



BULLYING, DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT POLICY & PROCEDURE

Introduction

The Australian Academy of Commerce (AAC) is committed to providing an environment where every individual is treated with respect, dignity and fairness. This policy outlines AAC's zero-tolerance approach to bullying, harassment and discrimination, ensuring a safe and inclusive environment for all students, staff and stakeholders. This policy complies with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 and National Code 2018, and English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (EICOS) Standards 2018; and aligns with AAC's values of equity and mutual respect.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework for preventing and addressing bullying, discrimination and harassment within AAC. This policy aims to:

1. Promote a culture of respect, inclusivity and safety for all students, staff and stakeholders.
2. Ensure a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, discrimination and harassment.
3. Provide clear guidelines for reporting, investigation and responding to incidents.
4. Ensure that appropriate support mechanisms are available to individuals who experience or witness bullying, discrimination and harassment.

Scope

This policy applies to all members of the AAC community, including domestic and international students enrolled in ELICOS and VET courses and staff, contractors and stakeholders engaged with AAC.

Policy Statement

AAC has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, discrimination and harassment in any form.

All members of the AAC community have a right to:

- Work and study in an environment free from bullying, discrimination and harassment.
- Access support and redress mechanisms.

AAC will:

- Provide regular training and awareness programs
- Ensure clear reporting mechanisms are in place
- Respond promptly and sensitively to all allegations of Sexual Assault or Sexual Harassment (SASH).

Definitions

Bullying	Repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards an individual or group that creates a risk to health and safety; including verbal, physical, social or psychological harm.
Discrimination	Treating someone unfairly or less favourable based on characteristics such as race, gender, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation or other protected attributes.
Harassment	Unwelcome conduct that makes a person feel intimidated, humiliated or offended. This includes sexual harassment.



Sexual Harassment	Unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature such as inappropriate or unwelcome comments or jokes or sharing or displaying explicit images or messages.
Victimisation	Retaliating against an individual who has made a complaint or assisted in an investigation related to bullying, discrimination or harassment.

References

- Disability Discrimination Act 1984
- ESOS Act 2000
- ELICOS Standards 2018
- ESOS National Code 2018
- Fair Work Act 2009
- NVR Act 2011
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Standards for RTOs 2015

Related AAC Policies and Procedures

- Access, Equity and Mutual Obligation Policy and Procedure
- Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Critical Incident Policy and Procedure
- Orientation and Transition Support Policy and Procedure
- Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct
- Student Handbook
- Support for Students Policy and Procedure
- Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) Policy and Procedure

Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Reporting and Response Procedure

1. Reporting an Incident

Any member of the AAC community who experiences or witnesses bullying, harassment or discrimination is encouraged to report the incident promptly. Reports can be made to the Student Services Officer (SSO) via email, phone, in person, or through anonymous reporting mechanisms where available.

2. Immediate Response

AAC will prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the individuals involved. Support services will be made available, and appropriate actions to secure the environment will be taken promptly. In reporting incidents, individuals may seek informal resolution with the person directly involved (with support person if required) or make a formal complaint. In the case of assault or injury, onsite security and/or emergency services such as ambulance and/or police should be contacted.

3. Support and Resources

AAC will provide support services to individuals who have experienced bullying, discrimination or harassment. These may include mediation, counselling and where required academic adjustments (such as extensions, deferrals or modifications).

4. Investigation Procedures

AAC will conduct a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into all reports of Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment in line with AAC's *Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure*

- The SSO will acknowledge receipt of the report within twenty-four (24) hours.
- A preliminary assessment will be initiated to determine appropriate actions.
- External investigators will be engaged if necessary.
- Appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken against individuals found responsible for incidents of Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment. Sanctions may include, but not limited to, mediations, warnings, probation, suspension, or cancellation. AAC may also recommend external mediation or legal action where appropriate.

5. Prevention and Education

AAC is committed to promoting awareness and prevention of Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment, through:

- Regular training for staff and students on identifying and preventing bullying, discrimination and harassment.
- Awareness campaigns, including posters, newsletters and workshops.
- Incorporating of respect and inclusivity principles into Orientation programs for all new students and staff.

6. Confidentiality and Privacy

AAC will treat all reports with strict confidentiality. Information will only be shared with consent from the individuals involved or as required by law.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
CEO	Ensures organisational compliance with Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment policy. Provide leadership in promoting a culture of respect and inclusivity.
Compliance Officer	Oversees policy implementation and reviews. Ensure policy aligns with current legal and regulatory requirements.
Student Services Officer (SSO)	Provides initial support, guidance and referrals to relevant services for individuals reporting incidents. Facilitate mediation and informal resolutions processes where appropriate. Ensure all reports are documented and escalated as needed.
Staff	Uphold AAC's zero-tolerance policy and model appropriate behaviour. Participate in training and awareness programs. Support students and colleagues by reporting incidents and promoting a culture of respect.
Students	Treat all members of the AAC community with respect. Refrain from engaging in bullying, harassment or discrimination and report any incidents they witness or experience.



Monitoring and Review

AAC reviews the Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment policy and processes annually to ensure effectiveness in preventing and responding to reports of bullying, harassment and discrimination and alignment with updated legislative and regulatory requirements.

Version Control

Version	Date	Description	Approved by	Approval date	Author	Review date
V1.0	Jan 2025	New policy for AAC.	CEO	17 Feb 2025	Compliance Team	Jan 2026

Policy and Document Information

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