

Equity and Diversity: Treating people with respect

January 2012



Forward

At UniSA, we take equal opportunity in education and employment very seriously. We aim to provide equal opportunities for all people regardless of their sex, marital status, age, pregnancy, family responsibilities, sexuality, race, disability, or political or religious belief.

This commitment is consistent with our founding legislation, our [vision and values](#) and our obligations under equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation. It underpins some of the key objectives of our strategy document, [Horizon 2020](#), including:

- producing graduates who represent and influence all sections of society
- building just, resilient and inclusive democratic societies
- fulfilling our responsibilities to Indigenous Australians.

It is our ambition that at UniSA, equity and excellence will reinforce each other in an environment characterised by uncompromising high standards.

This guide provides a reference to your rights and responsibilities, and information about the programs and facilities available throughout the university. If you have any questions about this guide, please contact the Human Resources Unit on 8302 1700.

Professor Peter Høj
Vice Chancellor and President

Introduction

At UniSA we expect that people and their differences will be treated with dignity and respect.

Discrimination can occur when we fail to act with courtesy, expect everyone to be 'just like us' or treat people with contempt because they are different. Discrimination can be very distressing for the person who experiences it, can be embarrassing to colleagues who witness it and can damage the reputation, productivity and finances of organisations where it occurs.

Unfair practices, historical discrimination or unique requirements sometimes result in people needing extra support or access to opportunities to ensure that they can get a 'fair go'. We are proud of the initiatives and resources that we have developed to ensure that UniSA is an innovative, exciting place to work and that we attract, develop and retain the best people.

University policies and procedures

The following policies and procedures set out rights and responsibilities of individuals and the organisation:

- [Anti-racism policy](#)
- [Disability action plan](#)
- [Discrimination and harassment grievance procedures \(staff\)](#)
- [Diversity and representation on committees and working groups](#)
- [Equal opportunity](#)
- [Inclusive language](#)
- [Sexual harassment](#)
- [Code of ethical conduct](#)

These can be found via the policies and procedures homepage www.unisa.edu.au/policies/default.asp.

State and Federal legislation

The [Equal Opportunity Commission of South Australia](#) (EOC) provides information, education and training, and assesses and resolves complaints under South Australian equal opportunity legislation:

- [Equal Opportunity Act 1984 \(SA\)](#)
- [Racial Vilification Act 1996 \(SA\)](#)

The [Australian Human Rights Commission](#) is responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights in Australia under federal human rights and anti-discrimination law:

- [Age Discrimination Act 2004](#)
- [Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- [Racial Discrimination Act 1975](#)
- [Sex Discrimination Act 1984](#)

Different cultures and beliefs

‘Culture’ refers to the distinctive patterns of values, beliefs, and ways of life of a social group.

There are many different cultures in our society, ranging from Indigenous Australian cultures to those of recent and past migrants from other countries. It is likely that all staff, at some point, will work with or provide a service to someone with a different cultural background.

UniSA initiatives and resources

Many areas at UniSA provide advice, support and training for staff. For more information:

- [UniSA International](#)
- [Religious needs](#) including prayer rooms for Muslim staff and students
- [Learning and Teaching Unit \(LTU\), International student support](#)
- [What do I call you? An introduction to Chinese, Malay and Hindu names](#)
- [Learning and Teaching Unit \(LTU\), Transnational Teaching](#)
- [Induction and staff development – development at a glance](#) including workshops such as *working across cultures* and *Middle East and Chinese cultural awareness*.

UniSA has negotiated with AROMA and ‘the Caf’ to ensure that Halal and vegetarian food is available on campus.

Indigenous Australians and Reconciliation

Reconciliation is about acknowledging Indigenous cultures that have existed in Australia for thousands of years and recognising that different groups of Indigenous Australians may have different ideas about what respecting their culture means for them.

Reconciliation at UniSA means Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians working together in a collaborative and mutually respectful environment.

UniSA initiatives and resources

UniSA employs a Consultant HR Services: Indigenous Employment and Development.

The David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education and Research and its antecedent organisations have been part of UniSA since 1973. It is the longest existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education program in Australia.

For more information:

- [Indigenous graduate program](#)
- [Indigenous employment strategy](#)
- [Indigenous professional development guidelines](#)
- [Statement of Commitment to Australian Reconciliation](#)
- [The David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education and Research.](#)

A staff member wanted to show respect by ‘acknowledging the traditional owners of the land’. UniSA is located on Kurna land in the Adelaide metro region, Banggarla land in Whyalla and Buandig land in Mount Gambier. Respect means acknowledging the owners of that particular area. A map of Aboriginal South Australia can be found at www.reconciliationsa.org.au/learn%20map.html.

Different age groups

Age discrimination involves treating someone less favourably than someone else based on their age. This may be due to assumptions about people's skills, abilities or personal qualities based on their age.

At UniSA, people's skills and abilities, not their age, determine access to employment and opportunities. However, UniSA also recognises that people may have a range of needs at different stages in their life.

UniSA initiatives and resources

Several programs provide access to employment and career development for **younger people**. They include the graduate employment program, traineeships and work experience.

Older workers may want to consider ways of balancing work with outside commitments (such as elder care) or to look at options prior to retirement. Flexible work arrangements may be available including access to part-time work and options such as pre-separation contracts.

For more information:

- [Graduate, trainees and work experience](#)
- [Flexible work arrangements](#).

A staff member was able to negotiate with his manager to reduce his fraction so that he had one day off a week to look after his granddaughter and to take his elderly parents to any appointments.

Disability

A 'disability' includes physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory (e.g. hearing or vision), neurological, and learning disabilities, as well as physical disfigurement and the presence in the body of disease-causing organisms. This broad definition ensures that everyone with a disability is protected.

UniSA provides information, resources, practical support and, where appropriate, reasonable adjustments to ensure that people with disabilities are able to work (and study) at UniSA.

UniSA initiatives and resources

Multi-access suites are available for people with disabilities to rest or deal with disability-related needs.

UniSA was one of the first organisations in Australia to have a Disability Action Plan.

UniSA aims to meet the Level AA rating of the World Wide Web Consortium Accessibility Guidelines.

For more information:

- [Disability](#) section of the Equity and Diversity website
- [Learning and Teaching Unit](#) for staff working with students with disabilities
- [Multi-access suites](#)
- [Disability Action Plan](#)
- [Web Accessibility](#).

A staff member who is blind and Poppy his guide dog were provided with orientation so they could move around the campus. Colleagues were trained on the protocols for approaching Poppy while she was 'working' and suitable toilet locations for Poppy were found.

Sexuality and Gender identity

- **Sexuality** refers to whether a person is gay, lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual.
- **Gender identity** refers to whether a person identifies as female, male, transsexual or intersex.

UniSA acknowledges that there is no universal agreement within the relevant communities about what these terms mean and whom they include.

UniSA initiatives and resources

Access to family responsibility, parental and carer's leave is available regardless of your gender or sexuality.

Staff members who formally change their birth gender can have their new gender recognised on UniSA systems.

Pre-emptive personal leave may be available if a staff member requires a period away from work for gender reassignment surgery.

For more information: [Sexuality and Gender Identity](#).

Security officers were not sure which toilet to direct someone to because they could not easily tell what their gender was. They now provide directions to all options and let the person make the decision as to which one is appropriate.

Family responsibility and pregnancy

Family responsibilities – responsibilities an individual may have as a member of a family, for example, looking after a sick child, attending a parent/teacher interview, or taking a partner or parent to the doctor.

Many initiatives relate to the role of women in caring for children and families. However, many men also have these responsibilities and can be supported by these same initiatives.

UniSA initiatives and resources

The University recognises that the understanding of what constitutes 'family' is very broad and we choose to use as wide a definition as is possible.

UniSA has very generous parental leave provisions, including up to 22 weeks full-time paid maternity or adoption leave and 15 days paid partner leave.

UniSA is a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace. Multi-access suites are available and provide a private and appropriate space and facilities for parents and breastfeeding mothers.

For more information:

- [Childcare @ UniSA](#)
- [Parental leave website](#)
- [Flexible work arrangements](#)
- [Enterprise agreement](#)
- [Multi-access suites](#).

Having the multi-access suite meant that two staff members were able spend some time with their baby during lunch time, changing and feeding him prior to his grandparents parents taking him for the afternoon.

Women

UniSA promotes equal opportunity in employment and recognises that female staff need a safe and effective working environment (see also 'sexual harassment' below).

UniSA initiatives and resources

The Women's Development program provides women with opportunities to engage in constructive development activities and to link their individual learning needs with organisational priorities.

UniSA is an active member of the ATN Women's Executive Development (WEXDEV) program and each year hosts the Clare Burton memorial lecture.

The Enterprise Agreement has as one of its aims to *work towards pay equity and gender balance* and contains a significant range of parental leave provisions.

For more information:

- [Women's Development program](#)
- [Clare Burton memorial lecture](#)
- [WEXDEV](#).

Since 2003, UniSA has been named as Employer of Choice for Women in recognition of our commitment to providing a work culture that respects and supports flexible work practices; family friendly initiatives; and a range of equal opportunity initiatives resulting in positive outcomes for women.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, where it is reasonable to expect that the other person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated. It erodes the rights of the individual, undermines morale and makes the work environment hostile. It has nothing to do with mutual attraction or friendship. When considering if sexual harassment has occurred is the *effect* of the behaviour that is considered not the *intent*.

Examples of behaviours that may constitute sexual harassment include:

- sexual jokes, lewd suggestions, leering, obscene gestures
- comments about a person's anatomy
- unwanted requests for dates or for requests for sex
- intrusive questions about a person's private or sex life
- promise of a 'reward' for sexual favours
- unwanted physical contact including touching, brushing, kissing
- sexually explicit pictures, screen savers, posters
- sexually offensive written, telephone or electronic communications
- indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking and rape.

For more information: [Sexual Harassment policy](#).

Cleaners working in the School of Art, Architecture and Design are advised that they may see images of naked people. Life drawing is a legitimate part of the art curriculum and a 'reasonable person' would expect to see this type of art. This is NOT sexual harassment.

Workplace bullying

Workplace bullying involves the repeated unreasonable ill-treatment of a person or a group at work. It may include offensive, abusive, belittling or threatening behaviour. However, a manager's legitimate comments on an individual's work performance provided in a reasonable manner do **not** constitute workplace bullying.

Workplace bullying and harassment may include but are not limited to:

- persistent teasing or regularly making someone the brunt of practical jokes
- spreading rumours or gossip or innuendo of a malicious nature
- constant and unreasonable criticism
- trivialising of achievements
- deliberately denying someone access to information or resources required to complete work or providing incorrect, incomplete or delayed information
- setting impossible deadlines or workloads
- intentionally under-utilising someone and her/his relevant skills and experience
- setting tasks that are unreasonably beyond a person's ability and the requirements of the position
- chastising someone in front of other people
- setting someone up for failure
- deliberately excluding someone from normal workplace activities
- excessively supervising or monitoring someone
- allocating humiliating and demeaning tasks unequally.

UniSA initiatives and resources

[*Recognising and managing workplace bullying*](#) has been developed by the Human Resources Unit to help staff and managers to recognise and manage bullying in the workplace.

A normally excellent manager shouted at her team and stormed off to her office. When asked to explain her behaviour, she was shaken, apologised and said that her ten year old son had been walking their dog when two bigger dogs killed it. Sometimes inappropriate but out-of-character behaviour has an underlying cause.

What to do

If you are not sure what to do, seek help and advice. The next page provides details of people you can talk to within UniSA as well as external people.

Despite what you might read in the press, it is rare that someone deliberately and maliciously chooses to discriminate against colleagues. Usually it is a clash of communication, different belief systems at work, a poor understanding of an organisation's values and culture or a misunderstanding. That said – when things go wrong it can feel horrible and overwhelming and you should bring it to someone's attention quickly.

Depending on the situation and what has occurred, UniSA seeks, wherever possible, to educate staff, resolve conflicts and enable people to work together to find solutions that will let them continue working with each other.

If you believe you have experienced discrimination or harassment or have concerns or questions please seek advice from one of the contacts listed on the next page.

Contacts

Human Resources

Your local human resource professional or the Human Resource Unit can provide advice on the options available to you and help you step your way through a plan to manage the situation.

→ phone: 830 21700

→ website: www.unisa.edu.au/hrm/contacts/default.asp

Equity Contacts

Equity contacts play a vital role in helping to provide a safe working and learning environment, free from discrimination and harassment. Their job is to be a point of contact when you believe that you have experienced unlawful discrimination or harassment. They will provide you with advice on how the complaint procedures work, help you look at options to deal with the situation and, if needed, direct you to someone who will provide you with further advice or handle your complaint.

→ website: www.unisa.edu.au/hrm/contacts/equity.asp

External Contacts

UniSA ensures that staff have access to information about contacting external agencies.

→ website: www.unisa.edu.au/policies/external.asp

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) counselling service

Sometimes staff need to talk about situations with a counsellor. UniSA provides free confidential access to an external counselling service for staff and their immediate family members.

→ phone: 1300 360 364

→ website: www.unisa.edu.au/ohsw/employeeassist/default.asp

→ website(Manager Assist Program): www.unisa.edu.au/ohsw/employeeassist/manassist.asp

*An electronic version of this guide with embedded hyperlinks to all resources can be found at
www.unisa.edu.au/staffdev/guides/equity_and_diversity.pdf*
