

WESTERN SYDNEY  
UNIVERSITY



# GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

2015 - 2020

UNLIMITED.



# FOREWORD



**Gender equality is about fundamental human rights and is integral to our commitment to being a world class university.**

Western Sydney University has a proud record for advancing gender equality. Considerable effort has been made to increase the representation of women in leadership positions, to reduce the gender pay gap, and to promote workplace flexibility.

The University has a range of strategies and policies on gender equality, including the newly published *Gender Equality Policy*, the *Equity and Diversity Strategic Plan*, the new *People Strategy Our People Securing Success*, the *Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy*, the *Workplace Flexibility Policy*, and provisions in our Enterprise Agreements.

Currently over 50% of our staff and students are women, 43% of our managers are women, and we have one of the highest rates of female professors (41%) in the sector. I want to build further upon this impressive foundation. If we are to be leaders in excellence in teaching, innovation, and research, it is critical that we utilise the skills and capacities of all our staff.

To progress gender equality further we must also continue to challenge the beliefs and attitudes that are undermining progress. We must expand our focus on workplace flexibility and be more innovative and creative in how we overcome the barriers that women and gender diverse individuals face. While we have the policies and procedures in place, more dialogue and action is needed to help address these challenges.

To guide this process, I have established the Gender Equality Committee who will assist in implementing the *Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2020*. This Strategy seeks to support the University's efforts in recruiting, retaining, and helping female staff to advance. Furthermore, the Strategy also seeks to develop and achieve a deeper understanding and commitment to gender equity across the entire organisation.

I want to continue the University's proud reputation as a sector leader in gender equality.

**Professor Barney Glover**  
Vice-Chancellor and University President

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With respect to Aboriginal culture and protocols, and out of respect that its campuses occupy their traditional lands, Western Sydney University acknowledges the Bundjalung, Darug, Gundungurra, Tharawal (also historically referred to as D'harawal) and Wiradjuri Peoples and thanks them for their support of its work in their lands (Greater Western Sydney and beyond).

# STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Western Sydney University recognises that its most valuable asset is its people, and achieving its mission is dependent on the performance, dedication, professionalism innovation and capabilities of its staff.

Aligning with Goal 6 of the University's 2017-2020 Strategic Plan, the Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan demonstrates our commitment to a dynamic and innovative culture. Fostering a culture of inclusion and diversity is crucial to achieving this goal, and in today's competitive global environment, the most successful universities will be those that fully utilise the talents and capabilities of all staff.

Research has demonstrated the benefits of diversity and inclusion citing improved productivity, innovation, and creativity in organisations that recognise and harness their diversity as an asset. Furthermore, organisations which have a higher proportion of women at Board and top management levels are the organisations that perform the best. The University recognises that building social inclusion leads to improved student outcomes and greater innovations in learning, teaching, and research.

Western Sydney University has been a leading Employer of Choice for Gender Equality for over a decade. The University has high levels of women in senior leadership positions and a long-standing reputation for fairness and equity in the workplace, distinguishing the University as a national benchmark for best practice.

While the University has made considerable progress in creating a fair, flexible and equitable workplace, our current workforce data indicates that we continue, like many institutions around the world, to under-utilise the talents of women particularly at senior levels and in the Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine (STEMM) disciplines. There is a significant gender pay equity gap due to the under representation of women in these areas. Our gender pay gap exists also due to a degree of occupational segregation, i.e. the large numbers of female professional staff employed at the HEW (Higher Education Worker) 5 and 6 levels.

To attract and retain a high-quality workforce that reflects the diversity of the region, and continue to be a leading Employer of Choice for Gender Equality, the University will promote and embed an organisational culture in which staff of all genders of a diverse range of cultural backgrounds and heritages participate equally at all levels. To achieve this we will challenge the beliefs, attitudes, and unconscious biases that undermine our progress towards gender equality for all staff regardless of background.

The leadership team at Western Sydney University is committed to gender equality and the Senior Executive, and Board of Trustees will lead the gender equity improvements by example.

## IMPLEMENTATION

A Vice-Chancellor's Gender Equality Committee has been established to oversee the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan. This Committee will monitor and report on the progress of implementation to the Executive Committee and provide an annual report to all University staff.

## STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

The Western Sydney University Gender Equality Strategy Action Plan 2015-2020 provides a framework to assist the University in developing and implementing effective strategies around workplace culture, leadership, and employment practices to improve gender equality across the whole organisation. This Strategy and Action Plan acknowledges the diverse people who constitute the Greater Western Sydney community and recognises the different lived experiences and challenges faced by individuals from a variety of cultural backgrounds, faiths, and traditions, and the richness this brings to our University Community.

# STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan aligns with Strategy 6 of the University's Securing Success Strategic Plan 2018-2020



# STRATEGIC GOALS

In alignment with the University's Securing Success Strategic Plan - Strategy 6 – A dynamic and innovative culture that secures success, this strategy aims to position the University to Secure Success by:



# 1 Leadership accountability for the promotion and support of an organisational culture and working environment that is inclusive and fair to all genders

Aligned with the University's commitment to a dynamic and innovative culture that secures success, the University will be a leading advocate for gender equality, promoting the benefits of an inclusive culture in all aspects of the University's operations.

The Vice-Chancellor, Executive Committee, and Senior Leadership team will champion social inclusion and gender equality. We will achieve this by articulating a clear, consistent business case and rationale for gender diversity, explaining the alignment with the broader vision and strategy of the University, and building a heightened awareness of gender equality in decision making.

## STRATEGIES

- 1.1 The Vice-Chancellor's Gender Equality Committee will oversee, monitor and promote the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan
- 1.2 To promote the University's image and reputation as an inclusive organisation that supports and values diversity
- 1.3 The Vice-Chancellor Executive Committee, and Senior Leadership team will support gender diversity internally and externally by participating in forums and conferences, making statements on the issue, and providing role models for inclusion within their areas of responsibility
- 1.4 Implement unconscious bias training for managers to equip them with the skills to recognise and understand their own biases and to take steps to overcome them
- 1.5 Integrate gender inclusion into planning and strategy at the University wide and organisational unit level
- 1.6 Ensure all staff are aware of the gender equality and related equity policies
- 1.7 Require Equal Opportunity (EO) online training to be undertaken by all staff at induction and at least every two (2) years
- 1.8 Monitor and report on the 40% target for gender representation on Western Sydney University Committees

## Measures of Success

- Participation of the Senior Leadership team in gender equality development and promotion programs
- Completion of leadership training in unconscious bias
- Incorporate Gender Equality objectives in University planning and strategy
- Positive MyVoice feedback on staff perception of gender equality
- Public communication and support statements for gender equality
- KPIs for improving gender equality outcomes are incorporated in Executive Managers' performance plans
- University Committees meet target of 40% representation of women on University Committees

# 2 Improving the representation of women in senior positions and on- traditional occupations, particularly Science Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEMM) disciplines

## STRATEGIES

To improve the representation of women across all levels, the University will:

- 2.1 Set targets for the representation of women in senior positions and in non-traditional domains
- 2.2 Review the workforce planning process to ensure gender equality objectives are included
- 2.3 Investigate how to improve promotional opportunities and outcomes for women
- 2.4 Develop a proactive recruitment policy to ensure gender equality objectives are included and recruitment processes monitored using data on applications received, shortlisting of candidates, and offers accepted by gender and classification levels
- 2.5 Research proven successful strategies and broaden search processes to attract senior women particularly in underrepresented disciplines
- 2.6 Explore and implement initiatives which could support staff of any gender to effectively incorporate child bearing, child raising, and other family responsibilities into their career plans

## Measures of Success

- Establishing and monitoring a target of 40% representation of women managers by 2020. Progress reports provided to the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees
- Establishing targets for the representation of women in non-traditional domains
- Participation in the Athena Scientific Women's Academic Network (SWAN) pilot program to improve gender equality in Science Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM) disciplines
- Workforce planning processes include gender equality objectives
- Undertaking an in depth review of promotions processes and related policies at the University and a consultation paper prepared
- The inclusion of gender equality objectives included in recruitment processes. Recruitment processes are reviewed to ensure elimination of bias and action plans are developed to eliminate any gender biases identified from the reviews
- There is gender diversity on selection panels
- A target of 40% representation of women on internal recruitment shortlists and external recruitments shortlists by 2020 is established. Monitor progress and reports submitted to the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees

# 3 | Developing and Retaining a Gender Diverse Workforce

## STRATEGIES

To develop and retain a gender diverse workforce the University will:

- 3.1** Develop a framework for succession planning and talent identification to support equitable career development
- 3.2** Include gender equality objectives in the Training and Performance Management Policy. Monitor and report data on training and performance
- 3.3** Investigate and identify the issues of retention of women, and develop strategies in response to issues identified
- 3.4** Consider the additional barriers to representation experienced by women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds in gender strategy and planning processes
- 3.5** Track and report terminations including resignations annually to identify trends in resignations and terminations including the departure of staff during Parental or other leave associated with carer responsibility

## Measures of Success

- A succession planning and talent development framework is developed to support equitable career development
- Performance, training and career development policies include gender equality objectives and outcomes continue to be monitored to ensure there is no bias
- Speed mentoring programs for women continue and outcomes are evaluated
- Retention strategies are developed in response to issues identified from monitoring of terminations data and exit interviews
- Greater gender balance in workforce representation and participation
- University meets Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) Employer of Choice requirements

# 4 Reducing Gender Pay Equity Gaps

## STRATEGIES

To reduce gender pay equity gaps, the University will:

- 4.1 Conduct annual gender pay equity audits to identify where pay gaps exist and the reasons for the gaps
- 4.2 Commission a report on pay equity to recommend strategies to address the factors that contribute to the pay gap
- 4.3 Examine the allocation of benefits/ allowances above base pay level
- 4.4 Review remuneration policies
- 4.5 Examine commencing salaries by gender
- 4.6 Develop action plans and set targets to address any gaps

## Measures of Success

- Analysis of factors that contribute to the gender pay gap, with consequent consideration for policy and procedures
- Targets and strategies which address gaps are developed for implementation
- Pay Equity reports are submitted to the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees annually
- Remuneration policy supports gender equality
- Impacts of unconscious and gender bias on remuneration are assessed and strategies developed and implemented

# 5

## A flexible workplace which enables staff to balance work and life responsibilities

### STRATEGIES

To build a flexible workplace which enables staff to balance work and life priorities, including family and carer responsibilities the University will:

- 5.1** Undertake a regular review of flexible work and other relevant policies
- 5.2** Expand web content on flexible work and parental support and improve promotion of flexible work options for all staff
- 5.3** Develop online and policy content regarding support and options available for staff who are experiencing family or domestic violence
- 5.4** Encourage men's uptake of flexible work options by promoting the benefits of flexible work to the University and to individuals
- 5.5** Provide support and training for managers to facilitate and encourage the uptake of flexible work practices
- 5.6** Review processes and support for staff before, during and on return from parental leave
- 5.7** Establish parent and breastfeeding facilities on all campuses to support staff with childcare responsibilities
- 5.8** Monitor parental leave uptake and return to work data, in relation to men and women
- 5.9** Monitor uptake of flexible work options and arrangements
- 5.10** Develop a comprehensive parenting support information kit

### Measures of Success

- Policies and guidelines relevant to flexible work are regularly reviewed and staff are informed of these policies and key entitlements and responsibilities
- A policy on Domestic and Family Violence is developed and published
- Online content on flexible work options is reviewed and expanded
- Online content regarding support for staff who are experiencing family and domestic violence is developed and published
- Online training in flexible work is developed and promoted to Managers for completion
- Applications for paid parental leave of eight (8) weeks (at full pay) are available for primary carers, regardless of gender, who are permanent employees. The eligibility period to access University funded paid parental leave for primary and secondary carers is twelve (12) months or more
- Profiles of key leaders (of all genders) who are role models of flexible working are highlighted in University communications
- Parent rooms and breastfeeding facilities are available on all campuses
- A parenting support information kit is produced and promoted to all Managers and staff

### Measures of Success

- Processes are put in place to regularly monitor flexible work uptake, and data is analysed, monitored and reported to the Executive Committee
- Entrenching flexible work in the workplace is included in Manager KPI's and performance review processes
- Data indicates an increased uptake of parental leave and flexible work options by men

# MORE INFORMATION

## RELEVANT WSU POLICIES

- Gender Equality Policy
- Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Respect and Inclusion in Learning and Working Policy
- Workplace Flexibility Policy
- Children on University Premises Policy
- Domestic and Family Violence Policy
- Discrimination, Harassment, Vilification and Victimisation Prevention Policy
- Professional and Academic Staff Agreements

## WEBSITES OF INTEREST

### Internal

- Gender Equality at WSU. This website includes information on pay equity, flexible work, parenting support, domestic and family violence support, sexual harassment and key gender equality initiatives currently in place at WSU.
- Science and Gender Equity Program
- Office of Human Resources
- Managing Family Responsibilities at WSU
- Flexible Work Options at WSU
- Flexible Working Arrangements at WSU

### External

- Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) - [wgea.gov.au](http://wgea.gov.au)
- WGEA Data Explorer - [data.wgea.gov.au](http://data.wgea.gov.au)
- Science in Australia Gender Equity Program
- Fair Work - Flexibility in the Workplace

## OTHER RESOURCES

- 'Flexible Work at WSU' – an online training module which can be accessed via Staff Online in MyCareer.
- Supporting Parents – A Toolkit for Staff
- WGEA - Manager's Flexibility Toolkit

## RESEARCH

### Vice-Chancellor's Gender Equality Fund

The Gender Equality Fund is an annual grant available to all staff for initiatives that facilitate gender equality at Western Sydney University and promote workplace inclusion.

Current completed research undertaken as part of this fund included a focus on breastfeeding, a review of academic Induction & Orientation packs (STEMM focus) and improving access to information on parental leave entitlements.

Full reports are available to view on the [VC Gender Equality Fund](#) webpage.

Western Sydney University  
Locked Bag 1797  
Penrith NSW 2751 Australia

ABN 53 014 069 881 CRICOS Provider No: 00917K



[WESTERNSYDNEY.EDU.AU](http://WESTERNSYDNEY.EDU.AU)