

Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This policy articulates RMIT's commitment to providing an accessible and inclusive learning and work environment that promotes diversity, inclusion and equal opportunity and is free from discrimination, sexual harm, victimisation and vilification.

Section 2 - Overview

(2) The RMIT Group operates in a diverse local, national and global community environment. This policy supports equity and diversity in employment and education to foster innovation, more effective use of talent, and ultimately benefit the creative, research and academic life of the University and entities, and our wider influence in the community.

Section 3 - Scope

(3) This policy applies to all RMIT staff and students, and any individuals engaged in the activities of the RMIT Group.

(4) Application of this policy in RMIT global partnership arrangements takes account of international and local regulatory contexts, the independence of partner organisations and commercial imperatives. These contextual considerations are managed through contract and partner management processes.

Section 4 - Policy

Principles

(5) RMIT is committed to preventing unlawful discrimination, bullying, vilification, victimisation and harassment of people based on protected attributes such as, but not limited to, age, gender identity and expression, sexuality, race, religious belief or disability.

(6) RMIT acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples and ongoing custodians of Country. We recognise the people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land on which the University stands and their unique rights to participate in all aspects of the University under the [Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology Act 2010](#). RMIT is committed to supporting the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples guided by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples through our dhumbali to responsible practice and the Indigenous strategic commitments outlined in RMIT's Strategy.

(7) In line with our commitment to the ngarn-ga (understandings) of Bundjil, RMIT commits to involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in its teaching, learning, research, and knowledge advancement activities, and thereby contribute to realizing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aspirations, protecting cultural heritage and supporting self-determination.

(8) RMIT commits to embedding responsible practice in all aspects of who we are and what we do. This involves

recognising, interpreting and acting upon multiple principles and values according to the field in which we work and the context of all our activities and relationships to promote behaviours that are fair, honest and ethical at all times.

(9) RMIT seeks to create an inclusive and culturally safe workplace, and teaching, learning and research environment in which all staff and students are treated with dignity and respect.

(10) RMIT commits to proactively designing processes, infrastructure, systems and policies to optimise access and opportunities for success at RMIT, including through anticipating and eliminating barriers to equitable participation.

RMIT is committed to:

- a. facilitating access to education, research and employment opportunities so that people of diverse circumstances and backgrounds can contribute to the intellectual, economic, social, cultural and civic life of their communities
- b. ensuring the principles of diversity, inclusion and equal opportunity are embedded and assessed in all relevant Group policies, procedures, decisions and operations
- c. applying universal design principles in our delivery of education, undertaking research activities, providing our services, and in our ways of working
- d. protecting academic freedom and freedom of speech in accordance with RMIT's [Intellectual Freedom Policy](#)
- e. educating staff and students about acceptable behaviour at work and in an education and research environment
- f. promoting the recruitment, retention, innovation, wellbeing and productivity of staff and students in an environment that celebrates and welcomes diversity and inclusion
- g. ensuring equitable opportunity for staff in recruitment, retention, performance management, promotion, talent identification, succession planning, remuneration, professional development and at the end of their employment
- h. ensuring equitable opportunity for students regarding access and admissions, enrolment, learning and assessment, services and supports, participation in the life of the University community, graduation and graduate outcomes, understanding and responding to the diverse needs of our community of students and staff, and providing individual adjustments and services where necessary.

(11) RMIT will take positive action to identify and prevent institutional or systemic issues that lead to:

- a. unlawful discrimination, or
- b. behaviours that may constitute racism, sexual harm, victimisation, vilification, harassment and bullying.

(12) RMIT is committed to taking positive action to prevent sexual harm and provides a framework to effectively prevent and respond to reports of sexual harm through the [Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Policy](#) and supporting procedures.

(13) RMIT is committed to recognising and addressing the ways in which a person's identity can impact their experiences and how they are affected by systems and structures, when developing policies, programs and services.

(14) RMIT acknowledges that intersectionality can compound the impact of discrimination and that certain groups of people will be more vulnerable to the effects of discrimination and harassment than other groups.

(15) RMIT extends its aim to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to provide equal opportunity on the grounds of the 'protected attributes' listed in the Definitions section, considering the context of local laws. Protected attributes relate to personal characteristics and the types of discrimination and impact that can occur based on these.

Responsibilities

(16) All members of the RMIT community must behave in a fair and equitable way and must not unlawfully discriminate or harass, sexually harm, bully, victimise or vilify others or request, induce, encourage, authorise or assist any other person to undertake such unacceptable behaviour.

(17) Staff with supervisory and leadership responsibilities must:

- a. demonstrate a commitment to responsible practice, inclusion and diversity and model appropriate behaviour
- b. promote awareness of relevant policy documents within their work area including this policy, [Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Policy](#) and [Workplace Behaviour Policy](#).

(18) Organisational units will support accessible and inclusive learning and work environments including through the provision of services, expertise and communications.

(19) The Diversity and Equity and Inclusion teams are responsible for raising awareness and implementing preventative, responsive and relevant strategies that value diversity, enable access and promote inclusion.

(20) It is the responsibility of each RMIT staff member or student to uphold the value of inclusion and implement and contextualise the [Inclusion, Equity, Diversity and Access Framework](#) in the context of their work and study.

Compliance

(21) RMIT will support members of the RMIT community who believe they have experienced harassment, bullying, racism, victimisation, vilification, sexual harm or unlawful discrimination.

- a. Students may make a complaint under the [Student and Student-Related Complaints Procedure](#) or under the [Sexual Harm Response Procedure](#).
- b. Staff may make a complaint under the [Staff Complaints Procedure](#) or under the [Sexual Harm Response Procedure](#).
- c. Third parties may make a complaint under the [Third Party Complaints Procedure](#) or under the [Sexual Harm Response Procedure](#).

(22) A breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action. Depending on the nature and impact of the breach, other actions may also be instigated, including legal action.

Review

(23) RMIT will undertake regular reviews of the staff and student life cycle to ensure systemic issues impacting equal opportunity, inclusion and responsible practice are addressed. These reviews will include analysis of policies, processes and culture, access, experience and outcomes to ensure inclusive practices enable all students and staff members to participate fully.

Section 5 - Resources

(24) [Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access Framework](#)

(25) [Reconciliation to Responsible Practice](#) (intranet)

(26) [Digital Accessibility Framework](#)

(27) [Gender Affirmation Guide \(PDF\)](#)

- (28) [Gender Equality Action Plan](#) (staff) and [Student Gender Equity Action Plan](#)
- (29) [Athena SWAN at RMIT](#)
- (30) [Commitment Statement on Program Inherent Requirements](#)
- (31) [Addressing Gender Based Violence - Strategic Action Plan 2023-2027](#)
- (32) Staff resources Service Connect (login required)
- a. [Safety-Wellbeing and Accessibility](#)
 - b. [Flexible Working](#)

Section 6 - Definitions

Bullying	Repeated unreasonable or unacceptable behaviour directed toward any person engaging in RMIT Group activities that creates a risk to health and safety.
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction with a decision, action or lack of these by RMIT, or the behaviour of a student or staff member where a formal response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.
Discrimination	<p>Discrimination can be direct or indirect.</p> <p>Direct discrimination is when a person treats, or proposes to treat, someone unfavourably because that person has a protected attribute. Direct discrimination can occur when a person makes an unfair assumptions about another person with certain attributes can and cannot do, and so treats them unfavourably.</p> <p>Indirect discrimination occurs when an unreasonable requirement is imposed that disadvantages a person with a protected attribute. Indirect discrimination happens when a workplace or educational institution's policy, practice or behaviour seems to treat all workers the same way, but it actually unfairly disadvantages someone because of a protected attribute.</p>
Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access Framework	The Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access Framework is a high-level strategic statement of RMIT Group's aspirations. Contained in the Framework are aspirations and actions which specifically identify strategies to improve staff and student experience of diversity or inclusion.
Equal Opportunity	<p>Equal opportunity means that every person can participate freely and equally in areas of public life such as in the workplace, in education, or in accessing goods and services without disadvantage or less favourable treatment due to their attributes.</p> <p>Inclusive practices, reasonable adjustments or special measures may be needed to policies, processes, practices, facilities and so on to provide equal opportunity.</p>
Inclusive Practices	Practices that anticipate and accommodate the needs of a diversity of people, minimising the need for adjustments to respond to individual needs, while maintaining quality and other standards.
Indigenous Strategic Commitments	The Knowledge With Action: 2031 Strategy contains five Indigenous strategic commitments. These Indigenous strategic commitments include (i) our transition from Reconciliation to Responsible Practice; (ii) empowering and growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners and professionals (Indigenous Students); (iii) recognising and integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' perspectives, world views and lifeways as important knowledge systems (Indigenous Knowledges); (iv) partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to ensure respectful and impactful engagement (Community Engagement); (v) building the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tertiary Education Workforce for shared achievement and sustained success (Indigenous Staff).
Intersectionality	The ways in which different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation.

Protected Attributes	<p>The characteristics of a person on the basis of which discrimination and harassment is prohibited at RMIT. These attributes include, but are not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Age 2. Breast feeding 3. Gender identity and expression 4. Impairment, disability or mental health condition 5. Indigeneity 6. Industrial activity, membership or non-membership of a union 7. Employment activity 8. Lawful sexual activity 9. Marital or relationship status 10. Parental status or status as a carer (family responsibilities) 11. Physical features 12. Political belief or activity 13. Pregnancy and potential pregnancy 14. Profession, trade or occupation 15. Race (including colour, nationality, ethnicity, ethnic or social origin) 16. Religious belief or activity 17. Sex and intersex status 18. Sexual orientation 19. Expunged homosexual conviction 20. Spent conviction 21. Personal association with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes. <p>These attributes are drawn from Australian anti-discrimination legislation and are applicable across the RMIT Group.</p>
Reasonable adjustments	<p>A reasonable change to a process, practice, procedure or environment to facilitate equal opportunity. The changes may be temporary or permanent depending upon the circumstances. For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. changes to premises, working hours or arrangements, facilities, software or equipment 2. adjustments to teaching, learning or assessment 3. change to work process, practice or procedure.
Responsible Practice	<p>Responsible Practice is about behaving in a fair, honest and ethical manner in all our activities and relationships. This involves recognising, interpreting, and acting upon multiple principles and values according to the field in which we work and the context of all our activities and relationships.</p> <p>These principles and values include reconciliation, cultural safety, ethical responsibility, and diversity, among others, as well as being conscious of and working to address the power dynamics, biases, and prejudices at play in our own and other's behaviours and that are embedded structurally within the university and across society more broadly.</p> <p>Responsible practice is therefore about working continually and with great focus to enliven these principles and values in our day-to-day as part of who we are, not as separate or standalone activities and behaviours that we engage with at specific times or in certain contexts.</p>
Sexual harm	<p>Non-consensual behaviour of a sexual nature that causes a person to feel uncomfortable, frightened, distressed, intimidated, or harmed, either physically or psychologically. Sexual harm includes behaviour that also constitutes sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape.</p>
Sexual harassment	<p>When a person:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) makes an unwelcome sexual advance, or an unwelcome request for sexual favours, or (b) engages in other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to a person, in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated the possibility that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated. <p>For more information see the Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Policy.</p>
Special measures	<p>Special measures are positive actions to assist or protect disadvantaged groups and aim to foster equality of opportunity. For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employment programs to improve the recruitment, retention and progression of disadvantaged groups 2. Equity admissions schemes that recognise and compensate for educational disadvantage or seek to address issues of under-representation or inequity 3. Student services and support programs.

Universal Design	Universal design is the design of buildings, products or environments to make them accessible to all people, regardless of age, disability or other factors.
Victimisation	To threaten, or subject another person to a detriment or to treat them less favourably because that person made a complaint or participated in a complaint investigation, such as by providing evidence. As well as being unacceptable conduct it may also be unlawful conduct depending upon the nature of the complaint made.
Vilification (Racial or Religious)	Behaviour that incites or encourages hatred, serious contempt, revulsion or severe ridicule against another person, or group of people, because of their race or religion.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	8th March 2023
Review Date	7th December 2027
Approval Authority	Senior Policy Advisor
Approval Date	7th December 2022
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Policy Owner	Teresa Finlayson Chief Operating Officer
Policy Author	Bridgid Connors Chief People Officer
Enquiries Contact	Employee Experience and Capability

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"RMIT Group" - The University, its controlled entities and strategic investment vehicles (known as the RMIT Group).