

## Harassment & Discrimination Policy

At all times, Vocational Skills Australia (VSA) will provide a work/study place that is free from all forms of harassment and discrimination (including victimization and bullying) so that that staff and learners feel valued, respected and are treated fairly.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- confirm Vocational Skills Australia commitment to providing a non-threatening workplace free of harassment and discrimination, including victimisation and bullying;
- ensure that all of our staff understand their roles and responsibilities in creating such a workplace; and
- ensure all of our staff is aware of the processes and procedures for addressing any form of harassment or discrimination by the complaints, grievances and appeals process.

### Definitions

**'Bullying'** - is unwelcome and offensive behavior that intimidates, humiliates and/or undermines a person or group. Bullying involves a persistent pattern of behavior over a period time and may include verbal abuse, physical assault, unjustified criticism, sarcasm, insults, spreading false or malicious rumors about someone, isolating or ignoring a person, putting people under unnecessary pressure with overwork or impossible deadlines, and sabotaging someone's work or their ability to do their job by not providing them with vital information and resources.

**'Confidentiality'** - refers to information kept in trust and divulged only to those who need to know.

**'Critical Incident'** – a traumatic event where: physical safety or life is threatened such as rape, personal assault, an armed robbery, hostage situation, act of violence, accident, natural disaster or suicide.

**'Discrimination'** – is treating someone unfairly or unequally simply because they belong to a group or category of people. Equal opportunity laws prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, pregnancy, family responsibility, family status, race, religious beliefs, political conviction, gender history, impairment, age or sexual orientation. Victimisation is also treated as another ground of discrimination.

**'Harassment'** – is any unwelcome and uninvited comment or action that results in a person being intimidated, offended, humiliated or embarrassed. Equal opportunity laws prohibit harassment on the grounds of sex and race.

**'Personnel'** – refers to all employees of the RTO.

**'Racial Harassment'** – occurs when a person is threatened, abused, insulted or taunted in relation to their race, descent or nationality, color, language or ethnic origin, or a racial characteristic. It may include derogatory remarks, innuendo and slur, intolerance, mimicry or

mockery, displays of material prejudicial to a particular race, racial jokes, allocating least favorable jobs or singling out for unfair treatment.

**'Sexual Harassment'** – is any verbal or physical sexual conduct that is unwelcome and uninvited. It may include kissing, embracing, patting, pinching, touching, leering or gestures, questions about a person's private or sexual life, requests for sexual favors, smutty jokes, telephone calls, emails, facsimiles or messages, offensive noises or displays of sexually graphic or suggestive material.

**'Victimization'** – includes any unfavorable treatment of a person because of their involvement in an equal opportunity complaint. Unfavorable treatment could include: adverse changes to the work environment; denial of access to resources or work.

### Specific principles

- all staff and learners have a right to work in an environment free of any form of harassment and discrimination;
- all reports of harassment and discrimination will be treated seriously, impartially and sensitively. harassment and discrimination, including victimisation and bullying, is unwelcome, uninvited and unacceptable behaviour that will not be tolerated;
- when management is informed of any harassment or discrimination has the responsibility to take immediate and appropriate action to address it;
- in dealing with all complaints, the rights of all individuals should be respected and confidentiality maintained;
- whenever possible, all complaints should be resolved by a process of discussion, cooperation and conciliation. the aim is to achieve an acceptable outcome while minimising any potential damage to our organisation;
- both the person making the complaint, and the person against whom the complaint has been made, will receive information, support and assistance in resolving the issue;
- victimisation is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. no person making a complaint, or assisting in the investigation of a complaint, should be victimised;
- harassment or discrimination should not be confused with legitimate comment and advice (including feedback) given appropriately by management or trainers; and
- staff and learners should not make any frivolous or malicious complaints. all staff and learners are expected to participate in the complaint resolution process in good faith.

### Responsible Officer

The responsible officer for the implementation and training for this policy is the Managing Director of VSA.