Australian Chiropractic College

CULTURAL SAFETY

Policy

DEFINITIONS

Terms in this document, for which definitions are not provided in the text or may not be self-evident or for which usage at ACC may differ to that in other higher education institutions are as follows:

Council of Chiropractic Education Australasia (CCEA): The independent accreditation authority appointed by the Chiropractic Board of Australia to accredit and monitor chiropractic education programs, ensuring they meet nationally defined standards for quality, safety, governance, curriculum, resourcing, and graduate competence.

Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF): The *Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF)* is the legislative framework established under the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (Cth)* that sets the minimum standards for Australian higher education providers. It defines nationally consistent requirements for academic quality, student participation and wellbeing, learning environments, staffing, research, governance, and institutional accountability, and is used by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) to regulate, assess, and assure the quality and integrity of higher education in Australia.

Service-Learning Environments (SLEs): A Clinic or other Clinical Practicum/WIL Environment where students, under the guidance of Chiropractic or other authorised health professional supervisors develop their knowledge and skills in Chiropractic practice.

Work Integrated Learning (WIL): "any arrangement where students undertake learning in a work context as part of their course requirements. WIL can be undertaken as part of coursework or research training." (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, 2022) WIL activities may include: professional workplace placements (also known as internships, clinical placements, fieldwork, practicums) whether local, interstate or international, online or virtual WIL (e.g.telehealth) with real clients or industry input, industry-partnered projects in the classroom that involve industry, community or professional partners, a simulated work environment with industry input, consultation or assessment, or activities in other contexts involving industry or community partners.' May also be synonymous with 'Service Learning'.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to articulate the Australian Chiropractic College's commitment to Cultural Safety as a core institutional value and governance priority across all academic, clinical, administrative, and governance activities of the College.

Cultural Safety is commonly understood as 'an environment that is spiritually, socially, and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people; where there is no assault challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge, and experience of learning together' (Williams, R. 1999).

This Policy establishes the principles, expectations, and accountability framework through which Cultural Safety is to be upheld, promoted, and sustained within the College, including in learning and teaching, WIL and SLEs, governance, research, student and staff engagement, and interactions with the broader community.

The Policy affirms Cultural Safety as an Indigenous-led concept grounded in self-determination, respect, and recognition of power relationships, while also recognising its application across diverse cultural contexts. It commits the College to fostering environments in which individuals and groups feel culturally respected, safe, and empowered, and in which practices do not diminish, demean, or disempower on the basis of cultural difference.

This Policy provides the overarching governance framework for Cultural Safety at the College. The operational responsibilities, processes, monitoring arrangements, and reporting mechanisms through which Cultural Safety is implemented and maintained are set out in the Cultural Safety Procedure and related College policies and frameworks.

BACKGROUND

The Australian Chiropractic College has obligations under the *Higher Education Standards Framework (2021)* to provide learning, teaching, governance, and support environments that are safe, inclusive, and respectful of diversity, and that support student participation, wellbeing, and equitable outcomes. Cultural Safety is integral to meeting these obligations across academic, clinical, administrative, and governance contexts.

As a provider of chiropractic education, the College is also required to ensure that its chiropractic program(s) and learning environments align with the *Council on Chiropractic Education Australasia (CCEA)* accreditation and competency standards, including those relating to public safety, professional conduct, communication, leadership, and culturally responsive practice.

Accordingly, this Policy affirms the College's commitment to Cultural Safety and provides the governance framework through which Cultural Safety is embedded and assured across the institution, consistent with the requirements of the HESF (2021) and the CCEA accreditation standards.

With regard to the HESF (2021) Standards specifically:

1. Student Participation and Attainment (1.3 Orientation and Progression: 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3,1.3.4, 1.3.5 & 1.3.6)
2. Learning Environment (2.1 Facilities and Infrastructure: 2.1.1, 2.1.3; + 2.2 Diversity and Equity 2.2.1 - 2.2.3; + 2.3 Well-being and safety: 2.3.1 - 2.3.4; + 2.4 Student Grievances and Complaints: 2.4.1, 2.4.2, 2.4.3, 2.4.4, 2.4.5)
3. Teaching (3.1 Course Design: 3.1.1, 3.1.3; + 3.2 Staffing: 3.2.1, 3.2.3(b), 3.2.4, 3.2.5; + 3.3 Learning and Educational Support: 3.3.4)
4. Research and Research Training (4.1 Research:4.1.1)
5. Institutional Quality Assurance (5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement:5.3.3 – 5.3.7; + 5.4 Delivery with Other Parties:5.4.1 -2)
6. Governance and Accountability (6.1 Corporate Governance:6.1.3, 6.1.4; + 6.2 Corporate Monitoring and Accountability: 6.2.1 e,f,j; + 6.3 Academic Governance: 6.3.1 (a),(c),(d), 6.3.2 (a),(e),(f),(g),(h).

Furthermore, it aligns with the CCEA's *Accreditation Standards for Chiropractic Programs and Competency Standards for Chiropractors* (2025), specifically:

- Standard 1 Public Safety (1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6)
- Standard 2 Governance and quality improvement (2.7)
- Standard 3 Program of Study (3.2, 3.5, 3.8)
- Standard 4 The Student Experience (4.2, 4.6, 4.8, 4.9)
- Standard 6 Cultural Safety
- Universal Competency 1 Practising Professionally (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5)
- Universal Competency 2: Practising in a culturally safe and respectful way
- Universal Competency 3 Communication, Collaboration and Leadership (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4)
- Practice Competency 4 Clinical Assessment (4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5)
- Practice Competency 5 Planning Care (5.1, 5.2, 5.3)

- Practice Competency 6 Implementing, Monitoring and Evaluating Care.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all staff, contractors, and enrolled students of the Australian Chiropractic College, and to members of the Board of Directors, Academic Board, and their sub-committees, when engaged in activities conducted on behalf of, or under the authority of, the College.

The Policy applies across:
a) all College-managed academic, clinical, administrative, governance, and community-engagement activities, including WIL and SLEs, whether undertaken on or off campus, during or outside standard working hours; and
b) outreach or extra-curricular contexts where the College is represented.

In applying this Policy, particular regard is given to learning, clinical, and governance contexts in which power differentials, vulnerability, or professional responsibility may heighten cultural safety risk.

POLICY

The Australian Chiropractic College is committed to fostering and maintaining culturally safe environments across all areas of its operations. Cultural Safety is recognised as fundamental to public safety, educational quality, professional integrity, and ethical governance, and as integral to the College's responsibilities as a higher education provider and educator of future health professionals.

Cultural Safety is acknowledged as an Indigenous-led concept grounded in recognition of power relationships, self-determination, respect, and reflective practice. The College affirms that Cultural Safety is determined by those who receive services or participate in College activities, rather than by the intent of individuals or institutions. The College further recognises that Cultural Safety extends beyond ethnicity alone and encompasses diverse cultural identities, experiences, and ways of knowing.

The College is committed to ensuring that its policies, governance arrangements, learning and teaching activities, Work Integrated Learning and Service Learning Environments, research activities, and administrative practices are underpinned by principles that do not diminish, demean, or disempower individuals or groups on the basis of cultural difference. This includes a commitment to environments in which individuals feel respected, heard, and safe to participate fully.

In fulfilling this commitment, the College recognises the particular significance of Cultural Safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including the importance of self-determination, recognition of cultural diversity, and respect for Indigenous knowledge systems. The College also acknowledges its responsibility to apply Cultural Safety principles across all cultural contexts in which it operates.

The College expects that Cultural Safety is embedded as a shared institutional responsibility, reflected in leadership, governance, decision-making, and continuous improvement. Accountability for Cultural Safety is exercised through the College's governance and quality assurance frameworks, with operational responsibilities and implementation mechanisms articulated in the Cultural Safety Procedure and related policies.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities for the implementation, monitoring, and continuous improvement of Cultural Safety are assigned in the Cultural Safety Procedure and related College policies.

REPORTING ON ACTION

The College will monitor and review Cultural Safety through its governance and quality assurance frameworks, with reporting occurring in accordance with approved College procedures.

IMPLEMENTATION and MONITORING

The implementation, monitoring, and review of this Policy are undertaken in accordance with the College's Cultural Safety Procedure and relevant governance and quality assurance frameworks.

RELATED LEGISLATION, REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS and REFERENCES

- Australian Government, April 2021, *Higher Education Standards Framework 2021*.
- Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Standing Committee, *Cultural Respect Framework 2016-2026 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.*
- *Accreditation Standards for Chiropractic Programs and Competency Standards for Chiropractors.* (2025). Council on Chiropractic Education Australasia. https://www.ccea.com.au/standards
- https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/06651271-647f-4ac5-a3a7-4ceaebb0f13a/National+Cultural+Respect+Framework+for+Aboriginal+and+Torres+Strait+Isl....pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE-06651271-647f-4ac5-a3a7-4ceaebb0f13a-nKPaygc
- South Australian Government, Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment, *Public Sector Work Health and Safety Framework for Cultural Safety,* SA Government, accessed on-line.
- State Government of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services 2017, *Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017–2027*, Melbourne.
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency. (2022, May 4). *Guidance note: Work-integrated learning.* Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency. https://www.teqsa.gov.au/guides-resources/resources/guidance-notes/guidance-note-work-integrated-learning
- 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.

REVIEW

The Cultural Safety Policy will be reviewed every three years.

It is a policy of the ACC that any Framework, Policy or Procedure may be reviewed earlier as indicated by internal or external factors (including but not limited to such factors as changes in the guidelines of regulatory authorities, accreditation/registration requirements of the profession, or relevant legislation at state or federal level) as determined the Board of Directors and/or Academic Board.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Quality Assurance Framework
- Risk Management Policy and Framework
- Equity and Anti-discrimination Policy
- Cultural Safety Procedure
- Staff Induction and Professional Development Policy and Procedures
- Staff Performance and Development Review Policy and Procedures
- Student Information and Communication Policy and Procedures
- Code of Conduct Policy and related Procedures
- Grievance Management Non Academic (Students) Policy and Procedures
- Grievance Management (Staff) Policy and Procedures
- Student Academic Appeals Procedures
- Privacy Policy and Procedures
- WIL/Clinical Practicum Framework

- WIL/Clinical Practicum Policy
- WIL/Clinical Practicum Procedure
- Clinical Policies and Procedures including, but not limited to: Caring for Children, Informed Consent, and Health Privacy
- Various Workplace Health and Safety Policies and Procedures including, but not limited to:
  - Workplace Bullying and Work-related Violence Policy and Procedures
  - Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures
  - Drugs and Alcohol Policy and Procedures

VERSION CONTROL

Document: A023 Cultural Safety Policy		
Responsible Officers: President and designated delegates		
Initially Approved by: Academic Board		**Date:** 25 January 2023
Reviewed and Approved by: Academic Board		**Date:** 6 May 2026
Minor Corrections Approved by: Chief Executive Officer		**Date:** 25 September 2023
Version: V2	**Replaces Version(s):** 1.1	**Next Review:** January 2029
HESF	1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment 2.2 Diversity and Equity	1.4.2b 1.4.2c 2.2.1 2.2.2
Nature of Change	September 2023 • Correct reference to this Policy in the Clinic/Clinical definition. • Typo corrections. • Correct section title to Related Documents. • Include Cultural Safety Procedures and the Drug and Alcohol Policy and Procedures in Related Documents section. • Inclusion of ", but not limited to" in "Clinical policies and procedures including,…." Dot point in the Related Documents section. February 2026 • The Policy has been revised to strengthen its role as a high-level governance document outlining institutional commitment, scope, and accountability for Cultural Safety. • Operational responsibilities, implementation detail, and reporting mechanisms have been removed from the Policy to avoid duplication and improve governance clarity. • These operational matters are now addressed within the Cultural Safety Procedure and supporting Quality Assurance and Governance Reporting Framework. May 2026: Comprehensive review and restructure of the Cultural Safety Policy to strengthen its role as a high-level governance and accountability document aligned with the HESF (2021), updated CCEA Accreditation Standards and Competency Standards (2025), and contemporary higher education governance expectations. Revisions clarify institutional commitments and scope, strengthen recognition of Cultural Safety as an Indigenous-led concept, simplify and modernise policy language, clarify governance and accountability arrangements, and relocate operational responsibilities, implementation detail, monitoring processes, and reporting mechanisms to the Cultural Safety Procedure and associated quality assurance frameworks.	