VET FEE-HELP - Equity & Fair Treatment Policy
PL023

PURPOSE
To ensure that student application and selection processes at TAFE Queensland South West are fair, equitable and transparent and that all students and persons seeking to enrol at TAFE Queensland South West can be advised and treated in a fair and equitable manner.

BACKGROUND
TAFE Queensland South West supports the concept of equal opportunity and is committed to providing all staff, students and potential students with a working and learning environment which values diversity, respects differences and provides an environment that is fair, safe, healthy, positive, supportive and free from all forms of harassment, bullying and discrimination.

SCOPE
This policy applies to both students and persons seeking to enrol at TAFE Queensland South West that are, or would be, entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance under clause 43 of Schedule 1A of the Act.

DEFINITIONS

Persons/Potential Students
Refers to all customers of TAFE Queensland South West seeking to enrol in or enquiring about a VET unit of study that meets the course requirements under the Act who are, or might be, entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance.

Student/s
Refers to all persons enrolled in a unit of study who are, or might be entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance under Clause 43 of Schedule 1A of the Act.

POLICY

Equity and Diversity Policy
This policy represents TAFE Queensland South West’s commitment to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to successfully gain skills, knowledge and experience through vocational education and training.

This policy has been developed to address the particular requirements of:

- potential students
- students currently enrolled at TAFE Queensland South West
- all staff

TAFE Queensland South West is responsible for fulfilling its commitment to access and equity by ensuring continued participation of target groups in VET programs. These target groups include:

- women
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- people with a disability
- rural and regionally isolated communities
- people in transition and other special groups (i.e. people re-entering the workforce, sole parents, people with literacy issues, the long-term unemployed, and those who have been institutionalised)

Equity
Essentially, equity means fairness. At TAFE Queensland South West it means that people are provided with an opportunity to access, participate in and successfully achieve outcomes. TAFE Queensland South West also has an understanding that:

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

TAFE Queensland South West recognises that there are many factors which influence the ability of people to access, participate in and succeed in a vocational education and training environment, including:

- prior educational experiences  
- goals and expectations  
- work and social experiences  
- geographic location  
- learning styles  
- gender  
- family

- language  
- values and beliefs  
- income  
- cultural identity  
- motivation  
- religion  
- age

This policy will be used to:

- inform staff, students and the wider community of TAFE Queensland South West  
- commit to equity and diversity  
- guide the development of TAFE Queensland South West specific equity implementation plans and strategies  
- facilitate the design of products and services that are attractive to clients

Policy Statements

1. TAFE Queensland South West aims to provide training programs and services that are accessible to all people.
2. The requirements of individual learners are accounted for in the strategic and operational planning processes of TAFE Queensland South West.
3. Clients and staff are provided with opportunities to be involved in the planning and decision-making processes of TAFE Queensland South West on matters that affect them.
4. TAFE Queensland South West seeks to provide a broad, relevant and balanced range of high quality training programs and support services that account for the diversity of clients and the needs of people under-represented in vocational education and training.
5. Training and support service delivery of TAFE Queensland South West strives to enable members of equity groups to successfully participate in vocational education and training.
6. TAFE Queensland South West provides opportunities for all people to achieve outcomes that meet their personal goals.
7. TAFE Queensland South West provides training and support services in an environment free from harassment.

Fair Treatment

TAFE Queensland South West will treat fairly all Students and other persons seeking to access the services offered by the TAFE Queensland South West.

Student Selection

TAFE Queensland South West has open, fair and transparent processes, based on merit for making decisions about:

a. the selection, from among potential students; and  
b. the treatment of students.

Potential Students seeking to enrol in a VET unit of study with TAFE Queensland South West, regardless of their background, circumstances or eligibility for funding will be assessed for entry to study through the same published entry requirements and through the same processes under subclause 45(1) of Schedule 1A of the Act.

The above paragraph does not prevent TAFE Queensland South West from taking into account, in making decisions mentioned above, educational disadvantages that a particular student or potential student has experienced or the fact that the student or potential student may be enrolled via a VET restricted access arrangement after consultation with the Customer Services Officers.
TAFE Queensland South West will ensure that prior to enrolment prospective students have access to information regarding the course, training, assessment, services and VET FEE-HELP provided by TAFE Queensland South West to enable them to make an informed decision about the suitability of the course and the TAFE Queensland South West facilities in meeting their individual needs.

TAFE Queensland South West will provide accurate and timely information to each student, prior to enrolment in regards to:

- student selection, enrolment and orientation procedures;
- course information, including educational and vocational outcomes;
- fees and charges, including refund policy;
- provision for language, literacy and numeracy assistance;
- student support services;
- flexible learning and assessment procedures;
- appeals and complaints procedures;
- disciplinary procedures;
- recognition of prior learning (RPL), including credit transfer processes.

**Selection Procedures:**

As a rule TAFE Queensland South West is able to accommodate enrolment for all eligible students. However, in instances where it is identified that there are limited places available for enrolment in a particular program of study TAFE Queensland South West will undertake a merit based selection process. Applications will be sort from eligible students and the selection process will be based on one or a combination of (but not limited to) the following evaluation methods:-

- Portfolio
- Academic Record (including pre-requisite requirements)
- Interview
- Skills Testing

All students must be a minimum of 15 years of age upon commencement of the program to be eligible to be considered for entry into VET Programs. The selection process will be conducted by the relevant Faculty team members. TAFE Queensland South West will ensure that throughout the process of selection and enrolments, applicants are treated fairly, courteously and expeditiously. Selection criteria and principles to be utilised, when applicable, will be published at time of advertising. These requirements will be communicated at time of enquiry or Program advertising.

**Publication**

This Equity and Fair Treatment Policy and associated procedures will be made available to students and potential students through publication on the website www.southwest.edu.au.

**ACCOUNTABILITIES**

TAFE Queensland South West Executive team is responsible for:

- approving the Fair Treatment Policy
- implementing open, fair and transparent procedures for making decisions about selection of students or other persons into VET units of study
- reviewing customer surveys to formulate plans to improve student satisfaction
- reviewing any systemic issues identified and recommending appropriate and timely action
- identifying and responding to improvement opportunities
- systematically reviewing the effectiveness of this process.

Faculty Directors/Associate Directors are responsible for:

- providing support to teaching teams to implement continuous improvement for the fair and equitable treatment of students and persons seeking to enrol through the application and selection process
- the process will be made available on TAFE Queensland South West's website
- identifying systemic and recurring issues within the teaching teams and liaise with the Faculty Directors and/or Compliance and Assurance for organisational improvement.
Delivery Teams are responsible for:

- ensuring they apply fair and equitable treatment of students and persons seeking to enrol in the application and selection process for their program of study
- implementing a selection process, if necessary, for high demand products.

DOCUMENTATION

VET FEE-HELP Academic Grievance and Appeals Policy

VET FEE-HELP Academic Grievance and Appeals Procedure

VET FEE-HELP Academic Grievance and Appeals Form

VET FEE-HELP Non-Academic Grievance and Appeals Policy

VET FEE-HELP Non-Academic Grievance and Appeals Procedure

VET FEE-HELP Non-Academic Grievance and Appeals Form

COMPLIANCE REFERENCES

- VET Provider Handbook, view at www.dest.gov.au
- Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2011 - Part 3, SNR 16, view at www.comlaw.gov.au

POLICY APPROVAL

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<th>Owned By:</th>
<th>Sarah Byers</th>
<th>Date: 02/05/2014</th>
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<td>Position:</td>
<td>Revenue Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<th>Authorised by:</th>
<th>Trevor Schwenke</th>
<th>Date: 02/05/2014</th>
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<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
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