

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND FAIR TREATMENT POLICY

SCOPE

This procedure applies to selection into all courses across HIIE.

PROCEDURES

Student Selection

- All applications for enrolment will be assessed against publicly available, clearly articulated entry criteria.
- Applications will be considered in a fair and non-discriminatory manner, and all students seeking to study at HIIE will be treated fairly and equitably.
- When there are more applications than places available in a course, selections will be made on merit alone, as judged against the courses entry criteria.

Openness and Advice

- HIIE will endeavour to ensure that all applicants entitled to government assistance are made aware of this entitlement and given help to access such assistance.

Reasonable Adjustment

- HIIE will consider access and equity issues during the development of its training and assessment materials.
- HIIE will provide adequate support and reasonable adjustment to enable students with special needs to equitably participate in and complete training.
- HIIE will support its trainers and staff to assist them in delivering training to learners with special needs.

Confidentiality Issues

- Where an applicant prefers not to have a current employer aware of their plans to undertake further study before they have actually been offered a place their preference, if clearly stated in the application, should be accommodated, but the applicant is then obliged to ensure that appropriate evidence is available to support the application for those programs where employer references or documented relevant work experience are specified in the selection resolution. If concerns as to the accuracy of work experience claimed subsequently arise, HIIE is entitled to contact the employer after the student has been offered and accepted a place. In a similar manner, where the authenticity of folios or work samples can only be verified by a current employer of the applicant, an applicant's request for confidentiality should also be accommodated, but again HIIE retains the right to contact the employer after the student has been offered and accepted a place if concerns as to authenticity arise.

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Except as obliged by relevant legislation:

- all material related to the application supplied by persons other than the applicant, including referee reports and employer references, is regarded as confidential and is not available except to HIIE staff with a genuine need to access it for the purposes of selection, quality assurance, or unsatisfactory progress investigation;
- all material supplied by the applicant in connection with the application, including personal statements, folios and work samples, is regarded as confidential and is not available except to HIIE with a genuine need to access it for the purposes of selection, quality assurance, or unsatisfactory progress investigation;
- confidential application-related material that HIIE does not seek to retain should be either disposed of in a manner appropriate for confidential material, or returned to the person who supplied it.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

The Compliance Officer, with input from other departments, is responsible for the development, compliance monitoring and review of this policy and any associated guidelines.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER

HIIE RTO's Manager is responsible for the promulgation and implementation of this policy in accordance with the scope outlined above. Enquiries about interpretation of this procedure should be directed to the HIIE RTO Manager.

STUDENT SELECTION PROCEDURE

Use of Selection Instruments

When selection instruments, other than academic merit based on past results are used, HIIE will follow the relevant procedures listed below unless otherwise authorised by HIIE RTO's Manager.

Interviews and Tests

For some courses, interviews and tests are necessary. Under these circumstances HIIE will conduct interviews and tests. An applicant cannot be accepted without undergoing that interview or test unless:

- a formal decision to waive the interview or test is made by HIIE; and
- the reasons for waiving the interview or test are noted in documentation attached to the application; and

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- all of the following conditions apply:
- it is impractical to bring the applicant and Selection Panel together or convene an interview by other means during the period in which the selection decision needs to be made;
- the applicant clearly exceeds the minimum standards for selection (especially, for the case of overseas students, the English language standard). There are no reservations expressed by HIIE and no aspects of the application that require elucidation.

When HIIE has decided that for a given intake the interview or test will not be required of all applicants, the interview or test cannot be required of an individual applicant unless:

- the decision to interview or test is made by HIIE, not by an individual Selection Officer; and
- the reasons for imposing the interview or test are documented; and
- these reasons include the identification of matters that HIIE believes require elucidation.

The applicant must be notified of the nature of the interview or test, its format, and broad issues likely to be relevant to HIIE's judgement of its outcome.

To ensure consistency in selection an agreed method of scoring must be adopted for any given course and the results of the scoring formally recorded (with brief reasons for the scoring where feasible). Scoring methods do not need to be given to the applicant.

Applicants must be clearly advised how they can obtain a time for their interview or test.

Individual programs for which interviews or tests are prescribed, or permitted but not prescribed, may have additional special requirements for the structure and content of interviews and tests, or the way in which they are assessed.

Portfolios and Work Samples

Clear guidelines must be given to applicants and Selection Panels concerning presentation standards for folios and work samples. Selection Panels must assess content rather than presentation.

HIIE must be able to take appropriate steps to verify the authenticity of submitted work. An explicit declaration that the work submitted is the original, individual work of the applicant is required. If the work is necessarily collaborative, the nature and extent of the applicant's contribution must be declared, and details of the principal collaborators also supplied. If there are restrictions on how long ago the work was done, these should be incorporated in the declaration.

Clear guidelines on the nature and extent of submitted work and assessment criteria must be provided to applicants. Selection Panels must document the criteria against which submitted work is assessed. Generally, submitted work is to be assessed according to its quality (including artistic merit, technical competence, or other attributes as appropriate), its extent, and its relevance to the proposed course or demonstration of potential to succeed in that course. Clear guidelines need to be given to applicants and to Selection Panels concerning presentation standards. In areas where applicants are expected to display significant artistic or creative ability, the guidelines for submitted work need not be unduly restrictive as to content, but should clearly indicate any limits on size, types of materials, and so on, that need to be imposed.

The applicant must be clearly advised of way in which material submitted with the application will be treated subsequently. If the applicant has the opportunity to have the material returned, the manner in which it is to be returned, and the responsibilities for costs involved must be explained. If the material will not be returned, the applicant should know this before sending it.

Individual programs for which folios or work samples are prescribed may have additional special requirements for the structure and content of the folios or work samples, or the way in which they are assessed.

Work Experience

The applicant must show how the work experience is relevant to the program of study to be undertaken. Examples of what constitutes relevant work or professional experience for the discipline should be given, including the type of employer and the type of duties performed for that employer.

Periods of work experience are to be interpreted as full-time equivalent. It should be clearly indicated for each course in guidelines to HIIE if fragmented work experience is not acceptable, or if it is to be valued differently from an equivalent period of continuous experience in a single organisation. Where work experience is a prescribed requirement for selection, the prescribed minimum amount must have been completed before the student commences the course.

The submitted documentation must include the name of the organisation, the dates of employment, and the nature of the work done. It is preferred that the documentation be provided by the employer or client, or able to be verified by contacting the employer or client. When references are supplied, these may be used to substantiate work experience claims made. When it is not possible for HIIE to verify independently that the submitted work or professional experience information is correct, HIIE should normally require the applicant to submit a Statutory Declaration or equivalent certification that the schedule of work experience submitted is accurate.

Individual programs for which work experience or professional experience is prescribed may have additional special requirements for the nature, documentation and assessment of this experience.

Referee reports and employer references

Where feasible, the reference or report is to be sent directly to HIIE by the referee independent of the applicant. Such references may be sent by conventional post or e-mail. Conventional post references must have the letterhead of the employer and be signed. Postmarks that are inconsistent with the letterhead details should be regarded as raising doubts as to the authenticity of the reference. References or reports sent by e-mail should be sent from an identifiable e-mail address consistent with the location of the referee, and their receipt must always be acknowledged by e-mail. When the reference or report is unable to be forwarded directly by the referee, as in the case of many international applications, the reference or report must be either

- a signed original copy on letterhead paper; or
- a formally certified or notarised true copy of a signed original letterhead paper.

References or reports sent by the applicant by fax or e-mail are never acceptable. In the event of any uncertainty as to the authenticity of a report or reference for an applicant that HIIE is inclined otherwise to accept, the employer or referee should be contacted to confirm that the reference is authentic.

Guidelines on the content of referee reports should be provided for the benefit of employers or referees in writing references, and to assist applicants in selecting appropriate referees. The following minimal standards apply in all cases:

- Employer references or reports must contain or be accompanied by a position description or descriptions relating to the applicant's career with the referencing employer.
- In personal references from mentors, professional colleagues or former employers, the workplace relationship between the referee and the applicant and the duration and closeness of the relationship need to be clearly stated.
- The reference or report should address in some detail the competence and performance of the applicant.
- References or reports that establish the relevance of the applicant's past employment or activities to the proposed course of study, or their continuity of purpose in seeking to undertake the course, are to be valued more highly than references or reports that do not address this issue.

In accordance with the HIIE's legal obligations with respect to discrimination, comments in references or reports that are immaterial to the application must be ignored in assessing the application. These immaterial matters include, but are not limited to, ethnicity, gender, family circumstances, and age (as distinct from years

of professional experience). However, statements that cast doubt on the integrity of the applicant or on their ability to conduct themselves within the expectations of the HIIE in respect of academic integrity, ethical conduct, discrimination or harassment should be considered.

Individual programs for which employer references or reports are prescribed may have additional special requirements for the structure and content of the references or reports, or the way in which they are assessed. Applicants who prefer not to have their current employers made aware of their application should be managed according to HIIE's Student Admission and selection Procedure

Assessing applicant statements

Applicants must be informed about the relative importance of the applicant statement, its purpose, appropriate content, format and length. The statement is to be a statement about the applicant by the applicant, not by a third party, and must be the original and unassisted work of the applicant. The applicant must be required to attest that the statement is original, unassisted, and correct.

For each intake, HIIE must be aware of the details for the use of applicant statements for the course that have been approved by the HIIE RTO Manager, and must understand in which of the following ways the statement is used:

- as a preliminary screening device;
- as a primary selection instrument, with substantial weight in the selection decision;
- as a secondary selection instrument, with small weight in the selection decision;
- to break ties between comparable selectable applicants when selectable applicants exceed available places.

In a sequential selection process applicant statements may be used in two of these ways at different stages in the process.

HIIE must understand how the quality of applicant statements is to be assessed and use a consistent agreed method of scoring statements appropriate to the way in which the statement is being used. Where it is not possible for the same individuals to read all applications, some application statements must be re-scored by additional Selection Panel members to verify acceptable consistency in assessment. Each statement must be rated by at least two Selection Panel members, at least one of whom should be an academic staff member, and a consistently applied method of determining final ratings must be used when committee members assign different scores to the same statement.