



Equal Opportunity Policy

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Status: Approved by AIC Senior Management Committee

Responsible for implementation: AIC Academic Team

Responsible for review: Director - Academics and Quality Assurance

Current version review date: August 2025

Version Control

History of amendments	Version/ pages/ section affected	Summary of changes
Last amended May 2023	Cover page	Website link included
Updated August 2025	Entire document	Comprehensive restructure with student-specific content, Pearson standards alignment, clear procedures, and educational focus

The individuals or group responsible for this document have the authority to make changes to it whenever necessary. In the event of any amendments, all relevant personnel will be duly notified.

The document can be found on the AIC website at the following link:

<https://www.aicedu.lk/academic-progression.php>

Purpose of the Equal Opportunity Policy

The Equal opportunity policy ensures equal access to employment, advancement and education opportunities for staff and students.

The AIC Campus has an obligation to staff and students not to discriminate on the basis of one or more protected attributes including sex, pregnancy, marital or relationship status, family responsibility, race, ethnic or ethno-religious background, descent or national identity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, trans-sexuality or intersex status, disability, union affiliation, political conviction, religious belief or any other characteristic specified.

The AIC Campus is committed to equal opportunity in education and employment for students and staff, and to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment to students and staff of all backgrounds and identities.

AIC is committed to pursuing high standards in providing equal opportunity for all in employment and education of staff, students, and all persons, with appropriate allocation of resources in order to implement this Policy fully, to the best of our abilities. This Policy Statement is to be reviewed according to necessity, as well as periodically every two years.

Purpose and Scope

The American International Campus Equal Opportunity Policy establishes a comprehensive framework ensuring equal access to educational opportunities, employment, advancement, and institutional participation for all students, staff, and stakeholders within our academic community. This policy specifically addresses the unique requirements of higher education institutions delivering international qualifications, including Pearson BTEC programmes, and ensures compliance with both local legislation and international educational standards.

AIC recognizes that equal opportunity in education extends beyond simple non-discrimination to encompass proactive measures that ensure all students can participate fully in their educational journey regardless of their background, circumstances, or personal characteristics. Similarly, equal opportunity in employment ensures that all staff members have fair access to career development, advancement opportunities, and a supportive working environment that enables them to contribute effectively to our educational mission.

This policy applies comprehensively to all aspects of institutional life including student admissions, academic progression, assessment practices, student support services, employment practices, professional development opportunities, campus facilities access, extracurricular activities, and all interactions within the AIC community. The policy encompasses both direct and indirect discrimination while promoting positive action where appropriate to address historical disadvantages or underrepresentation.

Legal Framework and Educational Standards Alignment

AIC operates within the legal framework of Sri Lankan anti-discrimination legislation while maintaining alignment with international educational standards, particularly those established by Pearson Education for institutions delivering their qualifications. The institution recognizes its obligations under the Constitution of Sri Lanka, relevant human rights legislation, and international conventions to which Sri Lanka is a signatory.

Specific alignment with Pearson standards includes compliance with their requirements for learner support, assessment accessibility, reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities, fair treatment in qualification delivery, and maintenance of inclusive learning environments. These standards require institutions to demonstrate systematic approaches to equal opportunity that are embedded in all aspects of programme delivery and student experience.

The policy also reflects best practices in international higher education, drawing from established frameworks used by leading universities globally while adapting these approaches to the specific context of Sri Lankan higher education and the diverse student population that AIC serves.

Student-Focused Equal Opportunity Provisions

Academic Access and Participation

AIC ensures that all students have equal access to high-quality educational opportunities regardless of their sex, pregnancy status, marital or relationship status, family responsibilities, race, ethnic or ethno-religious background, descent or national identity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability status, religious beliefs, political convictions, socio-economic background, or any other characteristic that should not influence educational access.

The institution maintains transparent and merit-based admission processes that evaluate candidates based solely on their academic qualifications, potential for success, and alignment with programme requirements. Where multiple candidates demonstrate similar academic credentials, the institution may consider factors that promote diversity and inclusion within the student body, ensuring that educational opportunities reach students from all backgrounds.

Academic progression and assessment practices operate on principles of fairness and transparency, with all students evaluated against the same academic standards using consistent criteria. Assessment methods accommodate diverse learning styles and backgrounds while maintaining the integrity and standards required by awarding bodies, particularly in programmes leading to internationally recognized qualifications.

Reasonable Adjustments and Support Services

The institution provides comprehensive reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities, learning differences, or other circumstances that may impact their educational experience. These adjustments are implemented in consultation with students to ensure they are effective and appropriate while maintaining academic standards and learning outcomes required by external awarding bodies.

Support services are designed to address the diverse needs of our student population, including academic support for students who may require additional assistance due to language backgrounds, educational preparation differences, or learning approaches.

Financial support through scholarships, payment plans, and hardship assistance ensures that economic circumstances do not prevent qualified students from accessing or completing their education.

Pastoral care and counseling services provide confidential support for students facing personal challenges that may impact their academic progress, with particular attention to supporting students who may experience discrimination or disadvantage due to their personal characteristics or circumstances.

Campus Life and Extracurricular Opportunities

Equal opportunity extends to all aspects of campus life, ensuring that students have equal access to facilities, extracurricular activities, student organizations, and leadership opportunities. The institution actively works to create an inclusive campus environment where all students feel welcome and able to participate fully in the community life of the institution.

Student representation and voice mechanisms ensure that diverse perspectives are heard in institutional decision-making processes, with particular attention to ensuring that traditionally underrepresented groups have opportunities to contribute to policy development and institutional improvement initiatives.

Staff-Focused Equal Opportunity Provisions

Recruitment and Selection

AIC implements fair and transparent recruitment processes that attract diverse candidates and evaluate them based solely on merit, including relevant qualifications, experience, skills, and potential for contribution to the institution's educational mission. Position descriptions clearly specify essential and desirable criteria, avoiding unnecessary requirements that might exclude qualified candidates from diverse backgrounds.

Selection panels include diverse membership where possible and receive training in fair selection practices, unconscious bias awareness, and inclusive interviewing techniques. All selection decisions are documented with clear justification based on the specified criteria, ensuring transparency and accountability in the recruitment process.

The institution actively promotes career opportunities to diverse networks and communities, working to ensure that talented individuals from all backgrounds are aware of opportunities to contribute to AIC's educational mission. Where legal and appropriate,

positive action measures may be implemented to encourage applications from underrepresented groups.

Career Development and Advancement

Professional development opportunities are made available to all staff members regardless of their background or personal characteristics, with decisions about development investments based on institutional needs, individual performance, and potential for contribution to educational excellence. The institution maintains transparent processes for career advancement, including clear criteria for promotion and progression that are applied consistently across all staff groups.

Mentoring and support programmes connect staff members with experienced colleagues who can provide guidance and support for career development, with particular attention to ensuring that staff from diverse backgrounds have access to networks and opportunities that support their professional growth.

Performance management processes operate fairly and transparently, with regular feedback and support provided to help all staff members achieve their potential and contribute effectively to institutional goals. Where performance concerns arise, supportive interventions are provided to help staff members address challenges and improve their effectiveness.

Workplace Environment and Culture

AIC maintains a workplace culture that respects and values diversity, ensuring that all staff members can bring their authentic selves to work while contributing effectively to the institutional mission. Workplace policies and practices accommodate diverse needs where possible, including flexible working arrangements, religious observance requirements, and family responsibilities.

Training and awareness programmes help all staff members understand their responsibilities for creating and maintaining an inclusive workplace environment, including recognition of unconscious bias, cultural competency development, and skills for working effectively in diverse teams.

The institution provides clear mechanisms for reporting and addressing workplace concerns, including informal resolution options and formal complaint procedures that ensure fair treatment for all parties involved in workplace disputes or discrimination allegations.

Implementation Mechanisms and Institutional Structures

Governance and Oversight

The Board of Directors maintains ultimate responsibility for ensuring effective implementation of equal opportunity principles throughout the institution, with regular reporting on progress toward equality objectives and outcomes achieved. Senior management teams in all areas of the institution are accountable for implementing equal opportunity practices within their sphere of responsibility.

An Equal Opportunity Committee, chaired by the Director of Academics and Quality Assurance, provides strategic oversight of policy implementation and monitors progress toward institutional equality objectives. This committee includes representation from academic staff, administrative staff, students, and external community members who bring diverse perspectives to equality planning and evaluation.

Regular institutional audits assess the effectiveness of equal opportunity implementation across all areas of operation, identifying areas for improvement and ensuring continuous progress toward more inclusive practices. These audits examine quantitative data on participation, progression, and outcomes alongside qualitative feedback from community members about their experiences.

Resource Allocation and Support

AIC allocates appropriate resources to support effective equal opportunity implementation, including dedicated staff time for equality initiatives, funding for reasonable adjustments and support services, professional development investments, and technology and facilities that promote accessibility and inclusion.

Partnerships with external organizations provide additional support and expertise, including relationships with disability advocacy groups, cultural organizations, professional associations, and other educational institutions that share commitment to equal opportunity principles.

The institution maintains emergency support funds to assist students and staff who face unexpected challenges that might impact their ability to participate fully in institutional life, ensuring that temporary difficulties do not create permanent barriers to educational or employment success.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Continuous Improvement

Data Collection and Analysis

AIC systematically collects and analyzes data on participation, progression, and outcomes across all student and staff groups to identify trends, gaps, and areas requiring attention. This analysis includes examination of admission rates, academic progression patterns, completion rates, employment outcomes for graduates, staff recruitment and retention patterns, and advancement opportunities across different demographic groups.

Regular surveys of students and staff gather feedback on their experiences of equal opportunity within the institution, identifying both areas of success and concerns that require attention. This feedback directly informs policy review and improvement initiatives.

Benchmarking against other educational institutions and sector standards helps identify best practices and areas where AIC can improve its approach to equal opportunity, ensuring that the institution remains at the forefront of inclusive educational practice.

Reporting and Transparency

Annual equal opportunity reports provide transparent information about institutional progress toward equality objectives, challenges encountered, and plans for continued improvement. These reports are made available to the institutional community and external stakeholders, demonstrating accountability for equal opportunity commitments.

Regular communication with students, staff, and stakeholders ensures that equal opportunity achievements and challenges are well understood throughout the community, promoting ongoing engagement with equality initiatives and encouraging community participation in creating more inclusive practices.

External validation through accreditation processes, regulatory compliance reviews, and peer assessment provides independent verification of the institution's equal opportunity performance and identifies opportunities for continued improvement.

Policy Review and Development

This Equal Opportunity Policy undergoes annual review to ensure continued relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with evolving legal requirements and educational standards. Review processes include consultation with students, staff, and external stakeholders to gather diverse perspectives on policy effectiveness and improvement opportunities.

Emerging issues and challenges are addressed through policy updates and supplementary guidance, ensuring that the institution's approach to equal opportunity remains responsive to changing circumstances and community needs. Regular benchmarking against sector best

practices ensures that AIC's approach continues to reflect leading-edge thinking in educational equal opportunity.

Integration with other institutional policies ensures consistency and coherence across all areas of institutional operation, avoiding contradictions or gaps that might undermine equal opportunity objectives.

Complaint Resolution and Support

Informal Resolution Processes

AIC recognizes that many equal opportunity concerns can be addressed effectively through informal resolution processes that focus on education, understanding, and relationship repair rather than formal sanctions. Trained mediators are available to facilitate conversations between parties in dispute, helping them understand different perspectives and work toward mutually acceptable solutions.

Informal resolution options include facilitated discussions, workplace coaching, additional training or support for individuals who may have acted inappropriately due to lack of awareness, and environmental changes that address systemic issues contributing to equal opportunity concerns.

The institution ensures that choosing informal resolution does not prevent individuals from pursuing formal complaints if informal processes prove ineffective or if the nature of the concern requires formal investigation and response.

Formal Complaint Procedures

When informal resolution is inappropriate or ineffective, AIC provides formal complaint procedures that ensure thorough, fair, and timely investigation of equal opportunity concerns. These procedures include clear timelines for each stage of the process, designated responsible officers for managing complaints, and regular communication with all parties involved throughout the investigation process.

Formal investigations are conducted by trained personnel who understand both equal opportunity principles and the specific context of educational institutions. Investigation processes include interviews with all relevant parties, collection and evaluation of documentary evidence, consultation with subject matter experts where appropriate, and development of findings and recommendations based on balance of probabilities assessment.

Outcomes of formal investigations may include individual remedies for affected parties, systemic changes to prevent recurrence of similar issues, disciplinary action where appropriate, and monitoring arrangements to ensure effectiveness of implemented solutions.

Support Throughout Complaint Processes

AIC provides ongoing support to all parties involved in complaint processes, recognizing that both complainants and respondents may experience stress and uncertainty during investigation periods. Support services include counseling and emotional support, academic or workplace adjustments to minimize impact on performance, interim measures to prevent ongoing harm or retaliation, and regular communication about process progress and expected timelines.

External support options are also available when individuals prefer assistance from sources independent of the institution, including referrals to community organizations, professional associations, legal advice services, and government agencies that provide equal opportunity support and advocacy.

The institution maintains strict confidentiality throughout complaint processes while ensuring that necessary information is shared appropriately to enable effective investigation and resolution. All parties are informed clearly about confidentiality limitations and information-sharing requirements before beginning formal complaint processes.

Training, Awareness, and Capacity Building

Community-Wide Education

AIC implements comprehensive education programmes that ensure all community members understand equal opportunity principles, their rights and responsibilities, and available support mechanisms. New student orientation includes specific content on equal opportunity expectations, available support services, and procedures for seeking assistance when concerns arise.

Staff induction programmes include thorough coverage of equal opportunity policies and practices, with ongoing professional development opportunities that deepen understanding of inclusive practice and cultural competency. Regular community-wide events celebrate diversity and promote understanding across different groups within the institutional community.

Curriculum integration ensures that equal opportunity principles are embedded within academic programmes where appropriate, helping students develop understanding of diversity, inclusion, and social justice that will serve them well in their future careers and civic participation.

Specialized Training Programmes

Leadership development programmes for staff and students include specific focus on inclusive leadership skills, equity-minded practice, and strategies for creating welcoming environments for diverse community members. These programmes prepare emerging leaders to champion equal opportunity principles in their future roles.

Technical training ensures that staff members responsible for implementing equal opportunity policies have current knowledge of legal requirements, best practices, and effective intervention strategies. This includes training for managers in fair recruitment and selection, performance management, and workplace accommodation processes.

Bystander intervention training helps community members develop skills and confidence to respond appropriately when they witness discrimination or harassment, creating a community-wide commitment to maintaining inclusive environments.

Performance Indicators and Success Measures

AIC measures the success of equal opportunity implementation through comprehensive performance indicators that track both quantitative outcomes and qualitative experiences. Quantitative measures include representation of diverse groups across all levels of the institution, progression and completion rates for different student populations, employment and advancement patterns for staff from various backgrounds, and utilization rates of support services and reasonable adjustments.

Qualitative measures include community satisfaction with institutional climate, feedback on the effectiveness of support services, perceptions of fairness in institutional processes, and case studies documenting successful interventions and improvements. Regular community climate surveys provide insight into lived experiences of equal opportunity within the institutional community.

External recognition through awards, accreditation achievements, and peer recognition demonstrates institutional commitment to equal opportunity and validates the effectiveness of implemented approaches. Benchmarking data comparing AIC's

performance with sector standards and leading institutions helps identify areas of strength and opportunities for continued improvement.

Long-term outcome tracking follows graduate employment success, career progression, and civic engagement across diverse alumni populations, demonstrating the long-term impact of equal opportunity education and the preparation of graduates to contribute positively to diverse workplace and community environments.

This Equal Opportunity Policy reflects AIC's fundamental commitment to creating and maintaining an educational environment where every individual can achieve their full potential regardless of their background or personal characteristics. Through comprehensive implementation of these principles, the institution contributes to building a more equitable and inclusive society while delivering educational excellence that prepares students for success in an increasingly diverse global community.