

PROCEDURE S7.4-P7.4

STUDENT DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Related Policy

Student Diversity and Equity Policy

1.2 Purpose

This procedure outlines the manner in which the AIM Business School (ABS) provides supportive pathways for new and existing students with diverse backgrounds and disabilities. This procedure ensures fair and equitable access and support to all ABS services for all students and ensures that ABS promotes inclusive practices across its core operational areas.

1.3 Scope

This procedure applies to all prospective and existing students of ABS and its Third-Party Partners (TPPs) irrespective of location, activity, premises, or mode of study.

This procedure also applies to academic and non-academic staff in terms of the actions required to support students with differing needs and from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds.

1.4 Scope Exceptions

None.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

1. All professional and academic staff of ABS including staff of TPPs are required to uphold the principles of access and equity as outlined in the Student Diversity and Equity Policy as they carry out their normal duties of work.
2. Marketing staff are required to design and develop marketing collateral (both physical and digital) that accommodate the principles of access and equity and are sensitive to cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds of prospective students.
3. ABS is required to publish information on its website which includes information on student support including disability support services.
4. Admissions staff are required to ensure that prospective students are provided with information on the support services offered by ABS and the availability of consideration for disability adjustment.

5. Students seeking consideration of a disability are required to provide documentary proof to support their application when requested.
6. Students who have received approval for consideration of a disability are required to advise the ABS Student Support Team if their circumstances change, or they are no longer in need of disability support.
7. Students who have been placed on an Access Plan are required to comply with the requirements of the plan at all times.
8. The Head of School, ABS is required to assess consideration for disability applications based upon information provided by the student and advice from internal and/ external organisations. The Head of School, ABS will advise the Admissions staff of their decision. The Head of School, ABS is also required to monitor the implementation of disability Access Plans and ensure the student is being provided with the requisite support outlined in the special consideration approval.
9. Academic Staff are required to ensure that access and equity principles are considered during the development of curriculum and are required to apprise themselves of the details of students with a disability and their Access Plans, and accommodate their requirements during teaching and learning and/ or assessment events.
10. The CEO is required to ensure that appropriate funding and access to staff development is available to all staff that engage with students who are seeking to have or who have had disability applications considered.

3.0 PROCEDURE

3.1 Pre-enrolment

- a. During the pre-enrolment process, Admissions staff provide prospective students with information about Access Plans and the support services ABS has available.
- b. Admissions staff use non-discriminatory student selection procedures and assess applications on their merit. These staff ensure open, fair, and transparent procedures are used for making decisions about the selection of students, which are based on the published and clearly defined entry requirements. Students are selected on merit, based on those requirements and on an individual case by case basis in consultation with the Academic Dean, ABS. Where a prospective student may have further questions regarding their enrolment, they may direct these questions to the Admissions staff.
- c. During the online application process, students are able to voluntarily indicate on the application if they have any disability that may impact their enrolment or cause barriers in achieving the outcomes of their chosen course.
- d. Where a student discloses a disability, the student will append supporting documentation as part of the application for enrolment process.

- e. Upon assessing the application, the Academic Dean, ABS will assess the disability application and determine if reasonable adjustments may be accommodated (see 3.3 Assessment of Disabilities and Reasonable Adjustment below). If they can be accommodated, the Academic Dean, ABS will communicate this to the student in writing, detailing in the Support Plan the adjustments that can be provided. The student must review the proposed Support Plan and confirm if they wish to proceed with their enrolment.

3.2 Post-enrolment

- a. The Academic Dean, ABS or nominee ensures that students requiring special consideration are supported and meets regularly with those students to ensure that the students are satisfied with the level of support.
- b. Head Success Coach, ABS Student Support, and Academic Staff are required to update the Academic Dean, ABS on the status of a student's compliance with their Access Plan, as necessary.
- c. Where a student is found to be not complying with the requirements of their Access Plan they will be required to meet with the Academic Dean, ABS and provide information as to why they are not meeting the requirements. The Academic Dean, ABS will document the meeting outcomes and require the student to increase the frequency of meetings to ensure they meet the ongoing requirements. Where a student continues to not meet the requirements of their Access Plan and, in the opinion of the Academic Dean, ABS, the student refuses to comply, then the Academic Dean, ABS may invoke the Student Code of Conduct.
- d. At the end of each study period the Academic Dean, ABS will ensure that a review of special consideration is conducted for all affected students. This review will ensure continuity in meeting the changing needs of the student.
- e. The Academic Dean, ABS will discuss at the Teaching and Learning Committee the performance and feedback collected from students on Access Plans.
- f. On an annual basis, the Academic Dean, ABS will ensure that all staff are provided with access to staff development to assist them to meet the needs of the diverse ABS student body.

3.3 Assessment of disabilities and the provision of reasonable adjustment

- a. Where a student has disclosed a disability and/ or has made a request for reasonable adjustment on their application form, the Admissions team will notify the Academic Dean, ABS who will then schedule a meeting to discuss their individual requirements. The meeting will allow the student to discuss all relevant circumstances, including the student's needs, the reasonable adjustment being sought, and the student's view on the assistance required. This meeting must be held prior to ABS accepting the student's formal application for enrolment.
- b. If the student has already been admitted, their application for reasonable adjustment may be made through Student Support and will be referred by

Student Support to the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean will meet with the student to discuss all relevant circumstances and interests, including the student's needs, the reasonable adjustment being sought, and the student's view on the assistance required.

- c. The meeting between the Academic Dean ABS and the student will consider the following:
 - i. the nature of the individual's disability;
 - ii. the information provided by the student (e.g., information from doctor, psychologist, learning disability specialist etc.) and how the disability may have an impact on the student's learning environment and the actions ABS could take to accommodate their disability;
 - iii. information provided by the student about his or her preferred adjustment;
 - iv. the Access Plan, potential adjustments, and the student's views on the proposed adjustment;
 - v. the effect of the adjustment on anyone else affected;
 - vi. the effect of the adjustment on the student, their ability to participate, achieve learning outcomes and operate independently; and
 - vii. the costs and benefits of making the adjustment.
- d. Reasonable adjustment activities in the Access Plan could involve, but are not limited to, the following:
 - i. additional time for exams (if exams are used for assessment);
 - ii. extensions for assessments;
 - iii. adapting the assessment methodologies, without impacting on the validity of the attainment of the relevant standards;
 - iv. changes to attendance requirements;
 - v. providing special assistance such as provision of paper-based materials in advance of face-to-face sessions;
 - vi. recording of lectures/ tutorials for those that are deaf or hard of hearing;
 - vii. Printing assessment materials on different coloured paper; and
 - viii. except where it involves an Unjustifiable Hardship for ABS, providing other potential alternatives suggested by the student, based on previous experience and evidence of practice at other educational providers.

- e. If the Academic Dean, ABS requires further information to assist and inform his/her decision, then they will seek advice from relevant government agencies, support organisations or specialists in the disability area to determine what needs to be done to accommodate the requirements of the student. The Academic Dean must seek the student's permission if they are going to identify the student in these circumstances.
- f. Where an individual has indicated that they are from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) background and has requested further support, the Academic Dean, ABS will have a confidential discussion with the student to determine what academic and non-academic support is required and the resources needed to provide the requested support. Further details on the support to be provided to students from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background is provided in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Support Framework.
- g. If the adjustment is reasonable (and in the opinion of the Academic Dean, would not cause Unjustifiable Hardship on ABS - see 3.4 below) and is within the capacity of ABS, the adjustment will be made 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 their course.
- h. The Academic Dean, ABS will communicate their decision in writing to all relevant stakeholders including but not limited to Admissions, Academic Learning Advisers and Facilitators. In communicating their decision, the Academic Dean, ABS will only advise of the reasonable adjustment, and not the cause of the adjustment. The Academic Dean, ABS will observe all relevant privacy principles and protect the privacy of the student. A copy of the decision will be placed on the student's private file, and access to this file will be in accordance with ABS's Privacy of Student Information and Records Policy.

3.4 Unjustifiable Hardship

- a. 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 ABS.
- b. Where a claim of unjustifiable hardship is made, ABS will take into account 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 ABS's capacity to provide education of high quality to all students while remaining financially viable.
- c. ABS should seek the advice of relevant external parties to help meet the needs of the student and to implement a financially viable option for the student, where reasonably possible.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- **ATSI** - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

- **Access** - The principle of the fair and equitable provision of all services provided by ABS that are free of any form of discrimination irrespective of a person's country of birth, language, culture, race or religion.
- **Equity** - The principle of the provision of services by ABS that are developed and delivered on the basis of fair treatment of all students who are eligible to receive them, irrespective of background.
- **Disability** - as defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, meaning:
 - a. total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
 - b. total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
 - c. the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
 - d. the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
 - e. the malfunction, malformation, or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
 - f. a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
 - g. a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour;

and includes a disability that:

- h. presently exists; or
- i. previously existed but no longer exists; or
- j. may exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability); or
- k. is imputed to a person.

To avoid doubt, a **disability** that is otherwise covered by this definition includes behaviour that is a symptom or manifestation of the disability.

- **Reasonable adjustment** - A measure or action taken by ABS to assist a student with a disability to participate in a course of study 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.
- **Student** - Refers to domestic and international ABS students.

5.0 REFERENCES AND ASSOCIATED INFORMATION

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Support Framework

- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cwlth)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (QLD)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cwlth)
- Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination (Staff and Students) Policy
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth)
- Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cwlth)
- Domestic Selection and Admissions Policy
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (VIC)
- Privacy of Student Information and Records Policy
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cwlth)
- Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention and Response (Students and Staff) Policy
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cwlth)
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct
- Student Progression and Support Policy

6.0 POLICY/PROCEDURE OWNERSHIP

Policy Owner	Executive Director, ABS
Status	Reviewed on November 2022
Approval Authority	ABS Corporate Board
Date of Approval	06/12/2022
Effective Date	11 January 2023
Implementation Owner	Academic Dean, ABS
Maintenance Owner	Head of Compliance
Review Due	November 2025
Content Enquiries	Sabina Cerimagic - Academic Dean Email: sabina.cerimagic@aimbusinessschool.edu.au

7.0 AMENDMENTS

Version	Amendment Approval (Date)	Amendment Made By (Position)	Amendment Details
S7.0-P7.0	10 July 2017	Head of Compliance / Director ABS	Initial document review after purchase of MHMHE
S7.1-P7.1	10 March 2020	Academic Board	

Version	Amendment Approval (Date)	Amendment Made By (Position)	Amendment Details
S7.2-P7.2	18 January 2021	Academic Board	Further details added on support to be provided to students from ATSI background
S7.3-P7.3	21 October 2021	Corporate Board	<p>Separation of Policy and Procedure.</p> <p>New proforma.</p> <p>Added the responsibilities of a student in relation to the Student Support Agreement they have signed.</p> <p>Added reference to third party.</p> <p>Added that the ABS website has to be updated with information on student support and student services as well as specialist support services and groups.</p> <p>Added information about handling/directing enquiries/questions regarding topics not covered in ABS information.</p> <p>Added that the admission documents will include reference to the ASP and an ASP must be accepted by the student.</p>
S7.4-P7.4	06 December 2022	Head of Compliance	Material change to staff titles and related templates.