



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 Polytechnic Institute Australia ('PIA') is committed to the provision of equality for all, valuing diversity across all the dimensions of difference.
- 1.2 In the furtherance of this objective, PIA has developed this *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework* to ensure everyone who studies and works at the Institute does so free of discrimination.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 PIA is a unique educational institution that is proactively committed to creating a stimulating learning and teaching environment that values diversity, fairness, mutual respect and inclusion. PIA is dedicated to realising the potential of its staff, students and local community, and believes that diversity enriches individual and collective experience, performance and achievement.

3 POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 PIA's aim is to set objectives, milestones and targets to:
 - develop diversity and inclusion as a widely recognised area of competitive strength;
 - effectively integrate and mainstream diversity and equality into corporate strategies, policies, academic curriculum, teaching delivery, assessment methods, learning environment and management practice;
 - continue to be at the forefront of the access and widening participation agenda; and
 - create an inclusive environment where differences are celebrated and everyone is valued and respected.
- 3.2 The drive and commitment to diversity and equity at PIA will ensure that the Institute:
 - is adequately equipped to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of staff, students and the wider community;

Created: 21 March 2018
Modified: 17 December 2019
Review Date: January 2022

Document Owner: CEO
Version: 2.3
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- creates an inclusive environment that promotes dignity at work and mutual respect; and
 - sets the standard within higher education and is recognised as an example of good practice in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.
- 3.3 PIA is committed to equality of opportunity, both as an educational institution and as an employer. Equality of opportunity means working to ensure that no student or member of staff receives less favourable treatment on the basis of their 'protected characteristics'. This means on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief (or no belief), sex, and sexual orientation.
- 3.4 Equality of opportunity is achieved by:
- promoting good relations amongst and between staff and students, and creating conditions which contribute to the full development and potential of everyone;
 - creating a climate where staff and students are given confidence to challenge acts and behaviour which contravene PIA's *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework* and the law; and
 - treating fairly and appropriately each job applicant, course assessment, and progression or promotion decisions at PIA.

Staff

Leadership and Management

- 3.5 PIA's Board of Directors, Executive Management Committee and Academic Board will set the pace providing leadership at all levels to champion equity, diversity and inclusion, monitor progress against planned activities and respond effectively to PIA's statutory requirements and legal obligations.

Professional Development and Scholarly Activity

- 3.6 As part of staff development, all employees will be provided with training in equity, diversity and inclusion in relation to: legislation, employment, leadership, the student experience, cultural competence, and how to put equality and the core principles of diversity into practice.

Equality and Diversity for Staff

- 3.7 PIA is committed to equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and promoting inclusion. As an employer PIA will ensure that no applicant for a post or existing employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of their protected characteristics.

Students

Access and Inclusive Learning



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- 3.8 PIA will provide an accessible environment for people with disabilities and from different cultures to study and work. Applications from groups currently under-represented in higher education will be positively encouraged.

Curriculum and Skills Development

- 3.9 Students will be educated for life and work in a global, multi-cultural society. PIA will promote understanding and pay due regard and respect for all cultures. All students will be given the opportunity to develop their skills to enhance their employability and progression opportunities when leaving PIA.

The Student Experience

- 3.10 PIA is committed to:
- ensuring and promoting equality through learning and teaching, and also in the selection, enrolment, assessment and progression of students; and
 - providing appropriate student support and guidance which reflects the diversity of students' needs, both pre-entry and in-course.
- 3.11 This means that no student will receive less favourable treatment on the basis of their protected characteristics. Support and guidance for students will be linked to their particular needs. It also means PIA aims to promote equal respect for all people, to challenge prejudice and to prepare students to work in a multicultural and diverse society.
- 3.12 Selection, assessment and progression will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected and treated only on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

Advertising and Promotion

- 3.13 PIA seeks to ensure that publicity and promotion practices encourage applicants from under-represented groups. There is careful scrutiny of publicity and promotional materials and marketing related activities to ensure that brochures, advertisements, applications forms and display materials reflect the diversity of students at PIA.
- 3.14 This means materials do not contain socially, racially biased or stereotypical terminology, information or illustration which would contravene this Framework. It also includes a proactive approach towards marketing courses to under-represented groups, which is designed to enhance the overall image of PIA as an institution with a determination to reflect and implement its commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

Access and Opportunities for Under-represented Groups

- 3.15 PIA is committed to working towards providing additional educational opportunities for under-represented groups. Methods to achieve this aim may include the following:
- an increase in the number of courses designed to be particularly attractive for these groups, taking advantage wherever possible of any external funding available and working closely with local and national bodies, which seek to extend educational opportunities for under-represented groups;

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- an increase in the number of routes to improve access into existing provision, in partnership with local schools and colleges; and
- moves towards greater diversity in course structure, including an extension of short courses, part-time and evening provision, and the creation of more flexible learning opportunities so that students can vary their pace of study.

Admission Policy

- 3.16 In courses where particular groups are significantly under-represented, PIA will seek to identify the cause and to take positive action.
- 3.17 To assist in this process, course or unit teams will need to:
- monitor the profile of entrants to their programs;
 - identify the nature and cause of significant under-representation within their student intake;
 - develop recruitment policies designed to attract groups that are currently under-represented; and
 - ensure that the admissions process has explicit criteria and procedures for entry of 'non-traditional' as well as 'traditional' applicants, and seeks to identify study potential in the absence of conventional indicators such as examination results.
- 3.18 PIA will ensure that the application procedures and criteria for non-traditional entry to particular courses are explicit and made available to the general public. It will also ensure that this information is collated across PIA in order to obtain an overall picture of developing practice.

Student Support

- 3.19 In the organisation and resourcing of its support services PIA will make every effort to meet the needs of students who, as an outcome of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief (or no belief), sex, or sexual orientation, may find particular difficulties related to their academic or vocational work or other aspects of their lives at PIA.
- 3.20 PIA will seek to ensure that the general facilities and services to students – e.g. halls of residence, canteens, libraries and the learning resource centre - are appropriately designed to meet the needs of a culturally diverse student body and that they are also accessible to students with disabilities.
- 3.21 With an ageing population, and an increase in the number of students with children, PIA recognises the care responsibilities that students have, which are viewed as the role of both men and women, and takes into account the specific challenges that care responsibilities bring and the impact they may have on attendance, learning and academic performance.

Staff Recruitment and Selection

- 3.22 The commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion underpins PIA's *Staff Qualifications, Recruitment and Appointment Policy and Procedure*. Through the use and application of training and monitoring, PIA is committed to ensuring that these recruitment and promotion procedures are

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constantly reviewed in order to ensure that individuals are selected for interview and appointed to posts on the basis of their ability to undertake the job required.

- 3.23 PIA will use published, objective and job-related criteria when making decisions on recruitment, remuneration, training, promotion and termination of employment. Where possible, barriers to equality of opportunity will be identified and positive action taken to address them by, for example, targeted training and development.

Inclusive Environment

- 3.24 It is unlawful for anybody to discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief (or no belief), sex, or sexual orientation.
- 3.25 PIA will provide an inclusive environment that promotes equality of opportunity and diversity and is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation of any kind. This also includes bullying, harassment and unlawful behaviours towards trans- students and staff (transphobia) and/or bisexual staff or students (biphobia).
- 3.26 All staff (including staff employed by agencies for contracted out services), students and other users of PIA services will be made aware of behaviour which amounts to discrimination, harassment or victimisation, and that such behaviours may result in disciplinary action and/or amount to a criminal offence.
- 3.27 PIA will do this by:
- Taking appropriate action against any student or member of staff who does not comply with the *Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedure*. PIA has engaged in disciplinary action against both staff and students who have breached the *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework* and in some cases this has led to permanent removal from PIA.
 - Ensuring promotional and teaching materials present appropriate and positive images relating to all dimensions of diversity and equity.
 - Ensuring management and staff have access to comprehensive information to assist them in planning, putting into practice and monitoring their responsibilities under this Framework.
 - Striving to challenge behaviour which does not accord with this Framework.
 - Considering appropriate measures to overcome under-representation, in particular jobs or education identified by the monitoring and impact assessment processes.
 - Responding positively and competently when issues relating to equity, diversity and inclusion are discussed.
 - Ensuring that all students and staff know how to raise complaints and that PIA provides a timely and sensitive response.

Complaints

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- 3.28 If a member of staff or a student believes that they have been discriminated against, they should seek the advice of either the Human Resources Manager (in the case of a member of staff) or the Registrar (in the case of a student).
- 3.29 All complaints concerning bullying or other unfair treatment within the scope of this Framework should be raised under either the *Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure* or the *Staff Grievance Policy and Procedure*.

Staff and Student Monitoring

- 3.30 Monitoring of the effectiveness of this Framework will take place on an annual basis and a report of the results made available across PIA. The results will inform corporate decision making through the Board of Directors, Academic Board and Executive Management Team.
- 3.31 PIA is committed to devising and implementing appropriate methods of monitoring and evaluation of the *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework*. PIA will produce statistical analyses which will help to identify and diagnose problems. This will enable the monitoring of the effectiveness of the Framework and identify actions that will make the implementation of the Framework more effective.
- 3.32 In order to provide essential statistical information, monitoring and evaluation will include the following approaches:
- People making applications to PIA for employment will be requested and encouraged to indicate their ethnic origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion and belief or no belief as perceived by themselves. This includes trans- and bisexual applicants. The same applies to existing staff.
 - As part of the enrolment process, students will be requested and encouraged to indicate race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability and religion, belief or no belief. This includes trans- and bisexual students. Schools will monitor admissions to their courses as part of the annual monitoring process, and will consequently review their admission practices annually in the light of their student intake and make recommendations accordingly.

4 PROCEDURES

- 4.1 PIA strongly encourages any student or staff member who believes they have been discriminated against, bullied, sexually harassed or victimised to take appropriate action by following the *Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure* or the *Staff Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure*.
- 4.2 Students or staff who do not feel safe or confident to take such action may seek assistance from the Administration Manager for advice, support, or action on their behalf.

Professional Counselling

- 4.3 Students and staff of PIA are able to access professional counselling from contracted professional at Life Resolution. To access this professional counselling, contact the Administration Manager for a referral.
- 4.4 Professional counselling is confidential and nothing discussed with a counsellor will be communicated back to PIA.

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5 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 Responsibility for approving and monitoring this Framework lies with the Board of Directors and Human Resources Manager.

Staff Rights and Responsibilities

- 5.2 All staff are entitled to:

- recruitment and selection decisions based on merit that are not affected by irrelevant personal characteristics;
- work free from discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment;
- the right to raise issues or to make an enquiry or complaint in a reasonable and respectful manner without being victimised; and
- reasonable flexibility in working arrangements, especially where needed to accommodate their family responsibilities, disability, religious beliefs or culture.

- 5.3 All staff must:

- follow the standards of behaviour outlined in this Framework;
- offer support to people who experience discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment, including providing information about how to make a complaint;
- avoid gossip and respect the confidentiality of complaint resolution procedures; and
- treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect.

Additional Responsibilities of Managers and Supervisors

- 5.4 Managers and supervisors must also:

- model appropriate standards of behaviour;
- take steps to educate and make staff aware of their obligations under this Framework and the law;
- intervene quickly and appropriately when they become aware of inappropriate behaviour;
- act fairly to resolve issues and enforce behavioural standards, making sure relevant parties are heard;
- help staff resolve complaints informally;
- refer formal complaints about breaches of this Framework to the appropriate complaint handling officer for investigation;
- ensure staff who raise an issue or make a complaint are not victimised;
- ensure that recruitment decisions are based on merit and that no discriminatory requests for information are made; and
- seriously consider requests for flexible work arrangements.



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Compliance, Monitoring and Review

- 5.5 Student Services will monitor use of its services by students with respect to race, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender and religion, belief and no belief. This monitoring will also include trans- and bisexual students.

Reporting

- 5.6 When a case is presented to PIA where an allegation of a breach of the law is made, the Administration Manager, with consent from the individual making the allegation, will lodge the matter with the relevant state authority.
- 5.7 All allegations of discrimination and harassment are reported to the Board of Directors.

Records Management

- 5.8 Staff must maintain all records relevant to administering this Framework in a recognised PIA record-keeping system.
- 5.9 All records pertaining to this Framework will be marked as confidential and only accessible through the Administration Manager.

6 DEFINITIONS

- 6.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the PIA glossary.

Terms and definitions

Age: Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age or range of ages.

Disability: PIA uses the definition of disability as set out in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth).

Diversity: Diversity comprises of a mosaic of people from all walks of life, who bring a variety of backgrounds, styles, perspectives, values and beliefs as assets to all those with whom they interact.

Equality: Equality is about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and has the same opportunity to fulfil their potential. Equality is backed by legislation designed to address unfair discrimination based on membership of a particular protected group.

Gender reassignment: The process of transitioning from one gender to another. The definition of gender re-assignment has been extended to cover people who have proposed, started or completed a process to change their sex, but are not under medical supervision.

Inclusion: Inclusion is the complete acceptance and integration of all students and employees regardless of diversity background that proactively leads to a sense of belonging, engagement and full participation within and across PIA.

Marriage and civil partnership: A legally binding union between two people.

Protected Characteristics: The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief (or no belief), sex, or sexual orientation.

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Pregnancy and maternity: Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for six (6) months after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding. After six (6) months a breastfeeding mother is protected through the sex discrimination provisions in the Equality Act.

Race: Refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.

Religion and Belief: Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect life choices or the way a person lives for it to be included in the definition.

Gender: A man or a woman or transgender.

Sexual Orientation: Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

7 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

Documents

Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedure
Grievance Form
Staff Grievance Policy and Procedure
Staff Qualifications, Recruitment and Appointment Policy and Procedure
Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure
Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)
Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)

Higher Education Standards Framework

- 7.1 This Framework complies with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015, Standard 2.3, which states:
4. A safe environment is promoted and fostered, including by advising students and staff on actions they can take to enhance safety and security on campus and online.
- 7.2 This Framework also complies with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015, Standard 2.4, which states:
1. Current and prospective students have access to mechanisms that are capable of resolving grievances about any aspect of their experience with the higher education provider, its agents or related parties.

National Code 2018

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7.3 The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 Standard 5 states that:

5.2 Registered providers must ensure students under 18 years of age are given age-and culturally-appropriate information on:

5.2.1 who to contact in emergency situations, including contact numbers of a nominated staff member and/or service provider to the registered provider

5.2.2 seeking assistance and reporting any incident or allegation involving actual or alleged sexual, physical or other abuse.

8 FEEDBACK

8.1 PIA staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing policy@pia.edu.au.

9 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Executive Management Committee
Administrator	CEO

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