

## Equal Employment Opportunity in recruitment

Equal opportunity principles in recruitment and selection is an important part in promoting selection on the basis of merit and advancing inclusion of people from diverse groups within our society, who have traditionally been under-represented in employment.

Resources are provided to enable staff involved in the recruitment of both academic and general staff to include equal opportunity principles within the recruitment process. These include:

1. [Addressing EO criteria for applicants](#)
2. [Sample EO questions for selection panels](#)
3. [Essential EO Criteria for General Staff positions](#)
4. [EO Criteria for Academic Staff positions](#)

There are specific initiatives in place which aim to improve representation of staffing areas where particular groups have low representation:

The University is currently implementing a number of specific [Indigenous Employment](#) initiatives click here to find out more about these initiatives.

The University's [Disability Action Plan](#) 2005-2008 is being implemented to improve access and better levels of support for staff with a disability.

### 1. Addressing EO criteria for applicants

The following comments and examples are provided to assist potential ANU staff in responding to the EO selection criteria. They should also assist recruitment panel members in constructing questions and assessing responses. There is an expectation that responses to the EO Selection Criteria for the lower levels will be less in-depth and less comprehensive than responses for positions at the higher levels. This is consistent with the increasing requirement from academic levels A to E and general staff grades 1 to 10+.

In demonstrating understanding of equal opportunity principles, candidates in their written application and at interview (if applicable) may choose to make reference to their achievement(s) or advocacy in relation to some of the following:

- Mentoring as a mechanism for advancing equal opportunity
- An understanding of the term "affirmative action"
- The relevance of search strategies in appointing women
- Why advocacy for people less familiar with the school or faculty "culture" would be important
- How membership of boards and/or committees might contribute to EEO
- The value of a "buddy" system for overseas students
- Some comments in relation to re-entry or breaks in service from an EO perspective
- The value of networks in advancing EO

- How harassment (sexual and otherwise) should be dealt with and why
- How individuals (particularly supervisors of staff and students) can avoid liability arising from non-action to prevent or eliminate discriminatory or harassing behaviour
- Other contribution to development of EO policy
- Other contribution to the application of EO policy
- EO training or seminars undertaken and/or organised

## 2. Sample EO questions for selection panels

### Q. What do you understand by equal opportunity?

*An appropriate response might include the following information:*

People being provided with an equal opportunity to compete on an equal basis for employment, promotion, training opportunities, career development, HDA, etc.; and that it is illegal to discriminate on the basis of sex, race, religion, sexual preference, etc.

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### Q. Can you explain what is meant by Equal Employment Opportunity?

*An appropriate response might include the following information:*

Equal Employment Opportunity is about:

- Making sure that workplaces are free from all forms of harassment and unlawful discrimination, and
- Providing programs to assist members of EEO groups to overcome past or present disadvantage (this is also called Affirmative Action.)

This means having workplace rules, policies, practices and behaviours that are fair to all and do not disadvantage particular people or groups.

In such an environment all staff and students are valued and respected and have opportunities to develop their full potential and pursue a career path of their choice.

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### Q. How would you apply equity principles in your decision making?

*An appropriate response might include information on:*

How they would act when making decisions in relation to allocation of work, training, development, marking, extensions, etc. They should be able to provide an example of how they have done this and what outcome resulted.

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### Q. In what situations have you shown leadership in the implementation of equity principles?

*An appropriate response might include the following information:*

Examples of how the person has been pro-active in the implementation of equity principles through, for example, encouraging and supporting staff to apply for promotion, research monies, etc; setting up informal networks (mentoring); agreement to flexible work practices, decision making and/or input to policy.

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### **Q. What are the Equity Target Groups?**

*An appropriate response might include the following information:*

There are four equity target groups in employment. They are comprised of people affected by past or continuing disadvantage or discrimination in employment. These groups are:

- Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders
- People with a disability
- Members of racial, ethnic and ethno-religious minority groups
- Women

In addition to the four groups outlined above, DETYA has designated the following two groups as disadvantaged in an educational context:

- People from rural and isolated backgrounds
- People from low socio-economic status backgrounds

DETYA defines the disadvantage for women in terms of their limited participation in non-traditional areas of education and in higher degrees, i.e. PhDs and Research Masters Degrees.

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### **Q. Does "Equity" mean treating everyone exactly the same?**

*An appropriate response might include the following information:*

Equity in an equal opportunity context does not mean treating everyone exactly the same. Equity means acknowledging that there are groups of people that have traditionally been discriminated against on the basis of their inherent characteristics. These are attributes that a person is born with or has acquired and which cannot be changed.

Equity aims to ensure that such people have the means of achieving financial independence through success in education and employment opportunities. This may require providing additional assistance to people from these groups to achieve this aim. For example, it is not equitable to treat people from non-English speaking backgrounds exactly the same as everyone else as there may be significant language barriers and cultural differences which may adversely affect their employment and educational opportunities in Australia. These people may require assistance to overcome any barriers of language and cultural difference.

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### **Q. How does Equal Employment Opportunity work?**

Equal Employment Opportunity aims to achieve fair practices and behaviour in the workplace.

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### **Q. Haven't we achieved equal opportunity?**

*An appropriate response might include the following information:*

We will know when we have achieved equal opportunity when people from the equity target groups are proportionately represented in employment, are proportionately represented in higher level positions, and are making a proportional contribution in key decision making roles.

The employment profile of many public institutions indicates low numbers of Indigenous Australians, people from non-English speaking backgrounds and people with obvious disabilities. These groups are often employed in entry level or base salary level positions. Even in those organisations where the percentage of women is close to 50% or more they are most often clustered in the lower salary level positions with limited career paths and limited security or tenure.

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**Q. Doesn't Affirmative Action mean that women will get jobs over men - for example, does it mean that a woman will get a job over a man all other things being equal?**

*An appropriate response might include the following information:*

Affirmative Action does not mean that women will get jobs over men. People are assessed on how well they met the selection criteria for the position, i.e. on merit. Affirmative Action does not mean that people from the equity target groups (including women) will be given jobs over those who are better qualified. There is no compulsory quota system in Australia which requires organisations to employ a specific number of people from the designated groups.

Affirmative Action is positive action taken to identify and eliminate discriminatory barriers that may exist for these groups and which prevent them from obtaining education and employment opportunities. It may even be necessary to identify individual positions and target one or more of the designated groups to fill the position.

The employment profile of many large organisations, including universities, shows that the majority of women are over-represented in entry level positions at the lower end of the salary scale. There are very high percentages of women staff at ANU levels 3 to 6/7 and women members of the academic staff at A and B. The percentages of women decline significantly at the higher levels, with very few in senior management or senior academic positions. It is in this context that Affirmative Action may include targets and strategies to increase the number of women over time.

The success of Affirmative Action in achieving equal employment opportunity can be measured by the number of people from each of the equity target groups who have been successful in gaining employment and promotion, particularly at senior levels.

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**Acknowledgment**

In assembling these samples questions the Equity and Diversity Unit has adapted material from the publication 'Fair Ways', ISSN 1320 5471, April 1999, and from two separate papers kindly provided by the University of Canberra.

### **3. Essential EO Criteria for General Staff positions**

<b>Academic Level</b>	<b>Criterion</b>
<b>ANU Officer Grades 1 - 4</b>	A demonstrated general knowledge and understanding of equal opportunity principles as they relate to employment. Where the position is within the

education context the application of equal opportunity principles is required.

**ANU Officer  
Grades 5 - 7**

A demonstrated understanding of equal opportunity principles and policies and a commitment to their application in a university context.

**ANU Officer Grade  
8\***

A demonstrated high level understanding of equal opportunity principles and a commitment to the application of EO policies in a university context.

*(While not exclusive of other evidence, some evidence of achievement or advocacy would satisfy this criterion.)*

**ANU Officer  
Grades 9 & 10\***

A demonstrated high level of understanding of equal opportunity principles and a commitment to the application of EO policies in a university context.

*(While not exclusive of other evidence, some evidence of achievement or advocacy would satisfy this criterion.)*

**Senior  
Administrative  
Officers  
Heads of  
Administrative  
Divisions  
Members of the  
University  
Executive**

A demonstrated high level of achievement in relation to incorporation of EO principles into strategic planning and the capacity to accept devolved responsibility for achievement of equity and diversity strategies.

*(While not exclusive of other evidence, an understanding of managerial and individual responsibility, the potential for vicarious liability, and some evidence of achievement or advocacy would satisfy this criterion.)*

#### **4. EO Criteria for Academic Staff positions**

**Academic Level**

**Criterion**

**Level A**

A demonstrated understanding of equal opportunity principles and policies and a commitment to their application in a university context.

**Level B**

A demonstrated understanding of equal opportunity principles and policies and a commitment to their application in a university context.

**Level C**

A demonstrated understanding of equal opportunity principles and policies and a commitment to their application in a university context.

*(While not exclusive of other evidence, an understanding of managerial and individual responsibility, the potential for vicarious liability, and some evidence of achievement or advocacy would satisfy this criterion)*

**Level D**

A demonstrated high level of understanding of equal opportunity principles and a commitment to the application of EO policies in a university context.

*(While not exclusive of other evidence, an in-depth understanding of managerial and individual responsibility, the potential for vicarious liability,*

*and some evidence of achievement or advocacy would satisfy this criterion)*

A demonstrated high level of understanding of equal opportunity principles and a commitment to the application of EO policies in a university context.

(While not exclusive of other evidence, an in-depth understanding of managerial and individual responsibility, the potential for vicarious liability, and some evidence of achievement or advocacy would satisfy this criterion for other than positions of Dean or Director)

**Level E**

*For positions of Dean or Director a demonstrated achievement in relation to incorporation of EO principles into strategic planning and the capacity to accept devolved responsibility for achievement of equity and diversity strategies is required.*