

## 22.1 Equality, 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 that 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.

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:

[www.aacap.org/App\\_Themes/AACAP/docs/resources\\_for\\_primary\\_care/cap\\_resources\\_for\\_medical\\_student\\_educators/responding-to-microaggressions-and-bias.pdf](http://www.aacap.org/App_Themes/AACAP/docs/resources_for_primary_care/cap_resources_for_medical_student_educators/responding-to-microaggressions-and-bias.pdf)

## Why should Clubs be inclusive?

1. Diverse teams are more efficient [hbr.org/2017/03/teams-solve-problems-faster-when-theyre-more-cognitively-diverse](http://hbr.org/2017/03/teams-solve-problems-faster-when-theyre-more-cognitively-diverse)
2. Access to greater degrees of perspectives [hbr.org/2013/12/how-diversity-can-drive-innovation](http://hbr.org/2013/12/how-diversity-can-drive-innovation)
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.

[We've prepared a checklist for you to use 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 and easiest 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](mailto: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](#)

Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW

<http://www.antidiscrimination.justice.nsw.gov.au/>

Community Relations Commission of NSW <http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au/>

Arc Legal & Advocacy – 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)

UNSW – Student Code of Conduct [www.gs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/studentcodepolicy.pdf](http://www.gs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/studentcodepolicy.pdf)

## 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

## Help!

### Visit Us

Drop in and talk to us. The Clubs Space is located on Level 2, Basser College, just off the Basser steps past the Quadrangle.

### Call Us

Call us at 9385 9840

**Email Us** [clubs@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:clubs@arc.unsw.edu.au)

**Office Hours**

During Term: 8:30am-6pm Mon-Fri

Outside Term: 9am-5pm Mon-Fri (access to the Clubs Space by appointment only)