

Achieving Excellence Through Diversity

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Foreword

The University of WA has a diverse workforce and its staff come from many different backgrounds and provide a broad range of skills, knowledge and experience that contributes directly to excellence at this University.

This University, within the context of its Strategic Plan and Operational Priorities Statement, is committed to developing strategies that will maximise opportunities for all Western Australians to access and actively participate in employment. The **'Workforce Diversity Strategy'** provides a framework to honour this commitment. It is a vehicle for identifying employment priorities and maximising performance through drawing on the widest possible pool of skills available, thus encouraging workforce diversity.

The Strategy builds on more than a decade of impressive equal opportunity achievements and aims to address diversity in our staffing profile. It recognises that not all people have the required mix of skills, education, experience and systemic awareness to move directly into mainstream employment at UWA, or that they can succeed without appropriate support.

A wide ranging consultative process has been employed across the University in the development of the Strategy to ensure active involvement and ownership of the strategies contained therein.

Professor Deryck Schreuder
Vice-Chancellor and Principal

1. Diversity in the WA Community

The Western Australian community is a diverse one comprising people from a wide range of backgrounds who live in many different circumstances. Women comprise 52.0 per cent of the adult population and 42.9 per cent of the workforce. Four per cent of people aged 15-64 report having a mild or moderate disability. Of these, fewer than 50 per cent are in the workforce.

Nearly 28 per cent of the Western Australian population was born overseas with 12 per cent born in non-English speaking countries. Recent migrants from a non-English speaking country have a much higher unemployment rate (15 per cent) than the Australian-born labour force (8 per cent).

Aboriginal people represent just over 3 per cent of the total population. The unemployment rate in the Aboriginal population is almost 20 per cent.¹

2. Diversity and UWA – Issues and trends

The diversity of the UWA community has been increasing markedly over the past few years and it is anticipated that this trend will continue. In the student body of 14,687, 17.3% are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and there are 135 students of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. Women constitute 47% of staff and 51% of students. Data available show that 21.3% of academic staff and 12% of general staff are from a non-English speaking background while 0.8% of academic and 0.9% of general staff are from an indigenous background. Finally, 1.2% of academic staff and 2.3% of general staff reported having a disability.²

Historically, UWA has focussed on enhancing the employment and career development prospects for women and significant resources have been directed towards achieving this objective over the past decade.

These have included, among other things, strategies such as:

- targeted search processes aimed at increasing the pool of women candidates for senior positions
- an internationally recognised Leadership Development program for women

¹ Statistics for representation in the general community are sourced from 'Diversity Improvement Plan 1999-2005: Setting the Direction for Workforce Diversity.' WA Office of Equal Employment Opportunity, 1999

Statistics for workforce participation are sourced from 'Building Diversity in vocational education and employment – a framework for setting priorities to cater for the diverse needs of Western Australians.' WA Department of Training and Employment, 1999

² 'How Does Your University Compare?' - University of Western Australia. WA Office of Equal Employment Opportunity, 2000

- affirmative action in areas where there has been a large gender imbalance in the staff/student population (eg. Women in Science and Engineering program)
- supporting various networks for women staff (eg. Status of Women Group)

The effect of the above strategies has resulted in a greater percentage of women participating in both the academic (31%) and general (63%) workforce at UWA. Although this overall participation rate is increasing, representation of women at senior levels in both academic and general staffing streams continues to be low and, based on current trends, is decreasing. These concerns are being addressed through specific strategies contained in the Women in the Workplace program and Leadership Development for Women program, as well as through the Reviews of the Position of Women on Academic and General Staff.

The Equal Opportunity Management Plan provides the overall strategic framework within the University for the achievement of equal employment opportunity and workforce diversity. A range of more specific plans and programs support the University's commitment under this umbrella. These include the Women in the Workplace Program and Leadership Development for Women Program aimed at achieving gender equity, the Diversity Initiatives Fund, the Equity Advisers Scheme, and the Workforce Diversity Strategy, among others. These central programs are complemented by access and equity initiatives contained in faculty strategic plans.

The focus of this strategy is to increase workforce participation in the three priority areas listed below. These have been identified through a variety of data sources including EEO annual reports, statistical information from the WA Office of Equal Employment Opportunity, and comparison with other Universities both in WA and interstate.

Indigenous Australians

The University of WA adopted an Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES) between 1994–1998. The Strategy was completed in 1998 and an evaluation carried out in 1999 provided an excellent opportunity to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the initiative. Accordingly, the Workforce Diversity Strategy will aim to consolidate and extend workforce participation outcomes for this group through a mixture of employment and training initiatives.

The participation of indigenous Australians in the UWA workforce was 0.8% and 0.9 % of the academic and general workforce respectively compared to just over 3% of the WA population. Both these figures and the fact that employment participation has further decreased since the cessation of the AES suggests that indigenous Australians are significantly under-represented in the UWA workforce.

People with Disabilities

Similarly, people with disabilities remain an under-represented group in the UWA workforce with 1.2% of academic and 2.3% of general staff who reported having a disability.

The participation rate of this group is also difficult to assess owing to both the criteria for inclusion and factors such as stigma and attitudinal barriers in relation to the employment and career progression of people with disabilities.

People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds

People from CALD backgrounds have a significantly higher rate of both under- and unemployment than people born in a mainly English speaking country or Australia, depending on their country of birth, language spoken at home, accent and circumstances of arrival in Australia. In addition to the obvious linguistic and cultural barriers, persons in this category may also face a lack of recognition of overseas qualifications and skills, limited 'systemic' awareness and racism.

Caution must be exercised while interpreting employment participation data for this group owing to conceptual variations and methodological limitations in the recording of ethnicity data. These relate to inconsistent usage (depending on the reporting requirements and policy environment), oversimplified indicators of areas of need and an inaccurate assessment of the impact of systemic barriers experienced by CALD persons.

Data available indicate that people from CALD backgrounds appear to be well represented in the academic stream (21.3%) while approximately 12% are represented in the general staffing stream. It is important that UWA consolidate and extend its achievements with respect to this group, particularly in the context of our internationalisation and community relations agenda.

3. Guiding Principles

1. The Workforce Diversity Strategy aims to create a UWA workforce that reflects the diversity of the WA community.
2. The Workforce Diversity Strategy is premised on a 'growth' rather than 'deficit' model. It is assumed that employment and development of staff from diverse backgrounds will enhance our capacity to achieve excellence in teaching, learning and research, service delivery and our external relationships with local, national and international communities.
3. The Workforce Diversity Strategy is a significant component of UWA's social justice responsibilities and will directly contribute to improving the access and active participation of indigenous Australians, reconciliation and our relationship with ethnic communities that are often marginalised.

4. Responsibility for management of the Workforce Diversity Strategy will rest with Executive Deans and Senior Administrative Heads with support provided by Human Resources and the Equity Office in particular.
5. The Workforce Diversity Strategy is a developmental one and will aim to achieve employment diversity outcomes throughout the life of the Strategy and beyond.

4. Benefits

Increasing diversity within the staffing profile at UWA will deliver significant benefits to both the individual and the University:

Benefits to the Individual

Supports people from diverse backgrounds, who may have experienced barriers in accessing the labour market, to participate more fully in accessing appropriate employment, skills development and career enhancement opportunities at UWA

- Provides an opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to utilise a broader range of their talents and abilities

Benefits to UWA and Faculties/Departments

- Enhances the quality of decision making and service provision through drawing on a diverse range of skills, expertise and perspectives eg. bilingual/bicultural skills

Links UWA to the local, national and international community thereby increasing our capacity in economic and social fields, adding a real but difficult-to-quantify aspect to our relations with communities throughout the world

- Increasing our share of income derived from the international student market through promoting UWA as an inclusive environment that promotes excellence in teaching and learning through diversity
- Provides an opportunity for UWA to become a national and international leader with regard to modelling equal employment opportunity best 'practice'
- Supports and complements the objectives of UWA's Internationalisation Strategy

5. Broader Strategic Framework

The UWA Workforce Diversity Strategy supports the following broad policy and strategic frameworks established by both the University and the WA Government:

- UWA Strategic Plan and Operational Priorities Plan;
- UWA Human Resource Strategic Plan;
- UWA Equal Opportunity Management Plan;
- UWA's Internationalisation Strategy;
- WA Government's Diversity Improvement Management Plan; and
- WA Government's WA ONE Policy.

6. Management of Workforce Diversity Strategy

The Workforce Diversity Strategy will be managed by a Reference Group that will be chaired by the Director, Human Resources and will comprise representation from each of the Faculties, Library, Equity, Personnel and the identified priority areas. The Reference Group will report bi-annually to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor through the Equal Opportunity Advisory Committee. The role of the Reference Group will involve:

- monitoring the progress towards achieving the outcomes specified in the Strategy;
- information exchange and sharing experiences within and across work areas;
- reviewing strategies to ensure the Plan remains focussed and responsive; and
- determining the appropriate level of resource allocation towards the initiatives contained in the Strategy.

7. Evaluation of the Workforce Diversity Strategy

The Workforce Diversity Strategy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through both the above and other management mechanisms and a formal evaluation will be conducted in late 2003. The Strategy is seen as a developmental one and it is anticipated that it will be at least two years before the full impact of the Strategy can be accurately assessed.

8. Key Result Areas

Five broad focus areas have been developed to identify issues and develop strategies to address the needs of individuals and communities. These are:

- *Leadership and Promotion*
- *Cultural Profile*
- *Recruitment*
- *Special employment initiatives*
- *Employment support and development*

Key Result Area One: LEADERSHIP AND PROMOTION

Outcome: *Responsibility for workforce diversity is integrated into the UWA management framework and it's benefits endorsed at senior levels and through a variety of channels*

| Strategies | Performance Indicators | Responsibility |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vice-Chancellor to launch 'Workforce Diversity Strategy' with both staff, community and industry representatives | Launch of Workforce Diversity Strategy Relevant recruitment networks developed Extent of participation in the Strategy by Faculties, Library and Central Administration | Vice-Chancellor Executive Deans and Senior Administrative Heads |
| Executive Deans, Chief Librarian and Senior Administrative Heads to report annually against achieving progress towards the outcomes outlined in the 'Workforce Diversity Strategy'. | Progress towards meeting the objectives of the 'Workforce Diversity Strategy' Increase in UWA workforce participation among members of identified priority areas | Deputy Vice-Chancellor Executive Deans Chief Librarian Senior Administrative Heads |
| Conduct a ' Workforce Diversity ' publicity and marketing campaign through: Regular coverage in Uninews Distribution of publicity material such as posters, stickers etc Coverage of successful case studies Recognition through application for awards Community outreach Web based information dissemination | Extent of marketing and promotional activities undertaken with respect to the Workforce Diversity Strategy Number and nature of employment placements offered through the Strategy | Equity Office of Public Affairs |

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Key Result Area Two: CULTURAL PROFILE

Outcome: *The UWA workplace culture develops a greater positive appreciation of diversity that will support and complement this employment initiative*

| Strategies | Performance Indicators | Responsibility |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Develop an Indigenous Employment and Career Development Policy | Indigenous Employment and Career Development Policy endorsed by Senate | Equity Office |
| Develop a Reconciliation Statement for the University | Reconciliation statement endorsed by Senate | Centre for Aboriginal Programs |
| Conduct regular 'Equal Opportunity and Diversity' Awareness (<i>including understanding of discrimination component</i>) workshops within each of the Faculties, the Library and Central Administration | Number of sessions conducted and nature of feedback received Percentage of Faculty, Library and Administrative staff actively participating | Equity Office |
| 3. Develop a Cultural Diversity Priority Statement for UWA | Cultural Diversity Priority Statement endorsed by Senate | Equity Office |
| 4. Ensure ongoing presence of workforce diversity issues within UWA media channels: Research 'Best practice' examples Profile successful workforce diversity achievements | Extent of media coverage of workforce diversity issues Number and nature of articles / publications etc. focussing on workplace diversity | Equity Office Office of Public Affairs |

Key Result Area Three: RECRUITMENT

Outcome: *Recruitment processes encourage and facilitate the employment of a broad diversity of employees*

| Strategies: | Performance Indicators | Responsibility |
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| <p>1. Conduct a two-stage diversity audit (within Faculties, the Library and Central Administration) to identify the recruitment barriers within the University's culture, practices and policy framework for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indigenous Australians - People from CALD backgrounds - People with disabilities | Diversity audits identifying structural and attitudinal barriers in recruitment | Equity Office Personnel Industrial Relations Faculties Library Central Administration |
| <p>2. Develop targeted strategies aimed at minimising the influence of <i>and/or</i> removing the barriers identified at 1 above**</p> | Proactive strategies implemented aimed at addressing the "gaps" identified through the Diversity audits | Equity Office Personnel Industrial Relations |
| <p>3. Develop new and / or consolidate existing linkages with indigenous, ethnic communities and disability recruitment and community networks</p> | Number and nature of employment placements through linkages with key indigenous, ethnic community and disability recruitment networks | Equity Office |

**** Sections 51 and 66R of the WA (1984) Equal Opportunity Act contain provisions that allow for special measures that promote access to services and opportunities in response to identified needs in relation to employment and training**

Key Result Area Four: SPECIAL EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES

Outcome: *The UWA workforce participation of staff from the identified areas reflects the representation of these groups in the general community and is consistent with our internationalisation focus*

| Strategies | Performance Indicators | Responsibility |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1. Explore best practice case studies from the tertiary, private and public sectors with respect to recruitment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Indigenous Australians . People from CALD Backgrounds . People with disabilities <p>2. Develop a mix of employment options (in addition to ongoing employment) to increase the representation of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Indigenous Australians which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . identified positions . seasonal and casual work . visiting scholars / artist program . indigenous Cadetships . People from CALD backgrounds which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . work experience opportunities to obtain systemic knowledge . seasonal and casual work . fixed-term positions . People with disabilities which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . clerical and administrative | <p>Relevant ‘best practice’ case studies shared with prospective employers on campus</p> <p>Number and nature of positions filled by indigenous Australians, people from CALD backgrounds and people with disabilities</p> <p>Nature of experiences / issues raised by staff from the priority areas with respect to employment</p> | <p>Equity Office of Public Affairs</p> <p>Equity Office</p> <p>Personnel</p> <p>Faculties and Departments</p> <p>Central Administration</p> <p>Library</p> |

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| traineeships (successfully trialled in HR) . fixed term positions . work experience opportunities 3. Establish a Diversity Job Bank where appropriate vacancies within the University can be “matched” with suitable applicants from the priority areas | Extent of liaison with employers at UWA and external recruitment networks Number and nature of job vacancies referred and number of successful placements | Equity Office Personnel, Faculties and Departments, Library, Central Administration |
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Key Result Area Five: EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

Outcome: *Participants in the Workforce Diversity Strategy are supported and encouraged to maximise the development of their skills and abilities*

| Strategies: | Performance Indicators | Responsibility |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| In addition to workplace orientation, provide ‘specialist’ orientation for all successful Diversity Job Bank applicants | Orientation package developed for successful Diversity Job Bank applicants | Centre for Aboriginal Programs Equity Office Personnel |
| Develop and implement ‘culturally’ appropriate employment support initiatives including assistance with performance management measures, if necessary, for successful Diversity Job Bank applicants from indigenous and ALD backgrounds | Implementation of ‘culturally’ appropriate employment support initiatives Feedback received from both successful applicants and employers | Centre for Aboriginal Programs Equity Office |

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| Develop and implement appropriate employment support initiatives including assistance with performance management measures, if necessary/required, for successful applicants with a disability | Implementation of appropriate employment support initiatives Feedback received from both successful applicants and employers | Equity Office Human Resources |
| Conduct a diversity audit of current staff training and development (T & D) options to assess factors such as suitability, accessibility etc. for staff from the identified priority areas | Diversity Audit assessing appropriateness and accessibility of current T & D options for staff from the identified priority areas | Equity Office Organisational and Staff Development Services |
| Develop and implement appropriate T&D initiatives for existing indigenous staff recruited under the Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES) | Number and nature of T & D initiatives implemented for AES recruits Impact of T & D in relation to career progression outcomes/advancement | Centre for Aboriginal Programs Human Resources |
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