



7.15 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

It is the policy of the University of Technology, Sydney to provide equal opportunity for all persons, and to prevent discrimination and harassment on the basis of:

- race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, ethno-religious background
- sex
- marital status
- pregnancy, potential pregnancy
- family responsibilities
- disability (physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological or learning disabilities and illnesses such as HIV/AIDS)
- age
- homosexuality
- transgender status
- political conviction
- religious belief.

Equal opportunity at UTS refers to the right of all staff and students to work, study and access services in a university environment which is safe, equitable, free from discrimination and harassment, and in which everybody is respected and treated fairly.

UTS's commitment to equal opportunity encourages the acceptance and valuing of diversity within its staff and student populations. The University aims to provide a work and study environment free from discrimination and harassment, to assist members of under-represented equity groups overcome past or present discrimination, and to provide a supportive and open organisational culture in which all students and staff are able to develop to their full potential.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

For students this policy relates to all aspects of University life, including selection and enrolment, assessment and interpersonal relationships.

For staff this policy relates to all aspects of employment including recruitment and selection, academic promotion, job classification, staff development, supervision and interpersonal relationships.

At UTS all staff and students have a responsibility to contribute to the achievement of a productive, ethical, safe and equitable study and work environment. This responsibility extends to:

- students (including local, international and exchange students)
- academic and support staff (including continuing, contract or casual, visiting appointments, guest lecturers)
- sub-contractors working on campus
- visitors to the University
- people external to UTS that students or staff interact with as part of their work or study,

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eg in work experience, industrial or clinical placements, exchanges or work-based learning units.

The University's commitment to Equal Opportunity is incorporated into the Code of Conduct (for staff) and the Rules Relating to Discipline and Appeals for students. Disciplinary action may be taken against students or staff who are found to have discriminated against or harassed other students, staff or other campus participants. Breaches of the policy by staff may constitute "misconduct" or "serious misconduct", and in the most serious cases may result in dismissal. Breaches of the policy by students may constitute "non-academic misconduct", and in the most serious cases may result in permanent exclusion.

Further information about the University's policy in relation to harassment is outlined in the *Prevention of Harassment* policy.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AT UTS

The University recognises that ongoing social and structural disadvantage creates barriers to success, and continues to encourage participation by students from under-represented equity target groups, including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- people from low socio-economic status backgrounds
- people with a disability
- people from a non-English speaking background
- people from rural and isolated areas, and
- women in non-traditional areas of study and in postgraduate study.

For staff, the University recognises that particular groups of people have traditionally been disadvantaged in employment because of discriminatory laws, rules, employment practices, stereotypes and attitudes. Some people may not have had equal access to job opportunities or training and development for reasons such as past discrimination or prejudice, different educational experience, or being locked into low-opportunity jobs. The NSW Anti-Discrimination Act (1977) defines these groups as:

- Indigenous Australians
- people who speak a first language other than English
- people with a disability, and
- women.

The University implements Affirmative Action strategies to redress these past disadvantages and improve employment and educational outcomes for people from these groups.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU EXPERIENCE DISCRIMINATION OR HARASSMENT

Staff experiencing harassment should refer the matter to an immediate supervisor in the first instance, or seek confidential information and advice from the Equity and Diversity Unit, or the Human Resources Unit. Staff may also wish to contact their union.

Students should seek advice from the Equity and Diversity Unit (if the complaint relates to unlawful harassment) or the Student Services Unit (for counselling and support). The Students' Association also provides advice and advocacy for students.

The University's procedures for handling complaints are based on confidentiality, impartiality, procedural fairness, protection from victimisation and prompt resolution. Any complaints relating to Equal Opportunity will be dealt with promptly, seriously, and without victimisation of those involved. Processes for handling complaints are outlined in the *Handling Staff Grievance* policy (for complaints made by staff), and the *Handling Student Complaints* policy (for complaints made by students).

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WHERE TO GO FOR ASSISTANCE

Seek advice and support from a senior staff member in your faculty/unit, or contact the:

- **Equity and Diversity Unit** (for students and staff), Room 1722, Level 17 Tower Building, City Campus, Tel: 9514 1084, TTY: 9514 2155, www.equity.uts.edu.au
- **Human Resources Unit** (for staff), City Campus, Tower Building, Level 3, Tel: (02) 9514 1060, www.uts.edu.au/div/hru/index.html
- **Student Services Unit** (for students), Level 6, Tower Building, City Campus, Tel: 9514 1177, or Kuring-gai campus, near the main entrance, Tel: 9514 5342 www.uts.edu.au/div/ssu

Advice can also be obtained from the relevant trade union (for staff) or the Students' Association (for students).

EXTERNAL AGENCIES

Information and advice can also be obtained from the following external agencies:

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC)

Street address: Level 8, Piccadilly Tower, 133 Castlereagh Street, Sydney
Phone: (02) 9284 9600; Complaints infoline: 1300 656 419; TTY: 1800 620 241
www.hreoc.gov.au/links/index

New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Board

Street address: Level 17, 201 Elizabeth Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Phone: (02) 9268 5555; Tollfree 1800 670 812; TTY (02) 9268 5522
www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/adb.nsf/pages/index