



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Purpose

Equity, diversity and inclusion are considered essential to the continued success of UNSW. UNSW values diversity of thought and experience and believes that an inclusive and collaborative culture underpins research and teaching excellence, and facilitates a positive student and staff experience.

Equity in regard to representation of gender, socio-economic status, Indigenous Australians, cultural diversity, sexual orientation and disability are essential to a just UNSW community and a broader just society.

The equity, diversity and inclusion principles stated in this policy aim to:

- i) Bring about the stated vision for Social Impact in UNSW’s updated [2025 Strategy](#), namely: “Our 2025 Vision is to be recognised as an international exemplar in equity, diversity and inclusion. Our success should be built on the diversity and cultural richness of our communities, ensuring our students and staff achieve their full potential regardless of their background.”
- ii) Support the Goals and Measures outlined in the [2025 Strategy](#)

Scope

UNSW staff, students and affiliates.

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Introduction

The University is committed to the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion in education, employment, and research.

This commitment was reaffirmed in the [UNSW 2025 Strategy update](#), under the “UNSW Values and Ethos”, and “Strategic Priority C: Social Impact, Theme 1: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion”.

Underpinning UNSW’s approach to equity, diversity and inclusion are:

[The United Nations’ 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), which sets out the basic rights and freedoms that apply to all people.

Our legal obligations, including but not limited to laws, regulations and standards dealing with: education, human rights, employee entitlements, student rights, health and safety, and unlawful discrimination and harassment.

UNSW’s [Code of Conduct and Values](#).

Principles and objectives

1. Our principles

To create a culture that both values and benefits from equity, diversity and inclusion, staff and students are required to follow these principles in our interactions with each other and the broader community, whilst carrying out the activities (or related activities) of the University.

- 1.1. The University will provide equal opportunity by removing barriers to participation and progression in employment and education so that all staff and students have the opportunity to fully participate in University life, and we will review the effectiveness of actions undertaken.
- 1.2. The University will support staff and students to exercise their rights and responsibilities as members of the UNSW community in relation to equity, diversity and inclusion at UNSW.
- 1.3. All staff and students must display respect as they seek to understand each other's perspectives, by inviting and exploring the evidence supporting alternative points of view.
- 1.4. All staff and students in positions of leadership and management must, with the support of their teams and for inclusive purposes, identify opportunities and take steps towards our objectives for student and staff equity, diversity and inclusion as outlined in the UNSW 2025 Strategy update.
- 1.5. All staff and students, whenever possible and appropriate, must strive for their communications to be accessible to diverse groups, reflect the diversity of UNSW's community, and use inclusive language so that it applies to all staff and students.
- 1.6. The University will promote clear and accountable policies and practices to support our values of partnership; integrity, transparency and ethical decision making; and respect.

Version: 4.1

Effective: 6 August 2024

Responsible: Pro Vice-Chancellor, Inclusion

Lead: Director, Access, Equity and Inclusion, Division of Societal Impact, Equity and Engagement

Appendix

Authority for procedures and instructions

The following UNSW officers are authorised to maintain and change sections of this policy in accordance with the *Policy Framework Policy*:

1. Pro Vice-Chancellor, Inclusion

Responsibilities

1. The University requires the continued cooperation of all staff and students to promote the awareness and embedding of our equity, diversity and inclusion principles into their everyday behaviour, language and decision-making.
2. The University has established an Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Board, chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Inclusion, comprised of leaders from across the University, and with representation from the Diversity Champions. The role of the EDI Board is to identify and prioritise initiatives to improve equity and diversity across UNSW for both staff and students. The EDI Board is responsible for reviewing the progress of diversity goals against the plans and targets set by the University, its faculties and divisions.
3. Faculties and Divisions are required to establish an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDI Committee) or process, which has terms of reference that are aligned to the EDI Board's terms of reference, and/or ensure that equity, diversity and inclusion is a standing agenda item at its regular leadership team meeting.

Legislative compliance

This Policy supports the University's compliance with Commonwealth, NSW and ACT laws, regulations, standards or other legislative instruments dealing with: education, human rights, employee entitlements, student rights, health and safety, and unlawful discrimination and harassment. This includes but is not limited to:

- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- University of New South Wales Act 1989 (NSW)
- Work Health & Safety Act 2011 (Cth)
- Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth)
- All related regulations, standards and codes.

Supporting documents

- UNSW Australia (Academic Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2023
- UNSW Australia (Professional Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2023
- Academic Offerings Governance Policy
- Academic Promotions Policy
- Academic Promotions Procedure

- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Racism and Anti-Religious Vilification Policy
- Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research
- Code of Conduct and Values
- Complaints Management and Investigations Policy and Procedure
- Education Quality Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Higher Degree Research Scholarships Policy
- The Model Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom in Australian Higher Education Providers
- Modern Slavery Prevention Policy
- Naming Recognition Policy
- Workplace Adjustments Procedure for Staff with Disability
- Representation on UNSW Committees and Decision-Making Bodies Procedure

Definitions and acronyms	
Affiliates	Conferred title holders; agency/labour hire staff; members of University committees; visitors from other universities, and any other person appointed or engaged by the University to perform duties or functions for the University (including volunteers).
Equity	Embracing the diversity and cultural richness of our communities and ensuring that our staff and students can achieve their full potential regardless of background, as is outlined in the UNSW 2025 Strategy . For example, this may entail action to reverse the impact of disadvantage stemming from a person or group's differences (such as those based on a person or group's social standing, economic status, demographic characteristics, or geographic location).
Diversity	Any attributes protected under Australian law and areas of focus as may be determined by a Division, Faculty or School for the purpose of delivering on the stated aims in the UNSW 2025 Strategy which include (but are not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For staff – addressing differences in employment rates based on gender, disability, cultural background and Indigenous origin, and sexual orientation or gender identity. • For students – increasing the intake and retention of Indigenous students, students from low socioeconomic groups and students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
Inclusion	“Inclusion occurs when a diversity of people... feel valued and respected, have access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute their perspectives and talents to improve their organisation”. [Source: O’Leary, J., Russell G., & Tilly, J. 2015, “ <i>Building Inclusion: An Evidence-Based Model Of Inclusive Leadership</i> ”, Diversity Council Australia, Sydney]
Indigenous	Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin (or both).
Staff	All employees of the University, including casual employees.

<p>Unlawful discrimination and harassment</p>	<p>Discrimination occurs when a person, or a group of people, is treated less favourably (either directly or indirectly) than another person or group because of a protected attribute.</p> <p>Harassment is unwelcome conduct on the basis of certain protected attributes that could reasonably be anticipated to cause a person to be offended, humiliated or intimidated.</p> <p>Protected attributes or characteristics under Australian federal, state and territory laws include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family/carer-related characteristics: including marital or relationship status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, breastfeeding and family or carer responsibilities. • Gender and LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer or Questioning) – related characteristics: including sex (male or female), sexual orientation, gender identity, transgender status and intersex status. • Age-related characteristics: including age and age-specific characteristics. • Disability-related characteristics: including physical, mental, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological or learning disabilities and impairments; HIV/AIDS status; and medical record. UNSW is required to consider whether any reasonable adjustments could be made to enable a person with a disability to perform their role or for a person to apply for and receive an education. • Race-related characteristics: including race, colour, descent, national extraction, nationality, descent or national or ethnic origin, and in some circumstances also immigrant status. <p>Other characteristics: irrelevant or spent criminal record, irrelevant medical record, political opinion, religious conviction, social origin, profession, trade, occupation or calling, trade union activity, characteristics that are generally imputed to a person with a protected attribute and association (as a relative or otherwise) with a person with a protected attribute.</p>
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Version history

- **Version 1.0** approved by UNSW Council (CL98/032) on 20 April 1998 effective 20 April 1998.
- **Version 2.0** approved by UNSW Council (CL001/18) on 26 February 2001 effective 26 February 2001.
- **Version 2.1** approved by Director, Equity & Diversity on 11 July 2005 effective 11 July 2005. Final paragraph and footnote 3.
- **Version 2.2** approved by Director, Equity & Diversity on 22 November 2006 effective 22 November 2006. Explanatory notes 1 and 3
- **Version 2.3** approved by Acting Head of Governance on 27 November 2015 effective 27 November 2015. Amendments to the Responsible Officer and Contact Officer.
- **Version 3.0** approved by President and Vice-Chancellor on 27 November 2017 effective 27 November 2017. Full review, and title change to add inclusion.
- **Version 3.1** approved by Director of Governance on 9 January 2018 effective 9 January 2018. Amendment from Sexual Discrimination Act to Sex Discrimination Act.
- **Version 3.2** approved by Director of Governance on 6 September 2018 effective 6 September 2018. DVC Inclusion and Diversity changed to DVC Equity Diversity and Inclusion. Manager Inclusion and Diversity changed to Director of Operations, Division of Equity Diversity and Inclusion.
- **Version 3.3** approved by Director of Governance on 10 May 2021 effective 10 May 2021. Administrative update to Contact Officer and to reflect updated 2025 strategy.
- **Version 4.0** approved by President and Vice-Chancellor on 12 November 2021 effective 12 November 2021. Full review with minor amendments.
- **Version 4.1** approved by Director of Governance on 1 August 2024 effective 6 August 2024. Administrative updates to remove outdated titles, links and policy references.