

## Consultation note: Draft Anti-Racism and Anti-Religious Vilification Policy

The draft *Anti-Racism and Anti-Religious Vilification Policy* is open for UNSW-wide consultation with feedback welcome by **COB Tuesday 27 October 2026**.

The review supports UNSW's commitment to a safe, respectful and inclusive environment where members of our community can learn, work and contribute free from racism, discrimination and vilification. The revised Policy aligns with the *Higher Education Standards Framework Amendment* that applies from 1 January 2027. It is critical that UNSW meets this deadline.

### Why is the policy being updated?

The proposed amendments are intended to improve clarity, consistency and compliance with the revised legal requirements. The principal change is the inclusion of definitions relating to:

- racism and anti-racism
- racism towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- antisemitism
- Islamophobia.

### Where have the definitions come from?

The draft Policy brings together definitions from existing UNSW Policy in the case of the antisemitism definition and sector sources for the Islamophobia and racism towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's definitions. The existing definition of racism was developed through the original co-design process for UNSW's stand-alone *Anti-Racism Policy* that became effective in 2021.

Universities Australia is coordinating a whole-of-sector approach on adoption of the same definitions. The definitions of antisemitism, Islamophobia and racism towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been developed through Universities Australia expert academic working groups (including UNSW experts in all three working groups). UNSW representatives more broadly participated in these sector processes, which involved relevant expertise, communities and specialist advisers.

The Universities Australia definition of antisemitism was endorsed by all 39 UA university members, including UNSW on 27 February 2025. It was accepted by UNSW Council in Q1 2025 for inclusion in the existing UNSW *Anti-Racism and Anti-Religious Vilification Policy*. TEQSA, as the regulator, is guiding universities to the UA definition or IHRA definitions. Further, UNSW indicated at the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion that it was supportive of the recommendations of the Finkel Report, which included the use of this definition.

### **What feedback are we seeking?**

The consultation seeks constructive feedback on:

- the overall clarity and accessibility of the policy
- whether its purpose, scope, responsibilities and expectations are clear
- implementation considerations
- improvements to increase the effectiveness of tackling racism
- how the policy can best support a safe, respectful and inclusive University environment.

### **What is outside the scope of this consultation?**

This policy consultation is not seeking to redraft the wording of the adopted definitions. The definitions have undergone considerable consultation through sector processes, expert reviews and UNSW discussion, and one of the definitions has been in effective operation for almost 2 years. Their inclusion supports UNSW's compliance with the revised *Higher Education Standards Framework*.

Feedback from the University community regarding how the adopted definitions sit within and operate through the policy is welcomed. Feedback on the policy's overall clarity, application and implementation is also welcomed.

### **How does this policy fit within UNSW's broader work on anti-racism and anti-discrimination?**

The policy is one part of UNSW's broader approach to anti-racism and anti-discrimination. In parallel, and more critically, UNSW is developing a comprehensive Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Action Plan, informed by the voices and experiences of our community. We thank everyone who has shared their valuable insights through the extensive consultation and listening sessions we have held. The Action Plan will be launched in the coming months and will guide further implementation, engagement and consultation.

### **What are the next steps?**

Read the policy draft available through the [Drafts for consultation](#) page. Feedback received through the established consultation process will be reviewed and considered before the policy progresses through UNSW governance and approval pathways. Subject to approval, the revised policy will be implemented to comply with the legal requirements that come into force from 1 January 2027.

### **Responsible Officer**

Prof. Verity Firth AM  
Vice-President, Societal Impact, Equity and Engagement