UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

RESPECT FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY POLICY

AIMS

The University of Wollongong aims to provide an environment where the cultures of its members are respected and which equips graduates and staff to function effectively in a world with increasingly open national boundaries.

The University’s Respect for Cultural Diversity Policy is designed to ensure that all staff and students enjoy and benefit from an environment for work and study which is free from all manifestations of racism, and which positively values and supports cultural and ethnic diversity. The policy recognises that racism is unacceptable and contrary to the University’s objective of creating an environment which allows all students and staff to achieve their full potential. In addition, this policy recognises that racism, in many of its manifestations, is unlawful under state and federal legislation. The University takes seriously its obligations under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW) and the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) to ensure the absence of racial discrimination.

Specifically, the policy is committed to ensuring that:

♦ No member of the University community suffers racial discrimination, vilification, harassment or intimidation in its structures, practices and values, in its curriculum, and in its learning and working environments; and

♦ That individuals and groups are not disadvantaged because of their race, colour, nationality, national origin, descent, ethnicity or ethno-religious identity.

At the University of Wollongong all forms of racist behaviour are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This includes racist behaviour which does not necessarily fall within one of the categories of unlawful racism, but which is nevertheless inconsistent with this policy.

Racial discrimination is often compounded by other forms of discrimination, in particular (but not exclusively) discrimination on the grounds of sex. This policy, therefore, acknowledges the significance of the possible interaction between racism and sexism and the importance of taking this into account in strategies aimed at eliminating discrimination.

Forms of racism are described in the attached glossary.
1. **STRATEGIES**

The University aims to achieve its goals with respect to the creating of an inclusive environment by a range of measures including:

1.1 Promoting cross-cultural awareness and support for cultural diversity in the University via educational programs and other activities for all staff and students;

1.2 Ongoing review to ensure that all courses and subjects are not inconsistent with principles of support for cultural diversity, anti-racism and non-discrimination;

1.3 Ensuring that all students and staff understand their responsibilities under this policy, and appreciate the consequences of non-compliance with relevant state and federal laws and the University’s Respect for Cultural Diversity Policy.

1.4 The provision of accessible avenues for making complaints and seeking redress;

1.5 Offering information and support to staff and students who elect to utilise external anti-discrimination law enforcement procedures such as those administered by the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board (NSW ADB) and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) in the resolution of complaints about racism;

1.6 Expanding its links with the broader community to promote values of cultural inclusiveness.
2. COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Strategies 1.4 and 1.5 relate to the provision of avenues for complaint and redress. The specific details of these strategies are set out below:

2.1 Anyone who experiences or observes racist behaviour on campus, or racist practices in the University, is encouraged to contact a Grievance Officer to report the matter.

2.2 The Grievance Officer will:

- make confidential record of the complaint;
- provide support and assistance as well as information on the University’s Respect for Cultural Diversity Policy and relevant laws; and
- explain the range of options available to deal with the problem.

2.3 The options that are available following notification are:

2.3.1 The complainant may request that no further action be taken;

2.3.2 A formal complaint of a breach of the University’s Respect for Cultural Diversity Policy may be recorded, and the matter will be dealt with employing the University’s grievance resolution procedures;

2.3.3 A formal complaint of a breach of the University’s Respect for Cultural Diversity Policy may be recorded, and the matter referred to the Vice-Principal (Administration). The Vice-Principal (Administration) will forward the matter to the Vice-Chancellor, who will investigate the matter and consider taking disciplinary action under the appropriate procedures against the student or staff member who is alleged to have engaged in the racist behaviour;

2.3.4 The complainant may lodge a complaint with the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board (where the conduct complained of is a breach of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)) or the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (where the conduct complained of is a breach of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)).
2.3.5  The incident may be reported to the NSW Police Service, where the conduct complained of constitutes a criminal offence.

2.4  The Grievance Officer will provide information and assistance on the most appropriate way to proceed with the complaint, but the final decision as to which option should be pursued rests with the complainant. The complainant should be advised that if the option originally chosen proves inappropriate as a means of handling the complaint, s/he may request that the matter be handled via an alternative option. In particular, the complainant should be advised that, even when s/he elects to have the matter handled internally, s/he is entitled to take the matter to a relevant external body at any point in the internal procedures.

2.5  Whether the complainant opts to have the matter handled internally (via the EED Unit for staff and the Office of the Dean of Students for students) or externally (via the ADB or HREOC) support and guidance throughout the process will be provided.

2.6  Where the complainant request that no further action be taken in accordance with 2.3.1, the Contact officer’s confidential written record of the complaint should be destroyed after a period of twelve (12) months has lapsed from the time of the original complaint.

2.7  The racism complaint procedure should include monitoring a statistical information regarding the number of complaints made and the time spent dealing with each complaint.

2.8  That the racism complaint procedure be integrated with the new Grievance Procedures and that all Grievance Officers receive training in dealing with grievances resulting from racism.

2.9  A review of the Racism complaint procedure should be conducted three (3) years after its establishment to ensure efficient operation.
3. EDUCATIONAL STRATEGY

Strategies 1.1 and 1.3 are described more fully below:

**Staff**

The Working Party proposes for staff, the development of a cross cultural and anti-racism awareness program as an integral part of professional development. These programs should be offered to all staff both academic and general at any time but be specifically prominent in workplace management programs including:

- Induction training;
- Heads of unit and Supervisor training; and
- Training for grievance conciliators.

The professional development should focus on dealing with race issues in the classroom and workplace and recognising indirect racism. The Working Party recommends that staff development be achieved through a combination of workshops, seminars, brochures and a handbook. It is also recommended that all academic staff be required to undertake training related to dealing with cultural diversity to be eligible for promotion or tenure.

The program should be developed by the appropriate staff Development Committees in conjunction with the Anti-Discrimination Board and an internal consultative committee.

**Students**

The Working Party proposes that the University, in conjunction with the SRC, develop the following initiatives.

- Inclusion of Respect for Cultural Diversity material in orientation kits;
- Discussion of Respect for Cultural Diversity in orientation welcomes;
- The continuation of the anti-racism forum developed by the SRC and supported by the University of Wollongong.
University Community

On a University wide scale, the anti-racism message could be enhanced by:

♦ Running a Cultural Diversity week with lectures, an art exhibition, poster competition, international food fair and conferences. This event will include both staff and students.

Links with the Community

Strategy 1.6 is expanded more fully below:

The Committee recognises the need to encourage and develop links with the community. The University, therefore, needs to work closely with the community to broadcast an anti-racism message across the whole community. It is suggested that this could be achieved in the following ways:

♦ Contacting appropriate groups within the community. These include: NSW Police, Wollongong City Council, Migrant Resources Centre, Ethnic Affairs Commission, Aboriginal Community Centre, NSW Anti-Discrimination Board, local schools and TAFE;

♦ Identify groups who may not be currently working in the area of combating racism but have access to the wider community. This includes the Retail Traders Associations, and taxi companies;

♦ Invite all groups to be involved in an anti-racism campaign using posters, stickers or a community service announcement aired on local television stations;

In line with these suggestions the Working Party on Racism has instigated contact with Wollongong City Council to establish a network to combat racism and promote cultural diversity. To date, the Council has not proceeded with this initiative but we wish to be represented if the network is established.
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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Forms of Racism

Racism may take a variety of forms. The following manifestations of racism are unlawful:

♦ **Racial Discrimination** is behaviour which disadvantages people on the basis of their real (or supposed) membership of a racial, ethnic or ethno-religious group. In the educational context it results in stressful working and learning environments and reduced like chances for students and employees belonging to certain groups. Racial discrimination can take many forms including direct and indirect discrimination.

♦ **Direct Discrimination** means treatment that is obviously unfair or unequal and directed at a particular person or group on the basis of (in this case) race. For example, if an employer will not hire a staff member just because of his or her race or ethnicity, this is direct race discrimination.

♦ **Indirect Discrimination** means treatment that, although not directed at any particular group, has the effect or result of unequal outcomes. Indirect discrimination may arise from the policies, rules, procedures, practices and culture of the institution or system – hence the term systemic or institutional racism.

♦ **Racial Vilification** is a public act that encourages (or incites) others to hate, have serious contempt for, or severely ridicule a person, or group of people, because of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national background. (The definition of “race” extends to some religious groups.) Racist abuse on the campus grounds or the adoption of racist stereotypes in an article written in a newspaper are examples of behaviour which could amount to racial vilification.

♦ **Offensive Racist Behaviour** is an act, which is reasonably likely to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate another person, or group of people, and is done because of the race, colour or national or ethnic origin of the other person or of some or all of the people in the group.