22.1 Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Cultural Sensitivity

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is treating someone unfavourably due to a personal characteristic protected by the law. In Australia, it is unlawful to treat someone unfairly based on protected attributes including age, disability, race, sex, intersex status, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnic or ethno-religious background and political conviction. This applies to certain areas of public life, including in the context of university life and Clubs events.

Australia’s federal anti-discrimination laws are contained in the following legislation:

- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984

The Student Code of Conduct sets out what the University expects from students. Behaviour that is discriminatory is considered a breach of the Student Code. As such, the University may take disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Misconduct Procedures.

Types of Discrimination

Direct discrimination is when someone is treated unfavourably because of a characteristic (refer to first paragraph) compared to someone who does not have that characteristic, in the same or similar circumstance. For example, it is direct discrimination to prohibit someone to run for a Club Executive position within a Cultural Club on the basis that they are not of that culture.

Indirect discrimination is when there is a requirement or rule applied equally to everyone but in effect disadvantages certain individuals over others. An example of this would be hosting an event in a public building that is only accessible by a set of stairs because people who use wheelchairs would be unable to enter.
Microaggressions

A microaggression is a casual snub through words or acts that communicate derogatory messages to people from a disadvantaged or minority group. They can be either direct or indirect and can often have damaging effects on the receiver. Examples include:

- That’s so gay
- Wow I didn’t expect your English to be good
- You’re good looking for a _______
- Where are you from? ... No really, where are you from?
- So, who wears the pants in the relationship?

The most common response by someone observing a microaggression is not responding at all. Silence or laughing it off can communicate tacit approval which in turn encourages this kind of behaviour. It is therefore important to catch it out when it occurs and respond appropriately. Here is a resource that provides ways to respond to microaggressions.

Grievance Officer Executive Role

All Clubs must at least one Grievance Officer position within their team. For most Clubs this role must be on your Club Executive (e.g. not a committee/subcommittee) - exceptions are only given where your Club’s grievance resolution process is administered by UNSW.

A role description for the Grievance Officer(s) must be included in your Club’s constitution including at minimum:

* To receive complaints and grievances relating to the Club;
* To investigate grievances (where necessary) and resolve grievances or make recommendations to the Club Executive on the resolution of grievances;
* To act in a fair, ethical and confidential manner in the performance of their duties, and pass on their responsibilities for specific grievances to other Club Executives if they cannot act impartially; and
* To notify those involved of the outcome of the grievance

The role can be given a different title and can be merged with a new or existing role but, if you do rename the position, we recommend that the new title makes reference to these grievance responsibilities in some way. As a reminder, you must hold a vote at an AGM or EGM to approve these constitutional changes and conduct elections for the new position/s at your AGM or EGM.
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Positions

We are encouraging all Clubs to create or incorporate Executive roles that focus on fostering a culture of inclusivity within your Club. These positions are optional, but strongly recommended.

We strongly recommend that Clubs have one or more of these roles within your Club (if you don’t have one already), ideally as an Executive position, or that you introduce similar roles that aim to facilitate and promote the engagement of specific non-majority demographics of your Club.

The purpose of these positions is to help your Club better engage demographics that may be under-represented and to ensure your Club is approachable to everybody. The general Equity Diversity and Inclusion role aims to facilitate and promote engagement of non-majority demographics of your Club in general. This position can be further extended into separate, dedicated roles. We’ve provided some templates for examples that could apply to most clubs:

- Women’s Officer – This role’s purpose is to address issues including under-representation of women in your Club. Some Clubs may not have a need for this role, but we recommend that in general, large (Gold tier) Clubs should have a Women’s Officer role. You can find a template here.
- Cultural Diversity – This role addresses the engagement of local and international students from diverse cultures at UNSW. Like the Women’s Officer, certain Clubs may not have much practical need for this role, but we recommend that large non-cultural Clubs should have this position on the Executive. You can find a template here.

Smaller Clubs may find that it makes more sense to introduce an Equity Diversity and Inclusion Officer position whose responsibilities include both above roles, while large clubs should opt to have individual positions dedicated to a specific under-engaged demographics. The Equity Diversity and Inclusion Officer can also be added to address any demographics not covered by existing executive roles. You can find the template here.

We suggest that you assess what groups your Club currently does not engage as well as it could, and create relevant positions to address them using the templates we have provided.

Why should Clubs be inclusive?

1. Diverse teams are more efficient – Read the related article here
2. Access to greater degrees of perspectives – Find out more in this article
3. Allows people to feel included and valued, which will help achieve most Club’s objectives
4. A greater mix of people = greater mix of ideas, experience, and skills
How can I make events more inclusive?

Here are a few simple ways you can increase inclusion within your Club:

1. Acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands at the beginning of meetings and events.
2. Ensure events do not clash with cultural holidays which would exclude people from attending.
3. Consider accessibility within your Club. For example:
   - *Do our events have wheelchair accessibility options?*
   - *Can we provide transport options to and from events?*
   - *What special considerations are available for those with reading impairments who apply for a Club Executive position?*
4. Provide special consideration for individuals with English as a Second Language who submit a written application to become a Club Executive.
5. Use clear language and avoid slang that may be difficult to understand by all students.

The inclusive events checklist is great for making events accessible and inclusive for all:

Find it here.

These simple ways are not exhaustive and depend on the context of your Club. A great way to explore how you can make your events more inclusive is by engaging in a simple activity at your next meeting. Spend 2 minutes brainstorming with your Executives about ways you can promote diversity and be inclusive of everyone.

For example, your Club is planning on holding a lunch time social where members can socialise over food. You later find out that it is the Ramadan months, and many of your Muslim members are fasting. You might consider changing the event to include but not revolve around food, or simply change it to dinner instead.

Another example might be that your Club is deciding between two locations to hold your annual ball. The first venue has wheelchair access from the car park to the function hall, while the second venue will need to investigate alternative options that are currently unavailable. To ensure that all your members will be able to attend the ball, your Club can book the first venue instead.
What should I do if someone reports discriminatory behaviour at a Club event?

As a Club Executive, you automatically become the first point of contact for your members when things go south in Club-related events. Someone may come to you if they feel excluded or discriminated against, and you will need to assess the situation and approach it appropriately.

The first action to take is to intervene as a by-stander if you witness discriminatory behaviour at a Club event. This normally works with microaggression discrimination and catching it while it develops stops it in its track before it escalates. This also lets the offender/s know that their action was inappropriate and that no one supports discriminatory behaviour at the event and will hopefully discourage them from taking it further.

For example, your Club organised a movie preview for a romantic comedy. A member of the Club commented that the movie is “so gay”, which you overheard. It is vital that you step in immediately and let that member know that it was an inappropriate comment. You can try saying “I don’t know if you’re aware but that is actually really offensive for you to say that”. This will normally result in an apology from the offender, and no further action needs to be taken if the offender does not escalate the situation further.

Should the discrimination come from an internal source (Club member or Executive) that is manageable by the Executives, this should be the first point of contact. You might need to sit down with the offender to discuss the behaviour – they might not have considered what they said to be discrimination and most of the time a civil discussion can result in an apology and a more educated member of the community. Section 20.1 of the Clubs Handbook offers more advice on internal dispute resolution.

If the issue arises at the fault of an external party (other members of the UNSW community including UNSW departments, other Clubs or students) and it is easily reconcilable, Club Executives should seek to speak to the offending party as they would, detailed above.

For example, an Executive member said something offensive to another participant at an event, i.e. “You have a dog? Is it so you can eat it?”, and the member approached you to file a complaint, you may reach out to that Executive member and educate them on why that was inappropriate. If they can recognise that the behaviour was unacceptable and wish to apologise to the victim, the issue is then resolved. If they are unwilling to change or continue to display the same behaviour repeatedly which will undoubtedly impact your Club’s image negatively, you might consider reaching out to Arc to resolve this issue with the Club and/or the Executive member.
However, should the situation be one that leads to adverse harm to the victim/s, i.e. physical harm, long term mental or emotional damage, Club Executives should let Arc know by sending an email to clubs@arc.unsw.edu.au, while complaints to UNSW should be done online through Student Complaints and Appeals. The Club may also consider speaking to the legal team at Arc for further advice if the incident is one that the Club may be legally responsible for. More information on Legal Help can be found in Section 13 of the Clubs Handbook.

Your priority in violent situations is the safety of the victim, bystanders, and yourself. If a physically violent situation presents itself and you are on campus, you may call campus security for assistance. If you are off campus, consider calling emergency services for assistance. Follow up the incident after by submitting a formal complaint to both Arc and UNSW.

FAQs

A student is running for an Executive position in my [religious/cultural/sex-specific] Club, but I don’t think their visions or beliefs align with those of the Club. Can we bar them from running for the position?

No, Arc has an anti-discrimination policy and all students who are eligible (UNSW student, Arc member) must be given a fair chance at the election. If the nominee’s intentions for running for an Executive position are not genuine, members of the Club will take this into consideration when voting. It is important for Club members to ask lots of questions during election for this reason.

How can my Club be more inclusive?

There are many ways that a Club can be more inclusive, which can include small changes done to day-to-day operations, or on a larger, constitutional scale. A small change to be more inclusive can be to use more inclusive language (i.e. using gender neutral nouns) while larger scale changes can be to include positions specifically designed to give disadvantaged groups more voice (i.e. women’s officer).
Where can I find out more information?

- Inclusive Events Checklist for Clubs
- Arc – Respect - [www.arc.unsw.edu.au/help/legal-information/respect](http://www.arc.unsw.edu.au/help/legal-information/respect)
- UNSW – Support and Development [student.unsw.edu.au/support](http://student.unsw.edu.au/support)
- UNSW – Racism. It Stops With Me@UNSW [student.unsw.edu.au/racism](http://student.unsw.edu.au/racism)

Related Document

Clubs Handbook ([www.arc.unsw.edu.au/clubs/clubshandbook](http://www.arc.unsw.edu.au/clubs/clubshandbook))

Section 20 – Complaints & Grievances

Section 20.1 - Resolving Disputes Internally

Section 21 – Incident Reporting

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### Need Help?

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<th>Call Us</th>
<th>Email Us</th>
<th>Visit us</th>
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| 02 9065 0930 (during office hours) | clubs@arc.unsw.edu.au | Level 2, Basser College (just off the Basser steps past the Quadrangle) | During Term: 10am - 4pm
Outside Term: By appointment only |

Files and Forms: [www.arc.unsw.edu.au/clubforms](http://www.arc.unsw.edu.au/clubforms)

Clubs Handbook: [www.arc.unsw.edu.au/clubs/clubshandbook](http://www.arc.unsw.edu.au/clubs/clubshandbook)