

Principles for promoting and protecting the human rights of international students

This fact sheet is a guide to the *Principles for promoting and protecting the human rights of international students* (2021).

The Australian Human Rights Commission originally developed the *Principles for promoting and protecting the human rights of international students* in 2009. The principles were developed in consultation with international students and peak bodies in the international education sector.

In 2021 these principles were updated and enhanced in light of the evolving needs of international students and, in particular, the impact of COVID-19 on their human rights. The update recognises that Australia's learning institutions and those engaging with international students should strive towards culturally competent systems and culture, services, policies and practices that affirm, protect and promote the rights of international students. This update was done in consultation with peak international student and education sector organisations.

This fact sheet is intended to support international students and their representative bodies in their advocacy for enhanced promotion and protection of human rights.



Principle 1:

Enhancing the human rights of international students, including by eliminating barriers to adequate health services, affordable and safe housing, and fair, just and meaningful employment



SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- ▶ Provide affordable medical and hospital treatment for international students and their families
- ▶ Give students the know how to access emergency health services including relevant in-language information
- ▶ Increase health services' awareness of their obligations
- ▶ Ensure adequate gender-specific health education and services
- ▶ Distribute information about mental health and wellbeing support services
- ▶ Facilitate affordable and safe accommodation
- ▶ Progress nationally consistent minimum standards for homestay and share housing
- ▶ Provide affordable public transport
- ▶ Distribute accurate information about employment rights and relevant support services
- ▶ Increase employer awareness of their obligations
- ▶ Ensure proactive, timely and flexible whole-of-government responses to financial, safety and well-being concerns following crises in an international student's country of origin



Principle 2:

Ensuring all international students have access to protections for human rights and freedom from discrimination



SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- ▶ Provide adequate information to international students about making complaints regarding tenancy and employment, including in relation to racism
- ▶ Share information on tenancy rights and responsibilities pre and post arrival in Australia
- ▶ Deliver targeted legal advice and support
- ▶ Identify and address barriers that may hinder or disincentivise international students from accessing their human rights

Principle 3:

Understanding the diverse needs of international students



SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- ▶ Undertake research and data collection about the international student experience, in accordance with privacy laws and concerns
- ▶ Collect and report on data relating to the experience of racism and racially motivated crime directed at international students to inform policy and service delivery
- ▶ Report publicly on the numbers and causes of international student deaths and how this information is being utilised to ensure the safety and well-being of international students
- ▶ Collect and report on data relating to exploitative practices in both employment and the provision of accommodation to inform policy and service delivery

Principle 4:

Empowering international students to participate in and contribute to community life during their stay in Australia



SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- ▶ Provide ongoing opportunities for collaborative work to improve outcomes for international students
- ▶ Improve the accessibility of information resources and services
- ▶ Increase awareness of key information resources and services
- ▶ Facilitate ongoing opportunities for international students to learn about local issues
- ▶ Increase institutions' and service providers' cultural competency and proficiency
- ▶ Ensure ongoing opportunities for international students to interact with local students and the broader community

Principle 5:

Celebrating the cultural and religious diversity of international students



SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- ▶ Provide an environment and culture that supports and encourages international students to celebrate their cultural heritage, practise their religions and traditions, and use their languages
- ▶ Support the contributions and inclusive participation of international students from all backgrounds
- ▶ Promote cultural/religious activities which celebrate the diversity of international students
- ▶ Promote the positive contribution international students make

Further information

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