

Diversity and Equal Opportunity Policy

1.0 PURPOSE

Youth2Industry College is committed to a diverse workforce and a workplace that is free from discrimination and harassment and as such Y2IC is an equal opportunity employer committed to providing a safe environment where all employees are treated fairly and with dignity.

This policy outlines the practices and principles to ensure that people are treated as individuals, respected for their unique attributes and not excluded, harassed or bullied in any way, through unconscious bias, stereotypes or unlawful actions that may form the basis of discrimination, harassment, vilification or victimisation.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to Youth2Industry College staff, students and other stakeholders connected with all Youth2Industry College activities including:

- Education (teaching and learning, enrolment, student management, student services, curriculum development and delivery, etc.)
- The provision of services (vocational education services, employment services, advocacy services, welfare/career counselling services, information forums, access to facilities etc.)
- Employment (recruitment, allocation of duties, employment conditions, access to benefits such as training, promotion and leave, etc.)

This document will be available at reception, SharePoint and included in both the Student and Staff handbooks.

3.0 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Equal opportunity is a requirement under both Victorian and Commonwealth legislation. In Victoria, the key legislation which makes it unlawful to discriminate is the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic).

Other relevant laws in Victoria are the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic) and the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic).

At the Commonwealth level, there is a range of legislation which provides for equal opportunity including the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth), the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth), the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth), the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) and the Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth).

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION

The Youth2Industry College is committed to promoting diversity and equal opportunity in employment and education.

The Youth2Industry College is committed to being fair, equitable and sensitive to the diverse needs of our students, staff and other stakeholders, in all its policies and practices, and to supporting access by marginalised groups with due regard and respect.

Youth2Industry College will actively promote diversity and equal opportunity by:

- Creating an environment where students, staff and other workers are able to work effectively, without fear of discrimination or harassment
- Providing effective mechanisms to resolve equal opportunity-related complaints
- Using non-discriminatory, inclusive language and practices
- Developing and operating programs to increase access and promote success in education and employment for marginalised groups in order to overcome disadvantage
- Ensuring that all Youth2Industry College students, staff and other workers have access to benefits and services in an equitable manner
- Consulting stakeholders to ensure positive outcomes
- Developing, implementing, monitoring and reporting on strategies and plans

The Youth2Industry College collects and analyses, stakeholder and client feedback and satisfaction data on the services we provide. Information collected is used in the review of policies and procedures. The Youth2Industry College develops and implements improvement systems at every opportunity.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Equal opportunity means that Youth2Industry College staff and other stakeholders experience fairness, impartiality and equal access to opportunities, services and programs developed and delivered by the Youth2Industry College.

5.1 In employment

Equal opportunity in employment includes the principle of selection and promotion of staff on merit, which precludes irrelevant personal attributes. Fair and transparent processes are applied in assessing the capacity of a person to perform the inherent requirements of a position, having regard to the person's knowledge, skills, qualifications and experience and their potential for future development.

5.2 In service provision

Equal opportunity in service provision includes the principle of providing access to participants on merit and eligibility. This precludes irrelevant personal attributes. Fair and transparent processes are applied in assessing the eligibility and capacity of a participant against specified requirements to access and participate in Youth2Industry College programs and services.

6.0 DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is unacceptable at the Youth2Industry College.

Discrimination means treating someone unfairly because of a personal characteristic protected by law, and causing them to be disadvantaged as a result. Unlawful discrimination can occur when someone, or a group of people, is treated less favourably than another person or group because of a specified attribute such as:

- Race, including colour, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status, gender, pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Marital, carer or other relationship status or responsibilities
- Age
- Disability
- Sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status, expunged homosexual conviction
- Religious or political opinion/activity
- Employment or industrial activity
- Physical features or
- Any other similar characteristics

Discrimination may be direct or indirect – both are against the law.

6.1 Direct discrimination could include:

- Refusing to enrol a student because he/she has Hepatitis C
- Refusing to allow a Muslim student to wear the hijab
- Failing to hire a suitably qualified job applicant because of their sexual orientation

Direct discrimination in employment could also include:

- Recruitment practices, such as how positions are advertised and how interviews are conducted
- Being offered unfair terms and conditions of employment
- Being denied training opportunities, promotion, transfers, performance pay or other employment-related benefits
- Being unfairly dismissed retrenched or demoted

6.2 Indirect discrimination happens when a rule, policy or requirement unnecessarily or unreasonably disadvantages a person or group of people because of a protected personal characteristic they share, for example:

- Imposing a requirement that all students take notes from the whiteboard without assistance may unreasonably disadvantage a student with vision impairment

7.0 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature towards another person which could reasonably be expected to make that other person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Sexual harassment can be physical, verbal, visual or written. Sexual harassment is an unacceptable form of behaviour that will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Refer to QMS: 422 Y2IC Anti-bullying Harassment Policy.

8.0 VILIFICATION

Racial and religious vilification is unacceptable at the Youth2Industry College.

Vilification is behaviour (through words or actions) that incites hatred, serious contempt or ridicule of another person or group of people because of their race or religious belief, such as:

- Public threats of harm
- Encouraging others to hate someone because of their religion
- Racist statements made in a public meeting
- Racist graffiti

9.0 VICTIMISATION

Victimisation means treating someone unfairly or otherwise disadvantaging them because they have made a complaint or might do so in the future. Victimisation is regarded as a serious breach of conduct and will automatically result in a formal investigation. If proven, this may result in disciplinary action being taken against the perpetrator, which may include dismissal. It is against the law to victimise a person for making a complaint about bullying, discrimination, harassment or sexual harassment, or racial and religious vilification.

10.0 REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Both Commonwealth and Victorian legislation require employers to make reasonable adjustments for employees with a disability. A range of factors must be considered in determining whether an adjustment is reasonable, including:

- The person's circumstances, including the nature of their disability
- The nature of the employee's role or the role that is being offered
- The nature of the adjustment required to accommodate the employee's disability
- The financial circumstances of the employer
- The size and nature of the workplace
- The effect on the workplace of making the adjustment, including the financial impact, the number of persons who would benefit or be disadvantaged by doing so, and the impact on efficiency and productivity and, if applicable, on customer service of doing so
- The consequences for the person or employee of not making the adjustment
- The consequences for the employer of making the adjustment

11.0 WORKPLACE DIVERSITY STRATEGIES

The diversity of Youth2Industry College's employees is our greatest strength. Youth2Industry College recognises the benefits of supporting and maintaining an inclusive work environment where employees can contribute their full potential by having their diverse strengths recognised and supported.

To this end, the Youth2Industry College workplace diversity strategies aims to:

- Develop and implement fair and equitable recruitment and employment practices and conditions for all workers and potential workers, regardless of their personal characteristics
- Use our people's differences to improve College performance and outcomes
- Enhance opportunities for employees to contribute to Youth2Industry College projects
- Prevent and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination in the workplace
- Ensure workplace structures, conditions, systems and processes foster diversity and allow employees to manage work and personal life
- Promote the value of diversity to our clients and stakeholders and the broader community
- Provide an effective grievance procedure to address incidents of workplace harassment and discrimination

Behaviours and actions of Youth2Industry College employees are aligned with the Youth2Industry College values:

- Workplace structures and conditions should enable Youth2Industry College employees to contribute their potential at work while taking into account personal commitments and interests outside of work
- Decisions affecting employees should take into account their individual needs
- Communication should recognise our diverse workforce and use inclusive language
- Decisions affecting employees should be based on facts and be free of discrimination

Benefits of workplace diversity strategies for the Youth2Industry College include:

- Improved recruitment and higher retention rates through being an employer of choice
- Reduced workplace stress and conflict; and improved work attendance
- Reduced professional development/training costs due to lower staff turnover
- Greater sense of unity as an organisation
- Better relationships with clients, stakeholders and the broader community

12.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Each employee needs to:

- Be aware of this policy and Youth2Industry College workplace diversity strategies and contribute to their achievement
- Behave in a way that is consistent with this policy
- Ensure their behaviour is aligned with the Youth2Industry College values
- Respect different ways of thinking and working to maintain a workplace that is free from discrimination and harassment
- Support employees who access reasonable adjustment and flexible work arrangements

Each Manager and/or Team Leader needs to:

- Practise and promote behaviour consistent with Youth2Industry College values
- Incorporate workplace diversity principles into their team and management practices.
- Recognise and use the diverse skills and knowledge of employees
- Support employees who require reasonable adjustment and flexible work arrangements
- Resolve workplace issues quickly, sensitively and effectively where possible
- Ensure meetings, travel and other work arrangements do not place inappropriate pressure on employees with personal or family commitments
- Consider innovative job design solutions to meet business and employee needs
- Recognise employees that have demonstrated commitment to workplace diversity strategies.

13.0 REPORTING OR MAKING A COMPLAINT

Employees can report or make a complaint about any incident of discrimination or harassment to Principal or to the College Board where the Principal is involved.

The procedures for dealing with allegations of discrimination or harassment and possible consequences regarding any breach of this policy are dealt with in QMS: 424 Complaints, Grievances and Disputes Policy.

The Department encourages any employee who believes they have been the victim of a criminal offence to report the incident to the Victoria Police as soon as possible, as well as reporting the matter to Principal.

If a complaint of discrimination or harassment is made, observed or brought to the attention of the Principal or Manager/Team Leader it must be acted upon immediately and managed in a sensitive and confidential manner.

Where discrimination or harassment is found to be substantiated, the consequences for the person against whom the complaint is made will depend on the particular circumstances. The consequences may include an apology, counselling, undertaking training, or disciplinary action including termination of employment.

14.0 SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE

Support is available to all staff involved in reporting and managing a complaint, even after the matter has been resolved. The College encourages all employees to speak to their Manager or Principal to discuss any questions or concerns they may have regarding the conduct of any staff member.

Employees can also seek support from the College Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

15.0 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- QMS: 422 Y2IC Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy
- QMS:424 Y2IC Complaints, Grievances and Disputes Policy and Procedure
- QMS: 429 Y2IC Student Behaviour Management Policy

VERSION CONTROL DETAILS

Revision History

Date	Version	Author	Change Reference
25/5/2020	1.0	P. Vakakis	Initial Policy
16/1/2024	2.0	P. Vakakis	Strengthened reference to complaints and support

Reviewers

Date	Version	Approved By	Next Review Date
25/5/2020	1.0	Y2IC Board	May 2023
17/1/2024	2.0	T. Witenden	Jan 2026