

# 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 “Theme C1: Equity Diversity and Inclusion” in UNSW’s updated 2025 Strategy, namely:

- Aspire to be recognised as an international exemplar in equity, diversity and inclusion;
- Provide outstanding support and development opportunities for all who work and study at UNSW as well as promoting these values in our external interactions;
- Our student and staff profiles to reflect the demographics of our society; and
- Celebrate and respect Indigenous knowledge.

ii) Support the initiatives of 2025 Strategy which are:

1. A Staff Equity Program;
2. A Student Equity Program;
3. A Disability Inclusion Action Plan;
4. An Indigenous Program; and
5. Equity, diversity and inclusion champions.

## Scope

UNSW staff, students and affiliates.

## 1. 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; and
- 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 [staff](#) and [student](#) codes of conduct.

## 2. 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. 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.
2. The University will support staff and students to exercise their rights and responsibilities as University members in relation to equity, diversity and inclusion at UNSW.
3. All staff and students must display respect as they seek to understand each other's perspectives, and endeavour to invite and explore the evidence supporting alternative points of view.
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 objective for our student and staff profiles to reflect Equity, Diversity and Inclusion as outlined in Theme C1 of the UNSW 2025 Strategy.
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.
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.

## 3. Roles and 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 Deputy Vice-Chancellor Equity Diversity and Inclusion, comprised of leaders from across the University, and 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.

## **Authorisation and policy information**

### **Authorisation**

Approved by the Director of Governance on 10 May 2021, effective from 10 May 2021.

### **Accountabilities**

*Responsible Officer:* Deputy Vice-Chancellor Equity Diversity and Inclusion

*Contact Officer:* Director, University Diversity and Inclusion, Division of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:  
[edi@unsw.edu.au](mailto:edi@unsw.edu.au).

### **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**

Nil

### **Related Documents**

- [UNSW Australia \(Academic Staff\) Enterprise Agreement 2018](#)
- [UNSW Australia \(Professional Staff\) Enterprise Agreement 2018](#)
- [Academic Program Review Policy](#)
- [Academic Promotions Policy](#)
- [Academic Promotions Procedure](#)
- [Admissions Policy](#)
- [Anti-Racism Policy](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2018-2020](#)
- [Education Quality Policy](#)
- [Health and Safety Policy](#)
- [Higher Degree Research Scholarships Policy](#)
- [Reasonable Adjustment Guidelines for Managers of Staff and Potential Staff with Disabilities](#)
- [Research Code of Conduct](#)
- [Staff Complaint Procedure](#)



- [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [Student Complaint Procedure](#)

## Superseded Documents

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, v3.2

## File Number

2017/26567

## Definitions & Acronyms

- **Affiliate** means conjoint and visiting appointees; consultants and contractors; agency staff; emeriti; members of University committees; and any other person, not being an employee, appointed or engaged by the University to perform duties or functions for the University.
- **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):
  - 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** 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, "*Building Inclusion: An Evidence-Based Model Of Inclusive Leadership*", Diversity Council Australia, Sydney]
- **Indigenous** means Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin (or both).
- **Staff** means all employees of the University, including casual employees.
- **Unlawful discrimination and harassment: D**  
 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.  
 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.  
 Protected attributes or characteristics under Australian federal, state and territory laws include:
  - **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.
  - **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.

## Revision 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 27 February 2001
- Version 2.1 approved by the Director, Equity & Diversity on 11 July 2005 effective 11 July 2005
- Version 2.2 approved by the Director, Equity & Diversity on 22 November 2006 effective 22 November 2006
- Version 2.3 update by Acting Head of Governance on 27 November 2015 effective 27 November 2015
- Version 3.0 approved by the President and Vice-Chancellor on 27 November 2017 effective 27 November 2017
- Version 3.1 updated by the Director of Governance on 9 January 2018 effective 9 January 2018
- Version 3.2 updated by the Director of Governance on 6 September 2018 effective 6 September 2018
- Version 3.3 updated by the Director of Governance on 10 May 2021 effective 10 May 2021.

