



# Policy: Equal opportunity

## Purpose

To inform staff and students of the University's approach to advancing equal opportunity in employment and education within the University community.

## Overview

The Equal opportunity policy outlines the University's policy for ensuring equal access to employment, advancement and education opportunities for staff and students.

The University has an obligation to staff and students not to discriminate on the basis of one or more protected attributes: including sex; pregnancy; marital or relationship status; family responsibility; breastfeeding; race, colour, ethnic or ethno-religious background, descent or national identity; age; sexual orientation, gender identity, trans-sexuality or intersex status; disability; union affiliation, political conviction, religious belief or any other characteristic specified.

Discrimination can be direct and can occur by specific exclusion or adverse treatment based on a person's personal characteristics. Discrimination can also be indirect, and can occur when a requirement or condition is imposed on everyone equally, but persons of a particular group would have difficulty complying with the requirement because of their personal characteristics.

## Scope

This policy applies across the University.

## Policy statement

### Preamble

1. The Australian National University is committed to equal opportunity in education and employment for students and staff, and to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment to students and staff of all backgrounds and identities. This commitment is consistent with the University's pursuit of excellence as an education-intensive research institute of international distinction, and is underpinned by values of integrity in activities, respect in relationships and

collegiality in the building of a community of scholarship and learning.

## **Policy statement**

2. The University will continue to integrate the principles of equal opportunity in its planning, policies and practices that advance the distinctive nature and purpose of the University.

3. The University will promote inclusive work and study environments that value the diversity of backgrounds and perspectives of the University community. This means that the University will continue to:

- improve access, participation and inclusion of particular equal opportunity groups who have been traditionally under-represented, through review of policy and practices and implementing special measures; and
- eliminate discrimination on the grounds of sex; pregnancy; marital or relationship status; family responsibility; breastfeeding; race, colour, ethnic or ethno-religious background, descent or national identity; age; sexual orientation, gender identity, trans-sexuality or intersex status; disability; union affiliation, political conviction, religious belief or any other characteristic specified.

## **Equal opportunity at the University**

4. Equal opportunity means that staff and students experience fairness, impartiality and equal access to opportunities in employment and education at the University. Special measures can be implemented to advance substantive equality.

## **In employment**

5. Equal opportunity in employment includes the principle of selection and promotion of staff on merit, which excludes consideration of irrelevant personal attributes. Fair and transparent processes are applied in assessing the capacity of a person to perform the inherent requirements of a position, having regard to the person's knowledge, skills, qualifications and experience and their potential for future development.

## **In education**

6. Equal opportunity in education includes the principle of selection and assessment of students on merit, which excludes consideration of irrelevant personal attributes. Fair and transparent processes are applied in assessing the capacity of a student against specified requirements to access and participate in educational programs.

## Implementation of equal opportunity

### *University Equity*

7. The Vice-Chancellor may from time to time appoint committees to provide advice on matters relating to the University community and, in particular, the priorities and activities relating to increasing diversity and promoting inclusion.

### *Executive and senior staff*

8. Executive and senior staff members have accountabilities for the implementation of this policy within their area of responsibility.

### *Specialist units*

9. Specific areas that support inclusion and diversity include: the Tjabal Indigenous Higher Education Centre, Access & Inclusion, the Gender Institute and Human Resources Division.

### *Equity practitioners*

10. The University employs staff to promote equal opportunity in planning, policy and strategies and to work with staff and students in the advancement of equal opportunity in employment and education.

## Document information

Title	Equal opportunity
Document Type	Policy
Document Number	ANUP_001227
Version	7
Purpose	To inform staff and students of the University's approach to advancing equal opportunity in employment and education within the University community.
Audience	Staff, Students
Category	Administrative
Topic	Equity & Diversity
Subtopic	Equity
Effective Date	19 Jul 2018
Review Date	19 Jul 2021
Responsible Officer	Director, Human Resources (director.hr@anu.edu.au)
Approved By	Vice-Chancellor (vc@anu.edu.au)
Contact Area	Human Resources Division (director.hr@anu.edu.au)
Authority	Age Discrimination Act 2004 Racial Discrimination Act 1975 Sex Discrimination Act 1984 Disability Discrimination Act 1992 Discrimination Act 1991 Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 Fair Work Act 2009
Printed On	21 Sep 2020

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