Access & Equity Policy & Procedure

Policy

Unity College Australia (UCA) is firmly committed to achieving best practice in the provision of Christian ministry vocational education and training.

UCA acknowledges that this is dependent on non-discriminatory access to services and comparable educational outcomes by all groups in society. By providing accessible and equitable vocational education and training all clients will be able to develop knowledge and skills to enhance life and work opportunities.

UCA recognises that particular groups of people in society have experienced, and continue to experience, institutional disadvantage and unequal educational outcomes. Target groups include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people of non-English speaking backgrounds, those with physical or intellectual disabilities, older people, young people identified as 'Youth at Risk', women, and the rurally isolated. This policy aims, therefore, to assist the College community to achieve best practice by promoting the establishment of strategies and processes which effectively redress past disadvantage and improve the position of all groups in society.

Scope

This policy applies to all students, staff and clients of UCA including:

- those who are, or are seeking to be, enrolled with UCA
- those who are, or would be, eligible for VET FEE-HELP or VET Student Loans
- those who are not eligible for VET FEE-HELP or VET Student Loans

Procedure

UCA's commitment to the principle of access and equity in vocational education and training for target groups gives practical expression to the Australian National Training Authority goal of improving the knowledge, skills, and quality of life for Australians, having regard to the particular needs of target groups.

In keeping with this commitment UCA will strive to ensure that programs and services are relevant, accessible, fair and inclusive by:

- promoting programs and services to the community in a manner that includes and reflects the diverse client population, to ensure that all prospective students are well informed on the options available to meet their individual training needs;
- increasing the skills base of clients to improve their employability in line with the skills requirements of the various industries that UCA delivers training in;
- providing an effective range of vocational preparation programs to the community;
- ensuring that those groups traditionally under-represented in vocational education and training have the opportunity to participate and achieve the same outcomes as other members of the community;
- implementing fair educational program and resource allocation practices, to maximise the participation of target groups;
- facilitating access to culturally inclusive literacy and numeracy training that meets individual, community and industry needs;

- undertaking to eliminate policies, practices, structures, assumptions and behaviours which may contribute to the disadvantages suffered by under-represented groups both in employment and in education.

Legislative Obligations

UCA's Access and Equity Policy acknowledges its legal obligations under the relevant State and Territory equal opportunity laws, to ensure that our working and teaching practices are fair and equitable, and our learning environment non-discriminatory.

Roles and Responsibilities

UCA's Board, President, Director, Principals, Trainers and other staff are change agents and foster the implementation of access and equity best practice by ensuring that:

- UCA's corporate goals clearly define its role in meeting the educational needs of all clients, including equity target groups;

- equal opportunity policies are in place and understood;

- barriers to participation are identified and strategies developed to overcome them;

- key staff have identified responsibility and expertise in equal opportunity matters;

- UCA's policies and procedures are non-discriminatory and inclusive;

- staff are provided with information about access and equity issues;

- students are provided with information about access and equity issues;

- levels of participation and attainment by equity target groups are recorded;

- staff are aware of progress in the participation and outcomes for equity target groups and action plans are developed and put in place to meet any deficiencies.

Staff are responsible for ensuring that they understand and implement the policy and behave in a courteous, sensitive and non-discriminatory manner when dealing with other staff, students and other clients.

Students are responsible for behaving in a courteous, sensitive and non-discriminatory manner when dealing with other staff, students and clients.

Fair treatment and equal opportunity

UCA ensures fair treatment and equal opportunity to all existing and potential students through open, fair and transparent selection procedures that are based on merit for making decisions about the selection and treatment of students.

All Students will be selected based on the entry requirements for each course, as published in the Student Handbook, which includes entry requirements outlined by the relevant Training Package or Accredited Course.

UCA may also consider any educational disadvantage of any individual student, or enrolment via a VET restricted access arrangement, when making enrolment decisions.

Christian Ministry Training Context

It is expected that students undertaking Ministry, Theology or Creative Ministries courses through UCA be committed Christians. This is in line with the employment outcomes of these

courses. Admission documentation must therefore be endorsed by applicants' Pastors. Students are expected to behave consistently with Biblical standards and Christian character.

As part of college life, students are also expected to attend a local church of their choice and be actively involved in the life of their church.

This Access and Equity Policy & Procedure is also noted in the following Unity College Australia documents:

- Handbook (publicly available at www.unity.edu.au)
- Staff Handbook