



John Paul II Institute

for Marriage and Family, Melbourne

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT LIAISON and CULTURAL DIVERSITY POLICY

1. Preamble

The John Paul II Institute, Melbourne (Institute) respects, promotes and celebrates the contribution that our international students make to the Institute. They enrich this academic community by their own personal and professional life experiences and the values and perspectives of their own cultures. The Institute will adopt and implement inclusive policies and strategies which assist international students to achieve the Institute's expected learning outcomes having particular regard to the fact that we are an international institute serving a wide region of the world and people from many different cultures. The Institute hopes that what students learn at the Institute will help them to enrich other people and cultures.

The Institute responds to the statement by the Second Vatican Council that the salvation of the individual, as well as of society itself, is intimately connected with the health and well-being of marriage and the family¹

The special concern of Institute, within the overall framework of higher education in Australia and education in theology, is to promote marriage and the family for the good of the whole Church and the wider community.

It provides the opportunity for lay people, religious and priests, who are graduates or have worked extensively in a professional discipline that is important to the health of marriage and family life, to achieve a scholarly formation within the Catholic tradition in the study of marriage and the family philosophically, theologically and through the evaluation of the human sciences. At the Institute in Melbourne a particular emphasis is given to the latter with respect to offering courses in Bioethics

2. Context

The Institute aspires to be a community characterized by academic excellence, intellectual integrity and ethical practice and recognises that it has a particular function as an international Institute to serve the needs of people from other cultures and to recognise the particular contribution that they have to make to the life of the Institute.

¹ *Gaudium et Spes* §47 promulgated by Pope Paul VI in December 7th 1965.

The research, teaching and learning at the Institute attends to the spiritual, moral, ethical and cultural perspectives affecting marriage and family focusing particularly on identifying the human person as belonging to a community of persons founded upon:

- The idea of a fruitful and equal relationship of love between the persons of the Holy Trinity (the “Trinitarian mystery”);
- Understanding marriage (the “nuptial mystery”) as the basis of Christian anthropology and of the communion of God’s people;
- A morality of love and excellence;
- The vocation to love and happiness; and
- Evaluation of the human sciences.

The Institute expresses its distinctive identity by creating a welcoming community of staff and students that:

- reflects the mission of the Institute and its international role;
- values and celebrates the diversity of the Institute community;
- expresses a commitment to access and equity;
- demonstrates ethical conduct;
- highlights the primary values of respect for human dignity founded on the *imago Dei*;
- appreciates the importance of cross-cultural knowledge;
- demonstrates acceptance of cultural diversity; and
- aims to ensure that the diverse nature of Australian society and those societies and cultures from whom staff and students are drawn, is reflected in the conduct of the Institute.

The Institute recognises the original inhabitants of this land, wishes to be made welcome by the Australian indigenous peoples and seeks reconciliation. The Institute also recognises that it exists to serve the peoples and cultures of the Pacific region of the world.

3. Relevant Legislation

There is a range of relevant federal and state legislation with which the Institute must comply and which relates directly or indirectly to recognition and accommodation of cultural diversity.

4. Policy Objectives

The objectives of this policy are for the Institute, in its working, teaching and learning, research and community engagement to:

- (a) give specific acknowledgement of and support other cultures including the cultures of Australian indigenous peoples;
- (b) recognise and value the multicultural nature of Australian society and of the Institute community, especially our international students;
- (c) provide a diverse, flexible and creative study and work environment which acknowledges, supports, values and encourages cultural diversity and assists in the development of understandings of and insights into a range of cultures;
- (d) facilitate the contribution and successful participation within the Institute, its courses and activities, of students and staff from diverse cultural backgrounds;
- (e) emphasise the value of cultural diversity and strengthen its commitment to cultural inclusiveness, in:
 - (i) the content and delivery of courses and units, and
 - (ii) the delivery of services across all areas of the Institute;
- (f) educate students and staff so that they are capable of responding sensitively, sympathetically and justly in any cultural context;
- (g) promote cultural activities which celebrate the diversity of its staff and students; and
- (h) as far as is reasonably practicable, provide culturally appropriate support services for Australian indigenous and international students and staff.

The Institute in its various activities, including the development and application of policies which guide its operation, will be informed by its commitment to, support of, and sensitivity to cultural diversity.

5. Policy Implementation

In order to achieve the above policy, the Institute will develop and adapt its policies, procedures and practices to integrate the principle of respect and support for cultural diversity.

The institute will maintain the appointment of an international student liaison officer to assist international students to adapt and to achieve the learning outcomes expected.

5.1 Teaching and Learning, and Research

5.1.1 The Institute will develop strategies to give effect to its commitment to inclusive, cross-cultural perspectives in the design and delivery of curricula.

5.1.2 In course proposals and reviews, the principles of inclusive curriculum will be applied in the design and delivery of the curriculum and to teaching methodologies and methods of assessment used.

5.1.3 Teaching and learning activities, including but not limited to curriculum design, content, delivery and assessment, will:

- (a) provide an orientation to assist the introduction of students to the subject or discipline and to relevant academic expectations, and in particular will assist in the transition of students facing a variety of linguistic, personal and intellectual challenges;²
- (b) include cross-cultural content, value diversity, and respect and support culturally diverse approaches to learning and ways of understanding;
- (c) create an open and inclusive approach which values learning from others (particularly others from different cultural backgrounds) and respects diversity of perspectives;
- (d) equip students to undertake projects and research in a manner which observes ethical guidelines, is sensitive to relevant cultural protocols of subject groups, including language protocols, and generally is culturally appropriate;
- (e) be designed to engage students of diverse cultural backgrounds;
- (f) maintain a learning environment that forestalls marginalisation or isolation of students on the basis of cultural difference.

5.2 Decision-Making

5.2.1 Decision-making within the Institute will, wherever reasonably practicable, be informed by input from staff and/or students from diverse backgrounds.

5.2.2 To the extent reasonably possible and appropriate, the membership of various bodies, associations and committees will reflect the diversity of the Institute community.

5.3 Study and Workplace Culture

5.3.1 Consistent with the Mission of the Institute, relevant policies, procedures and practices will promote a culture in which all members of the Institute community:

- (a) understand, value and have informed respect for cultural diversity in all interactions between and among:
 - students
 - students and staff
 - staff
- (b) are sensitive to the needs of students and staff whose first language is not English;

² Lewit, T, *Educating in a global village: the challenge of cultural diversity* B-HERT NEWS 18, November 2003

- (c) have the right, within reasonable limits, to adhere to their cultural traditions and to express their ideas and opinions, while respecting the rights of others, without fear of discrimination, harassment or bullying;
- (d) recognise that visitors to and temporary residents in Australia are entitled, subject to relevant legislative provisions, to the same consideration as Australian citizens.

5.3.2 To the extent reasonably possible, the Institute will endeavour to make provisions:

- (a) to assist the transition of, and promote the successful adjustment by, students of different cultural backgrounds (including international students) to study within the Institute;
- (b) for the cultural needs of all staff and students.

Revised by the Academic Board: 28 November 2012