

Equal Opportunity at the University of Melbourne

The University of Melbourne is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in education and employment. Equal Opportunity means that all staff and students have the right to fair and equitable treatment and access to resources and services at the University.

The University accepts that it has a responsibility to create an educational and employment environment free of discrimination. It will ensure that its structures and practices are free from direct or indirect discrimination based on age, gender, marital status, carer status, pregnancy and breastfeeding, parenthood, physical features, sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity, social and economic circumstances, race, disability, religious and political beliefs, and activities, industrial activity and personal association with a person who could be discriminated against.

Freedom from discrimination & harassment

Discrimination is broadly defined as treating one person unfairly over another according to factors unrelated to their ability or potential. Legislation prohibits discrimination on the specified grounds.

Discrimination may be direct or indirect and may not always be intentional.

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone receives less favourable treatment on the basis of characteristics or stereotyped assumptions which are not job or study related.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when policies and practices which appear neutral or fair because they are applied to everyone, have a different and disadvantageous impact on groups of people covered by equal opportunity legislation. For more information see the pamphlet "[Indirect Discrimination: Fair in Form, Fair in Effect](#)" (.pdf)

Harassment is discriminatory conduct that involves the improper assumption of power, either personal or institutional, and may be racial, sexual, religious, academic or based on any other specified grounds. Harassment may take many forms, such as verbal, written or physical. The distress caused can be the same whether the conduct is deliberate or unintentional. Harassment may arise from the behaviour of an individual or a group.

The **Discrimination Complaints Policy** provides procedures under which staff and students can raise concerns about discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation/sexuality, gender identity, or any other grounds covered by equal opportunity legislation.

The **University's Sexual Harassment Policy** covers harassment of a sexual nature between people of the same gender, and harassment of a sexual nature that relates to a person's known or assumed sexual orientation/sexuality.

[A network of Anti-Discrimination Advisers \(ADAs\)](#) provides advice and support for staff and students with concerns regarding discrimination and harassment, as well as informing staff and students about their rights and responsibilities with regard to equal opportunity legislation and University Equal Opportunity Policy through information sessions.

An ADA can provide advice and guidance on the University's complaints resolution process and make a referral to other procedures or appropriate University services. An ADA will assist you to deal effectively with a situation or issue that is seen as discriminatory. Anything you discuss with an ADA will be approached confidentially and impartially.

For further information go to the Human Resources website on Discrimination at <http://www.hr.unimelb.edu.au/advicesupport/dm/discrimination>

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The University is committed to providing an environment within the University that is free from sexual harassment. The University has legal responsibilities to protect members of staff and students from sexual harassment. All staff and students of the University are expected to comply with the University's sexual harassment policy as detailed on the University web site at: <http://www.hr.unimelb.edu.au/advicesupport/dm/definitions>.

Sexual harassment is a general term covering unwelcome, unsolicited and non-reciprocated behaviour. This could be a demand for sexual activity, unwelcome sexual jokes, or comments about a person's sexual behaviour. It could also be the display of offensive pictures or the use of offensive language in the classroom or workplace.

Mutual flirtation or sexual contact that is desired and freely consented to is NOT sexual harassment. It is not sexual harassment to develop friendships, sexual or otherwise, with staff members or students. Behaviour that is not freely consented to because of fear, intimidation or coercion constitutes sexual harassment because it is unwelcome.

A network of [Sexual Harassment Advisers](#), trained and experienced in handling harassment complaints and procedures, provide confidential advice to staff and students.

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

The University has policies in relation to racial harassment and discrimination. For further information see: [Mission Possible: Respect for racial diversity at the University](#), and [Cultural Diversity: our greatest asset](#).

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Other grounds of discrimination mentioned in the Equal Opportunity policy are mentioned in some of the specific policies available at <http://www.hr.unimelb.edu.au/advicesupport/dm>, along with further information about the University's sexual harassment and discrimination procedures.