

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTORY

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to outline the policy of Equinim College Pty Ltd (RTO 45758, CRICOS provider 03952E) (referred to as “**Equinim College**” or “**the provider**”), in relation to accessibility.

This policy and procedure applies to all staff and students of Equinim College.

2. OUR OBLIGATIONS

2.1 Our obligations at law

Australian law protects students’ rights to access learning on an equal basis with other students. Equinim College complies with accessibility legislation applicable to student entry and study.

2.2 What does disability mean?

Equinim College adopts the definition of “disability” as set out in section 4 of the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth).

3. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

3.1 Reasonable adjustments

We are required by law to make reasonable adjustments to ensure students with disabilities have equal access to education. We apply this principle in relation to enrolment, academic performance and use of Equinim College’s facilities and services.

3.2 What is reasonable?

The law requires us to make reasonable adjustments that do not compromise the rigour of assessment required to meet our educational requirements, including without limitation the standards required under the training package for the qualification being studied.

We take into account the following in determining what is reasonable in the circumstances:

- a) The student’s disability;
- b) The views of the student and any associates;
- c) The impact of the proposed adjustment including how it may affect the student’s independence and ability to achieve learning and assessment outcomes and participate in courses;
- d) The requirements of the training package and industry;
- e) The matters set out in sections 4.2 and 4.3, below;

- f) The impact of the proposed adjustment on anyone else affected including Equinim College, its staff and other students;
- g) The costs and benefits of making the proposed adjustment; and
- h) Whether there are any other reasonable adjustments with the same or similar benefit that would be less disruptive and intrusive.

3.3 Must meet inherent requirements

Equinim College is required to maintain the inherent requirements of the course. (See section 4, below.) By law, the inherent requirements (including those set by the training package and/or industry) may mean that the implementation of adjustments is prevented or limited.

3.4 Alternative strategies – not exemptions

Equinim College is required by law to uphold academic rigour of assessment in accordance with the training package and industry requirements. Exemptions from assessment on the basis of disability are not a reasonable adjustment. Alternative strategies or arrangements, such as changes to the mode of questioning and response, the provision of large print learning material, the layout of an assessment space, and/or allowing additional time for the completion of assessments, are reasonable adjustments and may be available depending on the circumstances. Reasonable adjustments are determined and applied in accordance with this policy and procedure as a whole.

3.5 Training in safety and academic integrity are required

Reasonable adjustments may not exempt a student from participating in training in the importance and nature of work health and safety principles on campus and in their course in general, or the necessity of preventing bullying, sexual harassment or assault, or any form of discrimination.

3.6 Decency and respect

All decisions are made and communicated with decency and respect for the student and all involved.

4. INHERENT REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Bound by law

As a registered training organisation and CRICOS registered provider, Equinim College is bound by law to respect and uphold educational standards and ensure students meet training package requirements through learning and assessments that are applied with academic rigour and integrity and that students achieve competence to a level required by the training package and industry.

4.2 Inherent requirements

Inherent requirements are the capabilities, knowledge, skills, attributes and behaviours that are essential to achieve the core learning outcomes or satisfy curriculum requirements of a course, preserve the integrity of Equinim College's educational programs and accreditation programs, and meet the standards or requirements of a training package and/or industry.

4.3 What is not a reasonable adjustment

An adjustment is not reasonable if it:

- a) Compromises the academic integrity of the course or assessment requirements and processes; or
- b) Removes or bypasses any Inherent Requirement of the course or qualification.

5. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THERE IS A REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT

5.1 Timeframe for determining

Negotiating and determining a reasonable adjustment can take time, as all of the factors in this policy and procedure need to be considered. Students should allow several weeks for this process to occur. No decision is ever made without consultation with the student and or any applicable associates.

5.2 Recording a decision

Once a decision is made as to reasonable adjustment, it is recorded in a Reasonable Adjustment Plan for the student, which is communicated to the Trainer/Assessor for the student and kept on file.

5.3 Review of the plan

Each plan should have a timeframe recorded within it for reviewing the student's progress and how the plan is working. Equinim College may agree with the student on adjustments to the plan as needed, preserving the matters of consideration as outlined in this policy and procedure.

6. REVIEW

6.1 Students' rights

Students have the right to:

- a) Disclose a disability to Equinim College and be treated with decency and respect, without bullying or discrimination;
- b) Request adjustments; and
- c) Have reasonable adjustments made by Equinim College in a manner that is timely, respects the requirements under this policy and procedure, and

facilitates opportunities for study and learning outcomes as required under the training package and/or by industry.

6.2 Students' right to review

If a student believes that a reasonable adjustment request has been unreasonably refused, or if they consider that a reasonable adjustment that has been agreed to by Equinim College has not been implemented in a timely manner, they may utilise the internal review procedure under the Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure-International Students.

7. ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION

7.1 Decency and respect underscore all operations

Equinim College and its staff treat students and all people who interact with the College with decency and respect.

7.2 No discrimination

Equinim College does not endorse or tolerate any form of discrimination, of any nature.

7.3 Report

Equinim College encourages all students and staff who feel they may have been discriminated against, to contact the Equinim College Team immediately for support.

8. RESPECTING YOUR PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

8.1 Privacy and confidentiality

Any report made to Equinim College of any believed or suspected discrimination shall be treated by Equinim College with respect. Details of persons involved shall be kept private and confidential and only authorised staff working in relation to the matter shall have access to information disclosed.

8.2 Investigation

If any student or staff member of Equinim College reports to the College any believed or suspected incident of discrimination, Equinim College shall discretely make enquiries and conduct an investigation into the allegations. Equinim College shall keep the person making the report updated on progress in that investigation.

8.3 Right to disclose or not

It is not mandatory for students to disclose a disability to Equinim College. Students may also determine who they want disclosure to be made to and may

limit, for instance, the staff to whom disclosure may be made. However if they choose not to disclose, or to limit disclosure, Equinim College may not be able to negotiate, determine and/or implement reasonable adjustments or access to services. If students have any concerns, they are always welcome to discuss these confidentially with a Student Services Team member.

9. WELLBEING

9.1 Wellbeing is important

Students' wellbeing is important to us.

9.2 Access services

If a student is experiencing any circumstance which does or may impact on their study or their wellbeing, they are encouraged to contact the Equinim College Student Services Team for support and/or referral to services which can help.

9.3 If your studies are affected

Equinim College understands that a student may not consider their condition to be a "disability". We absolutely respect all students. If your health or other condition is having an impact on your studies, even if this effect is a short term one, we encourage you to contact us. We are here to support our students.