

Equity, Inclusion and Respect Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Equity, Inclusion and Respect Policy (the policy) outlines the social, ethical and behavioural standards expected at UTS as part of our core values under the [UTS 2027 strategy](#).
- 1.2 In seeking to ensure diversity, fairness, social justice and the ethical treatment of others, this policy addresses:
 - equal opportunity and equity
 - diversity and inclusion in educational and workplace environments
 - discrimination, bullying and harassment.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all staff, students, affiliates and visitors to the university (collectively the 'UTS community') and is in addition to the requirements of the [Student Rules](#), the [Code of Conduct](#) and the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#).
- 2.2 Any references to staff in this policy should be understood to mean both staff and affiliates.

3. Principles

- 3.1 As a public purpose institution, UTS is committed to driving social change (including sustainability practices) within and beyond our campus. We aim to ensure that our research, education and practice benefit the people who work and study at our university, as well as the wider community.
- 3.2 UTS is committed to building a culture where the principles of diversity and inclusion are integrated into our everyday activities.
- 3.3 All UTS community members must uphold the university's organisational values and standards in accordance with this policy, the [Code of Conduct](#) and related UTS rules and policies. All UTS community interactions including virtual, digital, in person and/or via social media accounts (professional or personal) must be respectful and abide by the expectations outlined in this policy.
- 3.4 Students are required to comply with the [Student Rules](#), the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#) and other relevant [UTS policies](#).
- 3.5 UTS is committed to equal educational and employment opportunities for all students and staff via clear and transparent selection, progression, assessment and promotion processes.

- 3.6 UTS is a secular and non-political organisation. UTS reserves the right to express its values and principles within its mission statements and through its strategic goals.
- 3.7 UTS aims to provide an environment fostering equality and fairness; respecting and valuing diversity as an asset to the university and the wider community. UTS does not tolerate hate advocacy. UTS will meet its compliance requirements in relation to modern slavery (refer [Eradicating modern slavery](#)).
- 3.8 UTS supports and encourages rational and rigorous research, discussion, critical enquiry and public discourse in a respectful, open-minded and generous spirit. This is underpinned by the university's commitment to free enquiry and the pivotal importance of the pursuit of knowledge.
- 3.9 UTS acknowledges that historic and ongoing disadvantage has created barriers to access and progression for some groups in the community and will work to become part of the solution to this inequality. UTS will work to reach our equity and diversity targets and our commitment to our social and community responsibilities.
- 3.10 UTS has a 'zero tolerance' commitment to indecent assault, sexual assault and harassment as outlined in [section 16, Student Rules](#). Further information on reporting incidents of sexual assault and support for sexual assault victims is available at [Sexual assault, indecent assault and sexual harassment](#).

4. Policy statements

Standards of behaviour

- 4.1 Members of the UTS community should contribute to a productive, ethical, safe and equitable campus and learning environment by:
- recognising their individual role in contributing to and maintaining a respectful and inclusive culture
 - treating others fairly, with dignity and respect and without discrimination
 - avoiding any behaviour that could constitute bullying, harassment or vilification
 - attempting to resolve any issues of concern as early as possible in a respectful and courteous way
 - seeking advice if they do not understand any aspect of this policy, and
 - reporting any behaviour that is in breach of this policy.

Freedom of expression — rights and responsibilities

- 4.2 The UTS community is free to express and discuss political, religious, cultural and related beliefs and ideas in accordance with relevant legislation and the [Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression Policy](#).
- 4.3 UTS requires that personal views and beliefs expressed by UTS community members be identified as such and not represented as the views of the university. UTS does not implicitly or explicitly make any endorsement by permitting the expression of these beliefs. UTS community members are expected to use social media appropriately and responsibly, consistent with the expectations and requirements contained in legislation and university rules and policies.

- 4.4 UTS reserves the right to exercise control over material disseminated through UTS outlets (including websites, emails, publications or public displays) if judged to be in breach of this policy.

Equality, equity and inclusion

- 4.5 UTS will take a proactive approach to equality and equal opportunity by establishing programs to:
- provide access to under-represented equity target groups to improve representation with regard to education and employment
 - promote work practices that support the needs of all staff, recognising the value of a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives
 - provide a learning environment in which teaching materials, learning activities, learning spaces and assessments are accessible for all students
 - promote diversity on university employment, assessment, review and disciplinary panels
 - promote the university's values and expectations of behaviour through policy, procedure and practice, and
 - monitor and report our equity performance against identified priorities and legislative requirements.

Discrimination, vilification, victimisation, bullying and harassment

- 4.6 UTS will address identified incidents of discrimination, vilification, victimisation, bullying and harassment on grounds specified under relevant state and federal anti-discrimination, workplace, and work health and safety legislation.
- 4.7 Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person or group because of characteristics (or combinations of characteristics), including but not limited to:
- age
 - pregnancy, potential pregnancy or breastfeeding
 - family or carer responsibilities
 - disability or impairment
 - political or religious beliefs
 - marital or relationship status
 - race, colour, descent, nationality, ethnic, ethno-religious or national origin, and/or
 - sex, gender, sexual orientation or preference or transgender status.
- 4.8 UTS will consult with students with disability who may require adjustments and, where possible and reasonable, make such adjustments to facilitate equitable access and learning, in line with the [Student Rules](#) and requirements under the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) and the [Disability Standards for Education 2005](#). UTS staff and job applicants may also request reasonable adjustments in line with the UTS Workplace Adjustment Procedures (available at [Workplace adjustment](#) (Staff Connect)).

4.9 Bullying behaviour, as defined in this policy, can be manifested verbally, physically and/or through body language and can take the form of action or lack of action. Examples of bullying behaviour may include:

- abusive, insulting or offensive language or comments
- aggressive and intimidating conduct
- belittling or humiliating comments
- being subjected to practical jokes
- unjustified criticism
- deliberately excluding or isolating staff, students or other members of the university community.

4.10 Under work, health and safety legislation, all UTS staff must take reasonable care to ensure that their behaviour does not adversely affect the health and safety of others in the workplace or while undertaking work activities, irrespective of the location.

Appropriate personal relationships and conflicts of interest

4.11 High professional and ethical standards are essential to the pursuit of good practice in university teaching, learning and research. UTS recognises that there is an inherent imbalance of power between staff and students and, often, between staff members.

4.12 While the university does not intervene in consensual personal relationships between adults, it is acknowledged that relationships between colleagues, or between staff and students, may be problematic due to such power imbalances.

4.13 Sexual relationships between staff and students are strongly discouraged particularly where they could:

- harm the learning and research environment of that student and potentially other students, and/or
- compromise the academic integrity of all parties, including UTS.

4.14 Staff and graduate research students are advised to read and follow the advice of the Universities Australia: Principles for respectful supervisory relationships (available at [Universities Australia](#)) and must complete [Consent Matters training](#).

4.15 Any issues of harassment that may arise as a result of an imbalance of power (or for any other reason) will be addressed under this policy.

4.16 Where relationships occur (or the breakdown of such relationships) they may result in either real or potential unfair advantage or disadvantage. All personal relationships as described in this policy are considered a conflict of interest and must be disclosed in line with the [Code of Conduct](#).

Complaints and policy breaches

4.17 Students who wish to make a complaint against the university, its staff or its students should do so in line with the [Student Complaints Policy and Procedures](#). Staff who wish to make a complaint should refer to the [Staff Complaints Policy](#).

- 4.18 UTS may take action under the scope of this policy, against those who are found to have been in breach of this policy, under the applicable enterprise agreement and the [Code of Conduct](#) or [section 16, Student Rules](#), as appropriate.
- 4.19 Breaches of this policy that constitute unlawful behaviour under state and/or federal legislation may be managed and handled by the relevant external authorities and may result in criminal prosecution, in line with the [Code of Conduct](#) and the [Student Rules](#).
- 4.20 UTS reserves the right to undertake its own investigation (on the basis of a balance of probabilities) that may be in addition to any external criminal or civil proceedings. The exception to this statement is where any criminal proceedings specifically requires the university to suspend any ongoing internal investigation. The result of any internal investigation will be independent of external investigations.
- 4.21 UTS may take such steps identified as necessary to dissociate itself from the actions, statements and claims of any person or group that are inconsistent with the provisions of this policy, other policies, university rules and the university's values.

Support and advice

- 4.22 Support for students is available from the following services.
- Student Complaints Resolution Office: for students who wish to make a complaint. Further support and advice options are outlined in the [Student Complaints Policy](#).
 - Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion: in particular, for support and guidance relating to inclusion, accessibility, diversity, discrimination and harassment (refer [Diversity and inclusion](#)).
 - Student Services Unit: for any counselling, medical advice and other health supports (refer [Current students: Support](#)).
 - [Students' Association](#): for advice and advocacy for students.
- 4.23 Staff experiencing any form of bullying, harassment or discrimination should consult the [Complaints portal](#) (staff only) and refer the matter to their immediate supervisor in the first instance (where possible). Staff may also seek confidential information and advice from the [Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion](#), the [People Unit](#) or from any relevant external agency outlined in this policy's [references section](#).
- 4.24 Information on other work hazards that impact a person's wellbeing, including work-related violence, is available at [Psychosocial hazards](#).

5. Policy ownership and support

- 5.1 **Policy owner:** The Provost is responsible for policy enforcement and compliance, ensuring that its principles and statements are observed. The Provost is also responsible for approval of any associated university-level procedures and any training associated with this policy.
- 5.2 **Policy contact:** The Director, People Unit and the Director, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion) act as the primary points of contact for advice on implementing the provisions outlined in this policy, including:

- providing advice to the university on meeting key equity targets and equity-related opportunity obligations under federal and state legislation
- directing students to the [Student Complaints Policy](#) for the management and resolution of equity-related complaints
- working with the relevant university units and committees to monitor and report on the university's equity performance under relevant state and federal legislation
- recommending, developing and/or implementing educational programs, awareness campaigns and inclusion initiatives, and
- providing advice and guidance on local-level initiatives to enhance equity, diversity and inclusion and, where required, by providing committee representatives.

6. Definitions

These definitions apply for this policy and all associated procedures. These are in addition to the definitions of misconduct outlined in [section 16, Student Rules](#) and the definitions outlined in [Schedule 1, Student Rules](#). Definitions in the singular also include the plural meaning of the word.

Affiliate is defined in the [Code of Conduct](#).

Bullying means repeated and unreasonable behaviour (intimidation, undermining, and humiliation) directed towards an individual or group of individuals in a manner that creates a risk to the health, wellbeing and/or safety of the individual or community. Standard performance evaluation and reasonable management actions and requirements are not considered a form of bullying. Refer [References](#) for further guidance and information.

Discrimination means bias, unjust or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of certain characteristics or grounds. UTS acknowledges that discrimination can be direct (treating people less favourably because of physical characteristics or group associations, for example) or indirect (where a practice or policy gives the appearance of neutrality, but unreasonably impacts or disadvantages a particular group of people) or a combination of any of the above. UTS also acknowledges a commitment to certain requirements under governing bodies, regulations or other reasonable authorities (for example, AHPRA regulations).

Equity target groups at UTS include but are not limited to:

- students from low socioeconomic status (low SES) backgrounds
- students with a disability
- students from non-English speaking backgrounds
- students from rural or isolated areas
- women in non-traditional areas of study, and
- Indigenous Australians.

Equity strategies at UTS may also target people with disability or accessibility requirements, people from identified cultural groups, members of the LGBTIQ+ community and women in fields or at levels of seniority where they are under-represented.

Harassment is a form of discrimination and means any unwelcome, offensive, abusive, belittling or threatening behaviour that humiliates, offends or intimidates another person or

group of people on the basis of race, religion, nationality, gender or gender status, sexual orientation or any other grounds specified under anti-discrimination legislation. This is in addition to and consistent with the definitions outlined under [section 16, Student Rules](#), which includes the definition of sexual harassment.

Staff is defined in the [Code of Conduct](#).

Student is defined in [Schedule 1, Student Rules](#). For the purposes of this policy, a student also includes a person who has:

- recently completed the requirements of the course
- withdrawn from the course
- withdrawn temporarily from the course for a period of at least one semester through approved leave of absence
- no active enrolment in subjects or in time-based study in a particular semester, or
- been excluded from the course or from the university, in line with the UTS Rules, in the last semester.

Victimisation means subjecting or threatening to subject a person to some form of detriment because they have:

- lodged or proposed to lodge a complaint of discrimination or harassment
- provided information or documents to an internal investigation or an external agency
- attended a conciliation conference
- reasonably asserted their rights, or supported someone else’s rights, under federal anti-discrimination laws
- alleged that a person has acted unlawfully under federal anti-discrimination laws.

Vilification means the public incitement of hatred, contempt or ridicule of another person on the basis of certain characteristics or grounds.

Approval information

Policy contact	Director, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
Approval authority	Council
Review date	2023
File number	UR19/358
Superseded documents	<p>Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy (UR 07/631)</p> <p>UTS Policy on the Prevention of Harassment (2000) (UR07/632)</p> <p>Policy on the Expression and Practice of Religious, Political and Other Beliefs and Ideas at UTS (2005) (UR16/1120)</p> <p>Procedures and Guidelines in respect of the Policy on the Expression and Practice of Religious, Political and Other Beliefs and Ideas at UTS (2005) (UR16/1120)</p>

Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Sections modified
1.0	Council (COU/18-6/128)	17/10/2018	06/02/2019	New policy.
2.0	Council (COU20-6/133)	25/11/2020	02/03/2021	Changes to reflect updates resulting from the Policy Impact Project (2020), the new Student Complaints Policy and in response to the UA Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships.
2.1	Director, Governance Support Unit	19/05/2021	17/06/2021	Changes to reflect new organisational structure of the Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion.
2.2	Deputy Director, Corporate Governance (Delegation 3.14.2)	09/06/2022	10/06/2022	Changes to reflect new title of Director, People Unit.

Web version

[Equity, Inclusion and Respect Policy](#)

References

Legislation

[Age Discrimination Act 2004 \(Cwlth\)](#)

[Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 \(NSW\)](#)

[Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 \(Cwlth\)](#)

[Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cwlth\)](#)

[Modern Slavery Act 2018 \(Cwlth\)](#)

[Racial Discrimination Act 1975 \(Cwlth\)](#)

[Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cwlth\)](#)

UTS

[UTS 2027 strategy](#)

Rules and policies

[Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression Policy](#)

[Code of Conduct](#)

[Section 16, Student Rules](#)

[Staff Complaints Policy](#)

[Student Complaints Policy and Procedures](#)

[Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#)

[Student Rules](#)

[Sustainability Policy](#)

Advice and support for staff and students

[Accessibility Service](#)

[Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion](#)

[Complaints portal](#) (staff only)

[Consent Matters training](#)

[Diversity and inclusion](#)

[Eradicating modern slavery](#)

[Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research](#)

[UTS Social Impact Framework](#)

[UTS student policies](#)

[Workplace adjustment](#) (Staff Connect)

External agencies and resources

[Anti-Discrimination New South Wales](#)

Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC): [Quick guide to Australian discrimination laws](#)

[Bullying. No Way!](#)

[Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities](#)

[Fair Work Commission](#)

Fair Work Ombudsman: [Bullying in the workplace](#)

[International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#)

[Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)

Universities Australia: Principles for respectful supervisory relationships (available at [Universities Australia](#))