

HEPP52 Inclusive Culture Policy and Procedure

PURPOSE

Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education) acknowledges, endorses and celebrates the value of cultural diversity. SCEI-HE will establish and implement policies and procedures that are inclusive and that actively promote inclusiveness in a positive learning and working environment.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff and students of Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education)

DEFINITIONS

SCEI-HE	Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education)
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POLICY

SCEI-HE aspires to be a community characterised by a pursuit for knowledge, learning achievement, academic excellence, ethical practices, and academic integrity. In all its pursuits, the institution is guided by a primary concern for equality of opportunity and equitable outcomes.

SCEI-HE distinguishes its identity by creating a welcoming community for all its students and staff that:

- Values and celebrates the cultural and social diversity of its community
- Demonstrates ongoing commitment to access and equity
- Encourages understanding, acceptance, tolerance, cooperation and compromise
- Demonstrates fair and ethical conduct toward all students, staff and visitors
- Always reflects SCEI-HE's core vision and mission to provide an enriching learning and working experience
- The importance of cross-cultural proficiency and understanding
- Aims to provide a learning and working environment that is reflective of Australia's diverse and multicultural society

A commitment to strengthening cultural diversity practices embodies SCEI-HE's core belief in providing an education and working experience for all that is sensitive to the cultural differences that exist within its community.

SCEI-HE has a particular commitment to the education of people of low socioeconomic backgrounds, thereby assisting the process of upward social mobility for many students. SCEI-HE is also committed to providing exemplary educational and employment opportunities to Indigenous Australians and new Australians.

A commitment is also made to international students by offering people from other countries a quality higher education alternative within Australia. These processes are beneficial for both local and international students by enabling people of different cultures and backgrounds the opportunity to work together and learn interactively with one another.

Policy objectives

The objectives of this policy are for SCEI-HE in its working, teaching, learning, research, and community engagement to:

1. give acknowledgement and support to all students of all cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds;
2. give specific support and encouragement to students of low socioeconomic circumstances, Indigenous heritage, and migrant backgrounds;
3. recognise the importance and value of the ever-evolving multicultural nature of Australian society;
4. provide a diverse and inspirational study and work environment which promotes and supports cultural diversity, and facilitates the development of insights into a range of cultures;
5. facilitate the successful participation within SCEI-HE's community, its courses, and activities, of students and staff from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds;
6. emphasis the commitment to cultural inclusiveness, in:
 - a. the content and delivery of courses and subjects, including work placements
 - b. the delivery of services across all areas of SCEI-HE;
7. inform students and staff so that they are capable of responding appropriately, sensitively, and justly in any cultural context;
8. attempt to redress any discriminatory or illegal conduct or practices which may result or have resulted directly or indirectly from cultural difference, or cultural identity and/or context;
9. endorse and promote cultural activities which celebrate the diversity of its staff and students; and
10. as far as is reasonably practicable, provide culturally appropriate support services for Australian Indigenous, domestic, and international students and staff.

SCEI-HE will develop and adapt its standards, policies, procedures, and practices to integrate the principles of inclusion, empathy, respect, and anti-discrimination.

Teaching and Learning

1. SCEI-HE will develop strategies to give effect to its commitment to ethical, inclusive, participatory, cross-cultural perspectives in the design and delivery of curricula.
2. Teaching and learning activities, including but not limited to curriculum design, subject content, delivery methods and assessment, will:
 - (a) provide an orientation to assist the introduction of students to the subject matter or discipline and to relevant academic performance expectations, and in particular will assist in the transition of students facing any degree of linguistic, personal, and intellectual challenges;
 - (b) include and incorporate cross-cultural content and diverse approaches to learning and ways of understanding;
 - (c) develop an open, safe, and inclusive approach which promotes learning from others and respects diversity of perspectives in learning discussions;
 - (d) educate and equip students to undertake research and assessments in a manner which observes ethical guidelines, and remains culturally appropriate;
 - (e) be designed and implemented to engage students of diverse cultural backgrounds;
 - (f) maintain a safe learning environment that forestalls marginalisation or isolation of students on the basis of cultural or socioeconomic difference.

Employment

1. Employment policies and procedures will, where appropriate, foster the social and cultural diversity of the SCEI-HE workforce.
2. SCEI-HE will investigate how it may best expand viable and sustainable employment of Australian Indigenous people.
3. SCEI-HE will conduct educational programs of relevance for its staff on cultural diversity on the basis of need

Decision-making

1. Decision-making within SCEI-HE will, wherever reasonably appropriate and practicable, be informed by input from staff and/or students from a diverse range of backgrounds.
2. To the extent reasonably possible, the membership of various associations, boards and committees will reflect the diversity of SCEI-HE's community.

Study and workplace culture

1. Consistent with the mission and vision of SCEI-HE, relevant standards, policies, guidelines, procedures and practices will support a culture in which all members of SCEI-HE's community:
 - a) value and have informed understanding and respect for cultural diversity in all interactions between and among:
 - I. students
 - II. students and staff
 - III. staff
 - IV. staff and contractors
 - (b) are sensitive to the requirements of students and staff whose first language is not English;
 - (c) have the right, within reasonable limits, to adhere to their cultural traditions and to express their opinions, while respecting the ideas and rights of others, without fear of discrimination, isolation, exclusion, harassment or bullying;
 - (d) recognise that visitors to and temporary residents in Australia are entitled, subject to relevant legislative provisions, to the same consideration and fair treatment as Australian citizens.
2. To the extent reasonably possible, SCEI-HE aims to make provisions:
 - (a) to promote the successful adjustment by, students of different cultural backgrounds to study within SCEI-HE;
 - (b) subject to available financial, human, and material resources, provide specific cultural facilities on SCEI-HE premises that cater to the cultural needs of all students and staff.

Support Services:**For managers:**

The SCEI-HE counsellor will provide mental health workshops for managers of each department, providing tailored mental health training geared around:

- i. Mental health awareness training on workplace culture, diversity and inclusion
- ii. Educating managers on the damaging mental health effects caused by staff not following inclusive culture policies and procedures

- iii. Teaching managers on how to first respond to employees that are not following workplace diversity and inclusion policies and procedures
- iv. Educating managers on mental health risks imposed on staff that are experiencing discrimination, exclusion and no sense of belonging

The SCEI-HE counsellor will provide support for managers who have and/or currently are experiencing any form of workplace discrimination or bullying due to diversity and inclusion

The SCEI-HE counsellor will share useful resources and tools to managers on how to handle mental repercussions of issues with diversity, inclusion and culture. These resources will be accessible at all times, to all managers

For all staff:

The SCEI-HE counsellor will provide mental health workshops for all staff members, providing mental health training geared around:

- i. Mental health awareness training on culture, diversity and inclusion
- ii. Educating staff on the damaging mental health effects caused by not following inclusive culture policies and procedures
- iii. Teaching staff on how to first respond to colleagues and students who are not following the diversity and inclusion policies and procedures
- iv. Educating staff on mental health risks imposed on students that are experiencing discrimination, exclusion and a lack of sense of belonging
- v. Creating mental health awareness activities in groups for staff members, relative to diversity, culture and inclusion

The SCEI-HE counsellor will provide one-on-one emotional management and support for staff who have and/or currently are experiencing any form of workplace discrimination or bullying due to diversity and inclusion

The SCEI-HE counsellor will always ensure confidentiality and autonomy, unless the individual is in high risk of danger to themselves or to others

The SCEI-HE counsellor will share useful resources and tools to staff on how to handle mental repercussions of issues with diversity, inclusion and culture. These resources will be accessible at all times, to all staff

The SCEI-HE counsellor will have a referral system in place for all staff members who are in need of ongoing mental health support management

For students:

The SCEI-HE counsellor will provide one-on-one emotional management and support for students who have and/or currently are experiencing any form of workplace discrimination or bullying due to diversity and inclusion

The SCEI-HE counsellor will always ensure confidentiality and autonomy, unless the individual is in high risk of danger to themselves or to others

The SCEI-HE counsellor will share useful mental health self-management resources and tools to students, relative to issues of diversity, inclusion and culture. These resources will be accessible on Moodle at all times, for all SCEI-HE students

The SCEI-HE counsellor will have a referral system in place for students who are in need of further, professional, external mental health care

RELATED DOCUMENTS

HEMIS14 Student Charter
HEPP06 Freedom of Speech and Academic Inquiry Policy and Procedure
HEPP07 Student Conduct Policy
HEPP20 Recruitment Policy and Procedure
HEPP27 Staff Code of Conduct Policy
HEPP37 Admissions Policy and Procedure
HEPP47 Student Misconduct Policy and Procedure

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cwlth)
The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Cwlth)
The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth)
The Racial Hatred Act 1995 (Cwlth)
The Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (VIC)
The Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (VIC)
The National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, known as 'the National Code 2018 - Standard 6 (specifically 6.1)

RESPONSIBILITIES

All Staff and Students are responsible for the implementation of this policy.
Overall responsibility lies with the Corporate Board.

Original Author	VET Compliance Manager
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