

CULTURAL SAFETY POLICY

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

Purpose

- (1) This Policy affirms the College's commitment to cultural safety across all its academic and non-academic activities. This includes denouncing all forms of racism.

Scope

- (2) This Policy applies to all students, staff and members of ACPE governing bodies:
 - a. on an ACPE campus;
 - b. on a digital platform used for College purposes or where there is an identifiable connection to ACPE;
 - c. while representing ACPE or engaged in work integrated learning or other placement activities; or
 - d. in relation to a class, function, event sanctioned or organised by ACPE.
- (3) This Policy:
 - a. applies to contractors and visitors when engaged in activities directly related to the College; and
 - b. relates to people external to the College with whom students interact directly and where it is reasonable to expect a duty of care (such as on work integrated learning or placement activities).

Section 2 – Definitions

- (4) In this Policy:
 - a. **Cultural Safety** encompasses safety for all cultural groups. Cultural Safety is defined as an environment that is spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically safe for individuals, where their identity and needs are respected and acknowledged. It involves shared respect, meaning, knowledge, and collaborative learning (Williams, 1990).
 - b. **Racism** is defined by the Australian Human Rights Commission as “*the process by which systems and policies, actions and attitudes create inequitable opportunities and outcomes for people based on race. Racism is more than just prejudice in thought or action. It occurs when this prejudice – whether individual or institutional – is accompanied by the power to discriminate against, oppress or limit the rights of others*”.

Section 3 – Policy Statement

- (5) The College is committed to ensuring a safe and engaging learning and working environment, supported by principles of cultural safety that underpin the behaviour of students, staff and others. In so doing, the College recognises:
- a. the right to difference and ensuring that all individuals and groups feel safe, respected and valued for their cultural and other demonstrations of diversity;
 - b. the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and
 - c. that *“racism can be compounded by intersectionality where a combination of difference aspects of a person’s identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation”* [UoW Anti-Racism and Cultural Safety Policy: clause 21].
- (6) The College endeavours to develop its students to be graduates who understand the importance of cultural safety and are confident in demonstrating such behaviour across their professional and personal lives.
- (7) The College is steadfast in its commitment to eradicate racism and other forms of culturally unsafe behaviours by fostering an environment that:
- a. Acknowledges and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (First Nations) peoples, recognizing their enduring sovereignty and relationships with the land, including:
 - i. the Traditional Owners of the lands where the College is situated; and
 - ii. all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals who work, study, and visit the College.
 - b. Embraces the diversity of staff and students from various racial backgrounds, encompassing not only their heritage but also their families, histories, cultures, and beliefs.
 - c. Ensures that teaching and learning environments are culturally safe, respectful, and inclusive of diverse perspectives, including aiming to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and experiences.
 - d. Promotes respect and fair treatment for all staff, students, and other individuals associated with the College.
 - e. Raises awareness about respectful behaviours, obligations and responsibilities under this and other policies and codes of conduct.
 - f. Takes prompt action to investigate and call out incidents of racism and other forms of culturally unsafe behaviour, including handing down serious penalties for students or staff found to have breached relevant policies.
 - g. Seeks to identify and address systemic and structural barriers for limitations to equitable access and full participation in College activities.
 - h. Is free from unlawful discrimination.
- (8) A culturally safe learning environment and workplace is characterized by:
- a. clear, value-free, open, and respectful communication;
 - b. trust among peers and colleagues with all contributions valued;
 - c. recognition and avoidance of stereotypical barriers; and
 - d. engagement in a two-way dialogue where knowledge is shared. [Adapted from *SafeWork NSW*]

- (9) The College seeks to foster a learning environment and workplace that provides opportunities for First Nation peoples to have confidence that the College:
- is culturally safe for First Nations students, staff and the community;
 - respects its connections with First Nations communities and representatives;
 - responds to the identified needs of First Nations' students and staff; and
 - ensures all students and staff are able to study and work in a culturally safe and appropriate manner. *[Adapted from SafeWork NSW]*

CULTURAL SAFETY IN PRACTICE

- (10) The College recognises that developing cultural safety is an ongoing process. Examples of how the College aims to implement and strengthen its commitment includes:
- Curriculum / teaching:** ACPE will seek to ensure its Indigenous content in its curricula is meaningful, appropriately developed and resourced. *[Reflecting UA Indigenous Strategy 2022 – 2025]*
 - Graduate attributes:** ACPE will seek to ensure its graduate attributes reasonably demonstrate an awareness of Indigenous values and knowledges. *[Reflecting UA Indigenous Strategy 2022 – 2025]*
 - Community engagement:** ACPE will reach out to First Nations and other cultural groups and individuals to enrich the College's engagement with communities and representatives.
 - Professional development / training:** ACPE will support Cultural safety professional development opportunities for staff. *[Reflecting UA Indigenous Strategy 2022 – 2025]*.
 - Adjusting policies, procedures and other plans** as they come up for regular review, to ensure that cultural safety is appropriately incorporated. A particular focus involves recognising the cultural load of Indigenous staff and students and make relevant adjustments, including HR policies and practices. *[Reflecting UA Indigenous Strategy 2022 – 2025]*

Responsibilities

- (11) **The Board of Directors** is responsible for:
- demonstrating leadership across the College's cultural safety developments;
 - reviewing and where appropriate approving, reports, recommendations, policies, procedures, plans and other governance documents that incorporate cultural safety aspects; and
 - providing support to the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Management in their endeavours to address all allegations of racist behaviour and serious undermining of cultural safety through the complaints processes.

- (12) **The Academic Board** and its sub-committees are responsible for:
- overseeing the integration of cultural safety into curricula and graduate attributes as appropriate;
 - supporting the integration of cultural safety practices across assessment and teaching activities;
 - identifying professional development needs for academic staff to support their understanding of cultural safety in their academic roles; and
 - when reviewing policies, procedures and plans, to incorporate cultural safety aspects as appropriate.
- (13) **The Chief Executive Officer and the Executive Team** are responsible for:
- demonstrating leadership and modelling appropriate culturally safe behaviour in their engagements with students, staff and the broader ACPE community;
 - supporting the development of mutually beneficial relations with relevant First Nations communities and organisations and other identifiable cultural groups in the community where possible;
 - reporting to the Board of Directors, Academic Board or their respective sub-committees, where cultural safety may be at risk, including resourcing requirements;
 - taking action to address racism and other examples of culturally unsafe behaviour when they emerge, including through timely investigations in the complaints process and/or notification via work health safety process;
 - identifying professional development needs for all staff to support their understanding of cultural safety in their roles; and
 - when reviewing policies, procedures and plans applicable to their portfolio responsibilities, to incorporate cultural safety aspects as appropriate.
- (14) **All staff** are responsible for:
- staying informed about expectations of culturally safe behaviour and modelling such behaviour when engaging with students, staff or other members of the ACPE community;
 - attending training and professional development as requested by managers; and
 - taking action to prevent or respond to racist or culturally unsafe situations being experienced by others when safe to do so.
- (15) **All students** are responsible for:
- familiarising themselves with appropriate behaviours and avoiding from engaging in culturally unsafe practices and interactions; and
 - taking action to prevent or respond to racist or culturally unsafe situations being experienced by others when safe to do so.

Related documents

This Policy should be read in conjunction with but is not limited to:

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy
- Grievance, Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Grievance, Complaints and Appeals Procedure
- ACPE Governance Charter
- Equal Employment Opportunity, Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policy

- Staff Grievance Policy
- Staff Grievance Procedure

Legislation

- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act)

References:

- Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/what-racism> [accessed June 2024]
- SafeWork NSW, *What is cultural safety?* Available at <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/safety-starts-here/our-aboriginal-program/culturally-safe-workplaces/what-is-cultural-safety> [accessed June 2024]
- Universities Australia *Indigenous Strategy 2022 – 2025* <https://universitiesaustralia.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/UA-Indigenous-Strategy-2022-25.pdf> [accessed June 2024]
- University of Wollongong *Anti-Racism and Cultural Safety Policy* Available at <https://policies.uow.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=66> [accessed June 2024]
- Williams, R. 2008, 'Cultural safety: what does it mean for our work practice?' *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 213–214.

Document Administration

Policy Name	Cultural Safety Policy
Policy Owner	CEO
Approval Authority	Board of Directors
Approval Date	11 July 2024
Effective Date	As at Approval Date
Next Review #	Three years from the Approval Date
Amendment history	
Version 1:	Policy developed.

Unless otherwise indicated, this Policy will still apply beyond the Review date