

# Equity, Diversity and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Framework and Policy

<b>Supporting plans, policies and procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Privacy Policy</li> <li>• Academic Progression and At-Risk Student Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• Admissions and Enrolment Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• Marketing and Student Recruitment Policy</li> <li>• Student Welfare, Wellbeing and Support Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• Course and Unit Development and Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• Learning and Teaching Policy</li> <li>• Learning and Teaching Plan</li> <li>• Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• Student Orientation Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure</li> </ul>
<b>Related legislation and references</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021</li> <li>• Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011</li> </ul>
<b>Version</b>	3.0
<b>Approved by</b>	Board of Directors and Academic Board
<b>Date approved</b>	23 July 2021
<b>Document Review</b>	This document is to be reviewed every two-years at a minimum from the date of final approval

<b>Version</b>	<b>Review Date and Person/Body</b>	<b>Notes</b>
0.1	Draft prepared by CEO and approved at 7 January 2020 Board of Directors meeting	
1.0	Reviewed by Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) on 4 February 2020	LTC recommends that the AB approves this policy
1.1	Presented to Academic Board on 18 February 2020 for review and approval	
2.0	Approved by the Academic Board on 18 February 2020	
2.1	Reviewed and approved at 20 October 2020 Academic Board meeting	Minor amendments following comments from external reviewers
	Reviewed and approved at 28 October 2020 Board of Directors meeting	
3.0	Reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors and Academic Board via email circulation on 23 July 2021	Updates made following the response to the TEQSA Request for Information 23 July 2021

## Background and Scope

This document outlines MIHE's approach to equity and diversity and includes the approach to recruitment, admission, participation and completion of all students including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. MIHE's approach ensures the recognition and accommodation of student diversity to create equivalent opportunities for academic success regardless of a student's background.

This policy applies to all MIHE students, prospective students and staff.

## Definitions

Refer to Glossary of Terms.

## Policy

MIHE promotes and supports diversity in students and staff and recognises that different students require different levels of support and assistance. MIHE will provide support to students to assist them in achieving success in their academic endeavours as outlined in the *Student Welfare, Wellbeing and Support Policy and Procedure* and the *Academic Progression and At-Risk Student Policy and Procedure*.

Students regardless of having a mental or physical condition or disability (and regardless of socioeconomic, educational, religious or cultural backgrounds) must be afforded the same opportunity to succeed in their academic endeavours. MIHE recognises groups of under-represented students including students from non-English speaking background (NESB), students with disability, women in non-traditional areas of study (WINTA), students from low socio-economic status (LSES), students from regional and remote areas and students who are first in their family to attend a higher education institution. All individuals have the right to enrol in MIHE's higher education courses without any prejudice. MIHE is committed to providing access to its educational services and support to all students without any discrimination. All staff must respect the rights of others and treat individuals fairly.

Support and/or reasonable adjustments will be made for students that require additional support and/or reasonable adjustments so that they have the best opportunity to succeed in their academic endeavours.

MIHE is committed to promoting equity and diversity amongst student cohorts and will commit to continuously improving its policies, procedures, approaches to teaching, learning and support to achieve this.

Furthermore, MIHE has the following plans, policies and procedures which will be applied fairly and consistently to all students and staff:

MIHE's *Admissions Policy and Procedure* includes special consideration provided to prospective students from under-represented or disadvantaged backgrounds, including people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

MIHE's *Learning and Teaching Policy and Plan* considers requirements and adjustments required for students from under-represented or disadvantaged backgrounds.

MIHE's *Academic Progression and At-Risk Student Policy and Procedure* and *Student Wellbeing and Support Policy and Procedure* also consider and support students from under-represented or disadvantaged backgrounds.

All students have the right to object and complain in a case where bullying, harassment or discrimination occurs in any form (see *Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination Policy and Procedure*). Any complaints about breaches of this policy will be addressed in accordance with the *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure*.

## Document Review

Cohort data is collected in the Student Management System (Wisenet) during admission and is updated ongoingly, including when students become 'at risk'. All policies and procedures are reviewed at a minimum of every two years. Prior to review, cohort data will be extracted from the Student Management System to inform improvements.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Framework

MIHE acknowledges that barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples' success in higher education remain and appropriate institutional responses are required to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In accordance with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 specific consideration is given to the recruitment, admission, participation and completion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, notwithstanding that this is not MIHE's target market.

### Recruitment and Admission

Students who identify as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person may be eligible for special consideration for enrolment and admission as a student at MIHE (refer to the *Admissions and Enrolment Policy and Procedure*). To be eligible for special consideration, students who identify as

being an Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander decent must satisfy the following: 1) be of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent; 2) identify themselves as being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent when making an application; 3) be accepted as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person in the community where they lived (or have lived); and 4) be able to provide evidence of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. Once these points are satisfied and the relevant documentary evidence provided, prospective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will be asked to attend an interview at the MIHE campus. The interview will be conducted by a senior member of staff, which may include the CEO and/or the Dean. The purpose of the interview is to assess what/if additional support is required to provide the student with the best opportunity to succeed in their academic endeavours. Additional support can include and is not limited to 1) English Language Support; 2) additional Academic and Tutorial Support; 3) additional IT and Systems Support; 4) Counselling and Mental Health Services; 5) Cultural Support; and 6) Pastoral Support.

## **Participation**

MIHE will provide support and assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to encourage their full participation in their course of study, including through understanding their current educational achievements and capabilities and addressing any gaps through the provision of additional support. MIHE will encourage communication, self-reflection and self-determination in assessing the need and actively seeking support available at MIHE.

MIHE will work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student encourage early intervention where the student requires additional support and will be considerate of issues that impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' socio-economic and cultural priorities. As required MIHE will connect these students with appropriate groups who offer guidance with teaching and learning programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and provide support and mentoring for staff to ensure that the learning environments, curricula, resources and assessments cater for the requirements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Courses and study materials will be designed to incorporate appropriate terminology and content promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. MIHE will use various credible sources to access information and guidance on how to facilitate participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, including:

<https://aiatsis.gov.au/>

<https://www.education.gov.au/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-higher-education>

<https://www.acer.org/au/research/areas-of-research/indigenous-education>

<https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/policy-submissions/diversity-equity/indigenous-higher-education/>

MIHE academic staff will be required to provide special attention to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' participation and progress. The *Academic Progression and At-Risk Student Policy and Procedure* will provide mechanisms for the early identification and intervention to minimise the risk of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students falling into the "At Risk" category. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who have received special consideration and additional support at admission will be monitored carefully by academic staff, providing them with the opportunity to engage in early intervention strategies to get the student back on track if they are having difficulties. The Learning and Teaching Committee will be provided with regular reports on student attrition, progression and completions. These reports will include sub-categories of student cohorts, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students who have been admitted with additional support. The Academic Board will receive these reports at least twice per year and will use this data for continuous improvement to enhance academic quality.

### **Course Completion**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who graduate may require additional support to facilitate career transition or transition to further studies. MIHE will provide assistance and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates as required, for example providing advice around career choices and employment opportunities and opportunities for further studies.

### **Monitoring and Review**

To improve admission policies and processes, learning and teaching and support strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, MIHE will monitor and review the participation, progress, and completion of students through the *Monitoring Review and Improvement Policy and Procedure*. The Dean, Learning and Teaching Committee and Academic Board will also be provided with regular reports from Academic staff closely monitoring the participation, progress and completion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.