

Access, Equity & Diversity Policy

Purpose & Legislative Background

This policy ensures that PARAGON POLYTECHNIC provides fair and equitable access and opportunity to all its current and prospective students and staff members regardless of their age, sexuality, gender, ethnic background, marital status, religion, political convictions, physical disability or intellectual impairment. This policy allows them to freely participate in training and learning environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and vilification which enables all participants to understand the education program they are enrolled/ to be enrolled in.

All trainees/students will be recruited in an ethical and responsible manner and consistent with the requirements of the National Training Package. Our Access and Equity Policy ensures that trainee/student selection decisions comply with equal opportunity legislation. Appropriately qualified staff will assess the extent to which the applicant is likely to achieve the stated competency standards and outcomes of the course, based on their qualifications and experience. All members of the community, including priority VET target group members, are actively encouraged to participate in, and are supported during our courses.

Scope

This policy applies to all current and prospective students in all modes of delivery as well as the staff members.

Policy

PARAGON POLYTECHNIC will ensure that equity principles for all people are implemented through the fair allocation of resources and the right to equality of opportunity without discrimination.

We will increase opportunities for people to participate in the vocational education and training (VET) system, and in associated decisions that affect their lives. Appropriate student support services will be provided to maximize the chances of under-represented students achieving positive learning outcomes and placement/employment in their chosen career.

To achieve these aims PARAGON POLYTECHNIC will:

- Ensure the establishment of non-discriminatory student selection procedures which encourage fair access for members of under-represented groups, in particular priority VET program target groups as identified by the Queensland Department of Employment and Training;
- Ensure access and equity issues are considered during curriculum development;
- Ensure the requirements of individual learners are accounted for in the strategic and operational planning processes;
- Provide learners with the opportunity to be involved in the planning and decision-making processes on matters that affect them;
- Provide training programs and services that are accessible to all people in an environment that is free from harassment;
- Seek to provide access to a broad range of high quality support services that account for the diversity of clients and the needs of people under-represented in VET;
- Seek to provide opportunities for all people to achieve outcomes that meet their personal goals;
- Provide access to staff development to assist facilitators who deliver courses to underrepresented groups.

PARAGON POLYTECHNIC recognises that equity and diversity considerations and initiatives go beyond extending a helping hand to the 'disadvantaged' and responding to legislative imperatives. Fair and equitable access to Vocational Education and Training (VET) can assist all Australians to gain meaningful employment and participate in the economic and social life in their community. This policy is a mechanism to demonstrate PARAGON POLYTECHNIC commitment to State and National equity legislation and policy requirements including:

- Disability Services Act (2006) QLD
- Disability Discrimination Act (1992) Commonwealth
- Sex Discrimination Act (1984) Commonwealth
- Racial Discrimination Act (1915) Commonwealth

- National Strategy for the Education of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander People 1996 - 2002
- Anti-Discrimination Act (1991) Queensland
- Multicultural Queensland Policy (1998)

Equity

Equity essentially means 'fairness'. In the VET context, it means that people are provided with the opportunity to access, participate and successfully achieve outcomes. Underpinning the principles of equity is the recognition by PARAGON POLYTECHNIC:

- That it is common for people to identify with more than one equity group;
- Of the differences within and between equity groups;
- That each equity group does not experience the same type of disadvantage; and
- There remain many common systemic barriers for equity groups.

Diversity

Diversity recognises that many factors influence the ability of people to participate and succeed in vocational education, training and employment, including:

- Prior educational experience
- Cultural diversity
- Language and / or learning styles
- Goals and expectations
- Motivation
- Work and social experiences
- Gender
- Values and beliefs
- Religion
- Income
- Age
- Geographic location

This policy aims to address the requirements of all potential and actual learners, seeking to participate in training with PARAGON POLYTECHNIC including specific equity groups such as:

- Women
- Indigenous Australian peoples
- People with a disability
- People from non-English speaking backgrounds
- People with English literacy and numeracy needs
- Residents of rural and remote communities

Beyond these groups, and in recognition of diversity, PARAGON POLYTECHNIC aims to respond to the needs of the local community for example:

- Young and mature age people;
- People in transition from institutions;
- People who are socioeconomically disadvantaged; and
- People with family responsibilities

Implementation of this policy requires equity and diversity considerations to be embedded into all aspects of PARAGON POLYTECHNIC planning and operations.

This may be demonstrated by the development and implementation of strategies for specific equity groups as required by National and State agendas. And where strategies do not exist, the diversity of client/learner needs may be addressed through planning areas such as:

- Resource allocation;
- Support personnel;
- Staff training;
- Curriculum product development and delivery;
- Marketing and promotion; and
- Research

PARAGON POLYTECHNIC will monitor and review its equity performance in order to:

- Comply with national and state legislation and policies;
- Meet national and state reporting requirements; and
- Modify and improve performance to better achieve access, equity and diversity objectives

Management Action & Responsibility

The Academic Manager are responsible for implementing this policy.

All staff holds the responsibility for Privacy of data collected by PARAGON POLYTECHNIC.

CEO is responsible for overall management of this policy.

Definition

Access and equity means policies and approaches aimed at ensuring that VET is responsive to the individual needs of clients whose age, gender, cultural or ethnic background, disability, sexuality, language skills, literacy or numeracy level, unemployment, imprisonment or remote location may present a barrier to access, participation and the achievement of suitable outcomes.

VET means vocational education and training.

Legislative Context

The legislative base for this policy is as follows:

- National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (Cth)
- The ESOS Act 2000
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Regulations 2001
- The National Code 2018

Policy Control

Version	Date	Changes / Updates	Approved
1.0	Aug 2020	RTO Policy and Procedure of PARAGON POLYTECHNIC	CEO