Group Access and Equity Policy

Version: 03/22

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Approved by:	Chief Executive Officer
Date Approved:	12.08.2022
Implementation:	Respective Student Services Managers, Operations Managers
Maintenance Owner:	Executive General Manager, Group Quality, Accreditation & Compliance

CONTENTS

1. Section 1 - Introduction

1.1. PURPOSE

NextEd is committed to a policy of fair and equitable access to services for all stakeholders and is committed to providing support to encourage equal educational opportunity. NextEd will pursue this policy and these principles actively so that they may contribute to the fulfilment of each of the college's missions and goals.

1.2. SCOPE

This policy is an overarching Group policy and applies to:

i)   All staff of NextEd including employees and contractors;

ii) All courses delivered by NextEd including those delivered on their behalf by education providers with whom there is a licensing arrangement. If there are any discrepancies between an affiliate's policy and these, the NextEd policy will apply.

iii) All students (domestic and international) of NextEd brands :

- Academy of Interactive Technology Pty Ltd (also trading as Coder Academy Australia, iscd, and Work Ready Education) RTO: 90511, Registered Higher Education Provider PRV12005, CRICOS: 02155J
- International School of Colour and Design Pty Ltd (iscd) RTO: 91439
- Greenwich College Pty Ltd (also trading as Greenwich English College, Greenwich Management College, Greenwich Hospitality College) RTO: 91153, CRICOS: 02672K
- Brisbane Career College Pty Ltd (trading as SERO Institute) RTO: 32303, CRICOS: 03528K
- Capital Training Institute Pty Ltd RTO: 88145, CRICOS: 0399B
- Celtic Training Pty Ltd RTO: 40179

1.3. DEFINITIONS

Word/Term	Definition
Disability	i) total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or total or partial loss of a part of the body; or the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or ii) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or iii) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or iv) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or v) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in a disturbed behaviour; and vi) includes a disability that presently exists or previously existed but no longer exists, may exist in the future, or is imputed to a person.
Learning Management System (LMS)	A portal accessible by students to access their course content and other college resources. Canvas is an LMS used in NextEd, and others may be used from time to time.
Reasonable adjustment	An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with a disability to participate in training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it takes into account the student's learning needs and balances the interests of all parties affected, including the student, the provider, staff and other students.

2. Section 2 – Policy

2.1. PRINCIPLES

The Access, Equity and Support Policy and Procedure is committed to and guided by the principles of:

    i) Access
    ii) Equity
    iii) Fairness
    iv) Support for disadvantage

2.2. POLICY

NextEd will strive to meet the needs of individuals and the community as a whole, through fair treatment and the integration of access and equity guidelines. Current principles of social justice, including the Disability Standards for Education (2005), will be appropriately addressed in all aspects of its operations. These operational areas include enrolment, participation, curriculum development, training delivery and assessment, student support services, and include elimination of harassment and victimisation.

It is important to note that this access equity and support policy applies to all forums, chatrooms and correspondence within each college Learning Management System (LMS) or other student platforms. Acts of bullying and harassment, criminal activity, and offensive and graphic content will not be tolerated.

NextEd will ensure that equity principles for all people are implemented through the fair and reasonable allocation of resources and the right to equality of opportunity without discrimination. We will endeavour to provide opportunities for under-represented groups to participate in the vocational education and training system. This will be done through such means as the implementation of customer-oriented programs targeting the specific needs of market segments and ensuring that the opportunities and benefits of Commonwealth assistance are made equally available to all eligible students.

NextEd is committed to providing a fair environment for all students, with due consideration to the context of the circumstances applicable to that individual.

NextEd will develop quality support services that enhance individuals' chances to achieve positive outcomes.

3. Section 3 – Procedure

3.1. ONGOING ACTIONS

Student Services must:

i) Ensure the establishment of non-discriminatory student selection procedures which uphold the principle that all applicants seeking to enroll are treated fairly and equitably and encourage fair access for members of under-represented groups (such as people with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with a non-English-speaking background, Australian South Sea Islanders, people with language, literacy and numeracy difficulties, and older people).

ii) Ensure open, fair and transparent procedures for making decisions about the selection of students, which are based on the published clearly defined entry requirements, and that students are selected on merit, based on those requirements and on an individual case by case basis.

iii) Ensure access and equity issues are considered during development of training and assessment strategies; attention will be given to provision of a mix of appropriate instructional and assessment modes, support provided for students with special needs, and reasonable adjustment will be available.

iv) Provide access to staff development to assist staff who deliver training to under-represented groups.

v) Provide access to staff development to assist assessors meet the needs of a diverse range of clients.

3.2. ONLINE ETIQUETTE PROTOCOL

Student Guidelines: When communicating within the LMS online learning system you are expected to follow the same standards of behaviour as you would in a classroom situation and obey the rules of online etiquette:

i) Be respectful of your fellow students and all staff.

ii) Value the opinions of others. While you should feel free to disagree and present your own point of view you must do so in a manner that does not denigrate the opinions of others.

iii) Use appropriate language and never use language that could be found offensive.

iv) At no time attack others personally.

v) Do not act in a way that could constitute harassment, bullying or discrimination.

vi) The use of offensive, violent and graphic content is prohibited.

vii) Be careful of using CAPITAL LETTERS when posting. The use of CAPS can be interpreted as shouting.

viii) Use humor or sarcasm very carefully as this can often be misinterpreted.

Sexual exploitation is a serious offense. Sexual exploitation can include solicitation of sexual material, any sexual content involving minors, threats to share intimate images and offers of sexual services. Where appropriate, this content will be referred

to the relevant authority.

For the safety of our students, the LMS Student Platform is moderated by college staff, including the Education and Student Services teams. All colleges discourage the creation of external forums and sites by students for the purposes of between-student academic dialogue. As these forums are unable to be monitored, NextEd cannot ensure student safety in these external environments. Where students wish to create additional forums Student Services staff will assist with this process.

If you have any concerns or would like to report something you have viewed in an LMS, please refer to the SASH Policy and/or contact Student Services.

3.3.   IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIAL NEEDS

At the time of enrolment, every student is required to complete an Application for Enrolment, which is a contract between both parties for the delivery of education Implicit within this contract is the corporate policy to assist learners to attain the best possible outcome from the training service provided.

3.4.   LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND NUMERACY

Applicants or existing students identified with special needs regarding language, literacy or numeracy will be provided with assistance to maximise the possibility of a successful learning outcome. It should be noted that special needs do not constitute a disability. Without the accompaniment of a disability, each is a disadvantage and is not addressed by the Disability Standards.

The Admissions Supervisor in each college will consult with each student in private. Discussion will focus on the student's need(s), view of the assistance required, and how best to address the need(s). Possible options could be additional English language classes, special tutoring, and/or outsourcing of specialised assistance.

3.5.   DISABILITY

Each individual with a disability will have different needs, so it is not possible to implement a set of specialised services which will suit all students with disabilities. Instead, the following process recommended within the Disability Standards will be employed:

i) Consultation with the student – regarding all relevant circumstances and interests, including the student's needs, the disability (if applicable) and views on the assistance required.

ii) Consideration of whether a reasonable adjustment is necessary – would any adjustment be reasonable and to what extent would it achieve the aims?

iii) Identification of a reasonable adjustment if it is necessary – is there any other reasonable adjustment that would be less disruptive and intrusive and no less beneficial for the student?

iv) Making the reasonable adjustment – within a reasonable time according to the provision of relevant information in the student's possession about how they would be affected in relation to training.

This process must be repeated at regular intervals to ensure continuity in meeting the

changing needs of the learner.

Further information on working with people with a disability and information on agencies provided support for people with disabilities can be obtained from the following national website: http://www.acrod.org.au

3.6.   REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT

It is expected that a person with a disability will be able to advise their college regarding what adjustments are needed to be able to participate in the training and assessment. If necessary, advice will be sought from government agencies or support organisations to determine what needs to be done to accommodate the requirements of the individual.

The following factors will be considered:

     a. the nature of the individual's disability;

     b. the information provided by, or on behalf of, the student about how the disability affects them;

     c. ability to participate;

     d. the student's (or associate's) views about the adjustment;

     e. information provided by the student about their preferred adjustment;

     f. the effect of the adjustment on anyone else affected;

     g. the effect of the adjustment on the student, their ability to participate, achieve learning outcomes and operate independently; and

     h. the costs and benefits of making the adjustment.

Reasonable adjustment activities could involve, but not be limited to:

     i. providing additional lighting;

     j. providing an adjustable workstation or special seating;

     k. modifying equipment or providing special adaptive technologies such as voice-activated computer software, special keyboard, large screen monitor or associated aids;

     l. providing special assistance such as an interpreter for deaf candidates and provision of paper-based materials in advance of face-to-face sessions;

     m. adapting the training methodologies, without impacting on the delivery of the essential skills, knowledge and understanding required for the relevant competencies; and

     n. adapting the assessment methodologies, without impacting on the validity of the attainment of the relevant competencies. For example: allowance of extra time, varying question and response modalities (such as use of oral questioning rather than written, and audiotaped or videotaped answers instead of written answers).

The possibilities are considerable and staff members need to think laterally. For example: a learner with a physical impairment may not be able to physically undertake a certain activity, but they may be able to direct someone else to do so. In some cases, this will meet requirements.

3.7. UNJUSTIFIABLE HARDSHIP

Once an adjustment is considered reasonable in the circumstances, balancing the interests of all parties affected, the next step is to consider whether it would nonetheless impose unjustifiable hardship on the provider.

Where a claim of unjustifiable hardship is made, the reviewing officer will consider all the financial and other resources that are reasonably available for the purpose of making any necessary adjustments for the student, and the impact of those adjustments on their capacity to provide education of high quality to all students while remaining financially viable.

3.8.   SOURCES OF SUPPORT

There are many sources of support in the employment, training and assessment of a person who has a disability; some of these are listed under the Related External Sources section of this document.

3.9.   REPORTING

A student or staff member observing or experiencing behaviour, which may constitute a breach of this policy, whether by another staff member or by a student, must notify the Executive General Manager Group Quality, Accreditation & Compliance without delay.

3.10. PUBLICATION

This procedure is published on each NextEd education provider websites and relevant LMS, to ensure students have up-to-date and accurate information publicly available to them.

4. Section 3 – Reference and Supporting Information

4.1. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document name	Document type	Location
NextEd Group Enrolment and Admissions Policy	Policy	Each Website
NextEd Group Assessment Policy	Policy	Each Website
NextEd Employee Code of Conduct Policy	Policy	Group Intranet
NextEd Employee Privacy Policy	Policy	Group Intranet
NextEd Employee Employee Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy	Policy	Group Intranet

4.2. RELATED EXTERNAL REFERENCES

Sources of support for employment, training and assessment. There are many sources of support in the employment, training and assessment of a person who has a disability; some of these are listed below.

Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET)

ADECT provides information about inclusive post-secondary education and training teaching, learning and assessment strategies and support services for people who have a disability. Website: www.adcet.edu.au

Deaf Australia

Email: info@deafaustralia.org.au Website: deafaustralia.org.au

The Australian Federation of Deaf Societies (AFDS)

02 9550 2029, Mob: 0439 376 475, Email: executiveofficerafds@bigpond.com

Australian Network on Disability

1300 363 645 Email: info@and.org.au Website: www. https://www.and.org.au

Blind Citizens Australia

Freecall: 1800 033 660 Text: 0436446780 Email: bca@bca.org.au Website: www.bca.org.au

Brain Injury Australia

Freecall: 1800 BRAIN1 (1800 272 461) Email: admin@braininjuryaustralia.org.au Website: www.braininjuryaustralia.org.au

Carers Australia

(02) 6122 9900 Email: caa@carersaustralia.com.au Website: www.carersaustralia.com.au

Deafness Forum of Australia

The forum coordinates the annual National Hearing Awareness Week, held in the last complete week of August.

Email: info@deafnessforum.org.au Website: www.deafnessforum.org.au Website: www.hearingawareness.org.au

Department of Social Services (DSS)

The DSS network comprises of state and territory offices located throughout Australia.

- New South Wales / Australian Capital Territory
- Northern Territory
- Queensland
- South Australia
- Tasmania
- Victoria
- Western Australia

or access a standard, mobile, 1300, or 1900 DSS number:

- TTY users - phone 133 677 then ask for the phone number you wish to contact
- Speak and Listen (speech-to-speech relay) users - phone 1300 555 727 then ask for the phone number you wish to contact
- Internet relay users - visit the National Relay Service website and ask for the phone number you wish to contact.

To access a 1800 DSS number:

- TTY users - phone 1800 555 677 then ask for the 1800 toll-free number you wish to contact
- Speak and Listen (speech-to-speech relay) users - phone 1800 555 727 then ask for the 1800 toll-free number you wish to contact
- Internet relay users - visit the National Relay Service website and ask for the 1800 toll-free number you wish to contact.

ACT: 02 6274 5206	South Australia: 08 8236 6111
New South Wales: 02 9263 3818	Tasmania: 03 6221 1411
Northern Territory: 08 8946 3555	Victoria: 03 9285 8523
Queensland: 07 3360 2800	Western Australia: 08 9346 5311

Mental Health Foundation Australia

1300 643 287 (1300 MHF AUS) Email: admin@mhfa.org.au Website: www.mhfa.org.au

Council on Intellectual Disability

1800 424 065 Email: info@cid.org.au Website: cid.org.au/

National Ethnic Disability Alliance

02 6262 6867 or 0407 878 933. Website: www.neda.org.au

Physical Disability Australia

Phone: 1800 PDA ORG (1800 732 674) Email: manager@pda.org.au Website: www.pda.org.au

SANE Australia

Freecall: 1800 18 7263 Email: getsupport@sane.org info@sane.org Online chat: www.sane.org/# Website: www.sane.org

SAI Global

Standards Australia publications distributor. Email: sales@sai-global.com

Website: www.saiglobal.com

Standards Australia

Standards Australia develops standards and codes for building access. 1800 035 822 (Free call within Australia) Email: mail@standards.org.au

Website: www.standards.org.au

Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA)

0438 535 123 Email: officeadmin@wwda.org.au Website: www.wwda.org.au

5. Section 4 – Change History

CHANGE HISTORY

Version	Approval date	Approved by	Approved by	Change
V1.0	19 June 2017	AIT Principal Executive Officer	Group Manager	Development of Group Policy replacing existing entity level policies
		AIT Academic Dean		
V1.1	16 May 2018	Principal Executive Officer	Group Manager	
		AIT Academic Dean		
V1.2	05 September 2019	Group Accreditation & Compliance	Group Manager	Update to new AIT template
		AIT Technology & Design Division	General Manager	
V1.3	31 May 2022	Chief Executive Officer	Executive General Manager, Group Quality, Accreditation & Compliance	Update to new iCollege template; Update of Related external references list
V2.0	12 August 2022	Chief Executive Officer	Executive General Manager, Group Quality, Accreditation & Compliance	Update of Scope.
V2.1	23 February 2023	Chief Executive Officer	Executive General Manager, Group Quality, Accreditation & Compliance	Update to new NextEd template