpose

Industry Pathways recognises that particular groups of people in society have experienced and continue to experience, institutional disadvantage and unequal educational outcomes.

Target groups include women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people of non-English speaking backgrounds, people with physical or intellectual disabilities, the long term unemployed and the rurally isolated.

Aims

This policy aims to assist Industry Pathways to achieve best practice by promoting the establishment of strategies and processes which effectively redress past disadvantage and improve the position of all groups in society.

This policy also provides a framework for the development of policies and strategies which are aimed at achieving equal educational and vocational outcomes for target groups.

Our decision making seeks to be fair, equitable, transparent, and open to critique and review. While respecting an individual's privacy, all decisions we make and actions we take will support and encourage both an inclusive and diverse workforce and student body.

Scope

The Access and Equity Policy applies to all enrolment procedures, selection criteria and entry requirements as well as trainers conducting workshops.

All students prior to commencement receive a copy of this information via the website and via the student handbook found on the website and in the confirmation email. Students are encouraged to contact Industry Pathways should they wish to obtain further information or seek clarification about this Equity and Access Policy.

Industry Pathways staff are made aware of this Access and Equity Policy during their induction, ongoing operational procedures and periodic refresher training.

In our dealings with all people (including Staff, Students, Clients and the Community, Industry Pathways applies the following fundamental equity and fairness principles.

These principles are used as both objective and subjective measures for assessing how we have either made a decision or dealt with a situation.

(a) Merit-based decision making

While Industry Pathways has internal procedures to provide administrative guidance to decision making, each decision we make takes into account the individual situation and associated issues known or provided to us at the time.

By adopting a case-by-case approach, we aim to assess the relative merits of each situation to ensure that an equitable and fair outcome is consistently and transparently achieved.

In making our merit-based decisions, we ask ourselves two simple but important questions to confirm we have met our objectives:

1. Has the decision applied all our equity and fairness principles to this particular case?
2. Would this also seem to be true if the decision was reviewed by an independent party?

Merit-based decision making is specifically applied to Industry Pathways staff recruitment and student intake processes.

(b) Inclusivity and Human Rights

Industry Pathways aims to be an organisation that reflects and represents the community in which we exist.

Just as our community is made up of individuals of different gender, age, abilities, language, ethnicity, cultural background, sexual orientation, religious belief and family responsibilities, Industry Pathways aims to remove any barriers that would prevent our organisation from reflecting a similar cross-section.

Industry Pathways believes that the same basic human rights apply to all people. These rights include:

- Receiving genuine respect for human worth and dignity as individuals,
- Having the opportunity to realise personal capacities for physical, social, emotional and intellectual development,
- Receiving services that support attaining a reasonable quality of life in a way that supports an individual's family situation and full participation in society,
- Being informed about and able to participate actively in the decisions that affect an individual's life,
- Receiving information and services in a way that results in the minimum restriction of an individual's rights and opportunities, and
- Being able (and supported) to pursue a grievance without fear of recrimination or disadvantage.

Decisions made and actions taken by Industry Pathways will uphold these human rights principles.

(c) Recognition of disadvantage

In dealing with staff and students, Industry Pathways recognises that some groups face particular disadvantages that may reduce their access to, or participation in, employment or study opportunities.

These groups include:

- Indigenous Australians,
- People with disabilities,
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds,
- People from rural and geographically isolated areas of Australia,
- People from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and
- Women in non-traditional areas of work or study.

Industry Pathways will not make assumptions about whether an individual belonging to, or identifying with, one of these groups has faced, or will face, a disadvantage. We will assess each individual or situation on a

case-by-case basis to consider the particular circumstances before making a decision about whether any disadvantage exists and how it should be addressed.

Where Industry Pathways believes an individual has faced, or will face, a disadvantage, we will make all reasonable adjustments to remove or compensate for the disadvantage in the decisions we make and actions we take regarding the individual.

(d) Right of Review

Industry Pathways decision making incorporates transparency and accountability. We support the right of an individual to have any of our decisions or assessments affecting them reviewed by an independent party.

Our decisions or assessments will be made and recorded in such a manner as to allow effective review, should this be requested, in accordance with our Complaints and Appeals Policy.

(e) Right of Complaint

Industry Pathways accepts the right of an individual to make a formal complaint if they feel aggrieved about any decision, process, activity or outcome. We believe that lodging a complaint or grievance should be a straight-forward process at no cost to the individual.

We undertake to promptly investigate grievances without prejudice and respond to them in a timely manner in accordance with our Grievance Policy.

Selection and Student Intake

In applying our equity and fairness principles to all individuals applying to undertake a course, unit of study or VET unit of study provided by Industry Pathways we will assess applications and make selections and decisions in the following manners:

1. A suitably qualified staff member of Industry Pathways will assess each application separately, considering each application on a case-by-case basis.
2. Each application will be assessed on merit, seeking to ascertain the extent to which the applicant is likely to achieve the stated competency standards and outcomes of the course, unit of study, or VET unit of study, based on the applicant's qualifications, skills and proficiencies.
3. Each application will be assessed to determine if it seems likely that the applicant has faced, or is likely to face, educational disadvantage/s because of their specific circumstances. Where it is believed that disadvantage/s may exist, the Industry Pathways assessor will consider any reasonable adjustment to remove or compensate for the disadvantage/s when assessing the application.
4. The assessor will seek to obtain additional information or clarify any part of the application to ensure all aspects of the applicant's specific circumstances (necessary to make an equitable and fair decision) have been obtained.
5. In making a decision about any student undertaking, or an individual applying to undertake a course, unit of study, or VET unit of study, Industry Pathways will not apply an income test or similar financial assessment.

Should an applicant be dissatisfied with the outcome of their application assessment, they may submit a request for the decision to be reviewed, in accordance with our Grievance & Appeals Policy.

Training and Assessment

Industry Pathways recognises the importance of access and equity during the development and delivery of the training and within the assessment process.

All courses or VET units are planned, designed, developed and presented in accordance with our equity and access principles. In particular, care is taken with written material to ensure ease of understanding by all students.

Where it has been recognised that a student has faced, or is likely to face an educational disadvantage for a course or VET unit of study, Industry Pathways will ensure reasonable adjustments are made to enable the Student to fully participate in the course or VET unit to the best of their ability.

Assessments are planned, designed, developed and presented in accordance with our access and equity principles. Each assessment undergoes a validation process that includes reviewing the language and structure of the assessment to ensure that it can be readily understood by all students.

Should a student be dissatisfied with any aspect of the curriculum or assessment, they may lodge their concerns or request a review in accordance with our Grievance, Complaints and Appeals Policy.

Related Legislation

In formulating our Equity and Access Policy, Industry Pathways has made reference to the following legislation.

Commonwealth

- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Disability Discrimination and Other Human Rights Legislation Amendment Act 2009
- Equal Opportunity (Commonwealth Authorities) Act 1987
- Racial Hatred Act 1995
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 2012
- Age Discrimination Act 2004

Queensland State

- Anti-Discrimination Act 1991
- Public Sector Ethics Act 1994
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Related Documents

Policies

[Complaints, Grievance and Appeals Policy](#)

[Access and Equity Policy](#)

Procedures

[Complaints, Grievance and Appeals Procedure](#)

Course Applications, Enrolment & Induction

Forms

[Complaints & Appeals Form](#)