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## Access and Equity Policy (SB015)

### PURPOSE

Skills Base Australia is committed to providing all students with equal opportunity to pursue their training and development. This policy and procedure will be used by Skills Base Australia to integrate access and equity principles into all training and assessment activities it conducts.

### SCOPE

This policy covers all Skills Base Australia policies and procedures and all training function activities.

### DEFINITIONS

**Access and Equity principles** include:

- Equality for all people through the fair and appropriate allocation of resources
- Equality of opportunity for all people without discrimination
- Access for all people to appropriate quality training and assessment services
- Increased opportunity for people to participate in training

**Disadvantaged groups** include the following groups who traditionally have been under-represented in Vocational Education and Training (VET):

- People with a disability
- Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders
- Women
- People from non-English speaking backgrounds
- People in rural and remote areas
- Long term unemployed

**Discrimination** can be direct, indirect or systemic.

#### Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination is any action which specifically excludes a person or group of people from a benefit or opportunity, or significantly reduces their chances of obtaining it, because their status or personal characteristics, irrelevant to the situation (eg. sex, ethnic origin) are applied as a barrier. Direct discrimination has as a focus assumed differences between people.

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### **Indirect discrimination**

Indirect discrimination is the outcome of rules, practices and decisions which treat people equally and therefore appear to be neutral. It perpetuates an initially unequal situation and therefore significantly reduce a person's chances of obtaining or retaining a benefit or opportunity. Rules, practices and decisions are applied to all groups alike but it is the very assumption of a likeness that constitutes the discrimination.

### **Systemic discrimination**

A system of discrimination perpetuated by rules, practices and decisions which are realised in actions that are discriminatory and disadvantage a group of people because of their status or characteristics and serve to advantage others of different status or characteristics. Direct and indirect discrimination contribute to systemic discrimination.

**Equity** focuses on outcomes. Equity is not concerned with treating people in the same way; it is concerned with ensuring that all groups of people participate and benefit to the same level.

### **Legislation includes**

- Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Commonwealth Racial Hatred Act 1995
- Disability Services Act 2006
- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)

**Sexual harassment** is defined by the Commonwealth Sexual Discrimination Act 1984 as when a person:

- makes an unwelcome sexual advance or an unwelcome request for sexual favours;
- engages in unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, and a reasonable person would have anticipated that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

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## POLICY

1. The aim of the policy is to remove barriers and to open up developmental opportunities for all students by creating a workplace and training environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, bigotry, prejudice, racism and offensive behaviour.
2. All students will receive fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of training and employment without regard to political affiliation, race, colour, religion, national origin, sex, marital status or physical disability.
3. A person with a disability may be excluded under this policy if the disability could cause occupational health and safety risks to the person and/or other students.
4. All trainers/assessors are responsible to observe and be advocates for the policy.
5. Skills Base Australia's policies and procedures will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that they recognise and incorporate the rights of individuals.

Skills Base Australia's Training Coordinator will be the person responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the policy.

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