

RMIT Diversity and Inclusion

GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

Introduction

RMIT is a dynamic institution, known for its innovation, creativity and relevance to contemporary society.

The University's mission is to create transformative experiences for students, getting them ready for life and work, and to help shape the world with research, innovation, teaching and engagement (RMIT Strategic Plan to 2020.) Our future success is dependent on attracting and retaining the best people to support our vision of becoming a global university of technology, design and enterprise. By empowering all staff to thrive, the University can better achieve its aim of shaping the world by developing innovative and creative solutions to complex local, national and global problems.

RMIT takes a leading role in recognising and valuing the diversity of its workforce. The University's performance in relation to gender equality in particular shows significant room for improvement with women being under-represented in senior academic and executive ranks and in certain occupations and disciplines. While this situation is not unique to RMIT, sector data reveals we are notably behind many other Australian universities in terms of an inclusive and gender equitable workplace culture.

The benefits of providing an inclusive workplace have now been well documented. Inclusive workplace cultures, where all employees are valued and included, result in a more engaged, motivated and productive workforce. Diverse and inclusive teams are also more innovative, able to draw upon a wider set of experiences, approaches and resources to produce creative solutions. The research is also clear that when a workforce mirrors the diversity of its customers (such as students), it can more effectively understand and anticipate the needs of those customers. In addition to these arguments, rapidly changing workforce demographics mean that organisations will increasingly be challenged in the search for staff and will need to draw from and retain candidates from diverse backgrounds. Finally, diversity, particularly gender equality at all leadership levels, is subject to increasing scrutiny and an organisation's reputation and brand can be affected by its performance in this area.

Background and current status

The RMIT 2016-2020 Gender Equality Action Plan has been developed to provide a framework for identifying and addressing the remaining barriers to women's inclusion and progression at the University.

The Action Plan identifies three broad areas for focused attention that will enable strategic, sustainable and meaningful change at RMIT. The Action Plan will help us, over the next 5 years, to navigate and accelerate the gender equality journey that RMIT must take to improve the engagement, retention and advancement of female staff.

The Gender Equality Action Plan will lay also the groundwork for RMIT's successful application for the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation. This award provides public recognition of an organisation's focus on gender and pay equity.

The Action Plan will also support RMIT's successful participation in the Science in Australia Gender Equality (SAGE) Athena SWAN program. Recently introduced by the Australian Academy of Science, 32 Australian universities and research institutes have applied to participate in the pilot program, which specifically addresses gender equality in the fields of science, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM). The SAGE Athena SWAN program has had demonstrated success in the UK over the past decade in eliminating gender bias within institutions and developing inclusive cultures that value all staff. As a participant in the pilot program, RMIT will analyse its data, develop and implement an action plan, monitor progress and submit an application for the Bronze Institutional award in January 2019. Improving gender equality in these fields is of vital importance to RMIT and to Australia's scientific performance and productivity.

A new Plan

This new Gender Equality Action Plan sets out actions for the next five years to improve the experience of staff.

RMIT commits to promoting this Plan, devoting appropriate resources to its implementation, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation, and supporting leaders to develop and implement operational plans. We will continue to track and report on indicators regarding the participation and experience of our staff.

In adopting and implementing this Gender Equality Action Plan, RMIT demonstrates how it values the richness of diversity amongst its staff, and recognises its responsibilities to take University-wide transformative actions to enhance inclusion for all.

RMIT Gender Equality Action Plan: One-page summary

Key Focus Areas:	Leadership and Governance	Employment Conditions	Women's Career Advancement
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership commitment to Gender Equality • Gender Equality Action Plan Committee (GEAPC) monitors the plan including implementation of actions, progress and reporting • Provide Gender Equality Reporting • Participate in Higher Education sector Gender Equality benchmarking • Develop Gender Equality targets in Executive and Senior roles • College and Portfolio Plans to incorporate an outline of how they will align to the Gender Equality Action Plan • Increase leadership and manager accountability • Enable women to have a wider role in governance and decision-making • Develop a Gender Equality Toolkit • Workforce consultation and communication • Achieve external citation from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) • Achieve SAGE Athena SWAN Bronze Institutional Award accreditation • Develop RMIT Male Leader Champions of Gender Equality program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased attraction and recruitment of women • Fix gender pay-gap • Gender equality in succession planning • Provide parental leave resources and supports • Increase promotion of flexible work practices • Provide a workplace free from discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying • Increase gender intersectionality awareness • Develop an action against domestic and family violence program and campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase women's application and success rates in academic and professional promotion • Increase financial support for women in research • Review and maintain RMIT Leadership programs for gender inclusivity and participation • Provide enabling opportunities and forums for women

Action Area 1: Leadership and Governance

RMIT recognises and actively involves women at all levels of governance, management and leadership

Action	Responsibility	Target	Timeline
1. Leadership commitment to Gender Equality	Council VC ¹ VCE Executive Champion HR Executive Director, Marketing and Communications Academic Registrar	Council, Vice-Chancellor and members of the Executive to formally communicate and promote RMIT's commitment to gender equality and its role in improving the performance of the University to all employees and to the external community	August 2016
		Key University statements include reference to gender equality at RMIT and its connection to the aspiration of being a global university of technology, design and enterprise	August 2016 ongoing to December 2019
2. Gender Equality Action Plan Committee (GEAPC) monitors the plan including implementation of actions, progress and reporting	Executive Champion VCE HR GEAPC	Establish a Gender Equality Action Plan Committee (GEAPC) and comprised of senior decision-makers and representatives from across the University and provides oversight of the Gender Equality Action Plan, monitoring progress, developing initiatives and tracking of actions	August 2016
		GEAPC for provide quarterly reports to the Diversity and Inclusion Governance Group	October 2016 ongoing to December 2019
		Establish local champions/ ambassadors in each College and Portfolio who are senior staff and who take responsibility for planning, implementing and reporting on activities within their own area	August 2016
3. Provide Gender Equality Reporting	HR Executive Champion GEAPC	Produce annual gender equality report as part of WGEA reporting to provide comprehensive workforce data by gender	March 2018 ongoing to June 2018
4. Participate in Higher Education Gender Equality Benchmarking	HR	Benchmark RMIT's gender equality performance the Australian Higher Education sector and other relevant Victorian universities.	July 2018 ongoing to November 2018
		Benchmarking data produced and presented to GEAPC for review and action	November 2018 ongoing to June 2019

¹ If position titles change, these responsibilities will be updated accordingly.

Action Area 1: Leadership and Governance

Action	Responsibility	Target	Timeline
5. Develop Gender Equality targets for Executive and Senior roles	Executive Champion VCE HR	Develop University-wide and College/ Portfolio targets for women's representation at Level C, Level D, Level E, HEW 9, HEW 10 and Executive staff	September 2016
		University targets for women's representation established for each level in consultation with VCE and Executive and included in performance workplans	June 2016 ongoing to December 2019
6. College and Portfolio Plans to incorporate an outline of how they will align to the Gender Equality Action Plan	Executive Champion VCE HR	Align College and Portfolio unit plan objectives, outcomes and targets with the Gender Equality action plan and report annually	January 2017 ongoing to December 2019
7. Increase Leadership and Managerial accountability	Executive Champion VCE HR GEAPC	Executive and people leader roles to provide leadership on gender equality to their teams including staff responsible for recruiting, promoting, identifying talent, succession planning and training/development	September 2016 ongoing to December 2019
		Align gender equality Key Performance Indicators into the individual performance workplans of Managers who are responsible for meeting or exceeding these goals	February 2017 ongoing to December 2019
		Executive and people leader roles to undertake RMIT Unconscious Bias professional development program	November 2016 ongoing to December 2019
8. Enable women to have a wider role in governance and decision-making	Executive Champion VCE HR GEAPC	Develop and implement a policy for improving the representation of women on decision-making committees with a target of at least 30% women with the aim of achieving equal representation	October 2016 ongoing to February 2017
9. Develop a Gender Equality Toolkit	HR GEAPC	Develop a Gender Equality Toolkit for Managers that contains a range of strategies on integrating gender equality into workplace policy, processes and procedures.	August 2017 ongoing to October 2017
		Gender Equality Toolkit developed, launched and promoted	September 2017

Action Area 1: Leadership and Governance

Action	Responsibility	Target	Timeline
10. Increased visibility of women	Executive Champion VCE HR GEAPC	Ensure visibility of women and use a range of female role models in University communications, events, meetings, conferences and panels	June 2016 ongoing to December 2019
		Women with diverse characteristics and in a range of positions, including leadership positions, are included in RMIT communications, events, meetings, conferences and panels	June 2016 ongoing to December 2019
11. Achieve external citation from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA)	HR GEAPC	Implement actions and strategies to meet the criteria of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation to be achieved for 2016-2017 reporting cycle and maintained	July 2017 ongoing to December 2019
12. Achieve SAGE Athena SWAN Bronze Institutional Award accreditation	Executive Champion VCE HR GEAPC Athena SWAN SAT	Establish a SAGE Athena SWAN Self Assessment Team (SAT) with 1 x representative from each College and a mixture of grades and roles representing different stages of the career ladder in STEMM	April 2016
		SAT must meet at least three times a year and is responsible for meeting and monitoring the requirements of the SAGE Athena SWAN Bronze Institutional Award application	April 2016 ongoing to January 2019
		SAGE Athena SWAN Bronze Institutional Award Action Plan developed which includes proactive actions such as activities, programs and changes to policy to address the problems identified in the analysis.	June 2016 ongoing to January 2019
13. Develop RMIT Male Leader Champions of Gender Equality program	Executive Champion VCE HR GEAPC	Establish quarterly forum for Male Leaders to advocate for and act to advance gender equality	April 2017 ongoing to November 2019
		Use RMIT Male Leader Champions to promote gender equality targets locally	
		Identify opportunities to promote experiences of men as carers as good practice examples	

Action Area 2: Employment Conditions

RMIT respects and protects the employment conditions of women to enable their full participation in the workforce.

Action	Responsibility	Target	Timeline
1. Increase attraction and recruitment of women	HR	Conduct an analysis of University recruitment data by gender including number of applications, number shortlisted and number appointed	October 2016 ongoing to December 2016
		Develop action plan per College/Portfolio recruitment identifying areas for increased female representation	February 2017 ongoing to November 2017
		Engage Executive search firms and provide information that details RMIT's commitment to gender equality and a requirement for them to supply 50% appropriately qualified female candidates	October 2016 ongoing to February 2017
		Develop guideline that selection panels include a minimum 50% female membership of appropriate seniority	June 2017 ongoing to December 2019
		Provide diversity and gender equality information for Chairs of RMIT selection panels as part of Recruitment & Selection training including Unconscious Bias professional development	June 2017 ongoing to December 2019
		Pilot recruitment of women-only roles in consistently in under-represented areas and disciplines through exemption application of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010	July 2017 ongoing to November 2017
		Include in all recruitment communications and marketing materials a statement about RMIT's commitment to gender equality, and the benefits and programs available to staff that support gender equality	June 2017 ongoing to December 2019
2. Fix gender pay-gap	HR	Conduct University-wide and College/Portfolio annual pay equality analyses which include comparison of total remuneration (normal pay and loadings)	June 2016 ongoing to August 2016
		Prepare recommendations paper to Council with recommendations for endorsement and develop strategies to address any gender pay gaps	June 2016
		Strategies developed and implemented to address gaps identified in total remuneration between men and women	September 2016 ongoing to December 2019

Action Area 2: Employment Conditions

Action	Responsibility	Target	Timeline
3. Gender equality in Succession Planning	HR	Develop procedures to ensure women are considered for leadership appointments in succession-planning activities	June 2017 ongoing to December 2019
		Produce guidelines for Managers on how to conduct succession-planning activities that take into account gender equality considerations	June 2017 ongoing to December 2019
4. Provide Parental leave resources and supports	HR	Develop Parenting Kit with all relevant information on parental leave and University support for parents online	February 2017 ongoing to October 2017
		Provide information and professional development to Managers on supporting women on and returning from maternity leave	June 2017 ongoing to December 2019
5. Increase promotion of flexible work practices	HR	Analyse utilisation rates of flexible work arrangements by gender and primary carer status to identify any interactions between use of these options and impact on career progression.	February 2017 ongoing to July 2017
		Report produced on the use of flexible work arrangements and satisfaction and strategies developed to reduce the negative impact of using these arrangements on career progression	July 2017 ongoing to December 2019
		Implement strategies that improve the satisfaction ratings of women and primary carers on Staff Survey items relating to work life integration and compare to prior Staff Survey results	June 2018 ongoing to September 2018
		Develop and launch an 'All Roles Flex' model University-wide	July 2018 ongoing to December 2019
		Continue to provide additional training and resources to Managers to assist them in promoting and managing staff using flexible working options	February 2017 ongoing to December 2019
6. Provide a workplace free from discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying	HR	Produce annual report on cases of discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying and develop strategies to increase awareness, prevention and responding appropriately.	February 2017 ongoing to June 2017
		Provide professional development, resources and access to supports ongoing	February 2017 ongoing to December 2019

Action Area 2: Employment Conditions

Action	Responsibility	Target	Timeline
7. Increase gender intersectionality awareness	HR	Conduct data analysis of gender and other factors such as Indigenous women, disability, age, culturally and linguistically diverse origins, LGBTIQ status, ethnicity, race and religion	February 2018 ongoing to May 2018
		Increase awareness across the University of the way in which gender intersects with other factors through an 'Intersectionality Awareness' program and how various forms of inequalities interconnect	July 2018 ongoing to December 2018
8. Develop an action against domestic and family violence program and campaign	HR	Develop guidelines and resources for all staff to access 24/7 information around support available regarding domestic and family violence	March 2017 ongoing to June 2017
		Launch an RMIT Action Against Domestic and Family Violence campaign including support to access leave entitlements, counselling, flexible working and workplace safety plans	June 2017 to July 2017
		Achieve external recognition through the White Ribbon Australia Workplace Accreditation Program to complement gender equality initiatives	November 2017 ongoing to December 2019

Action Area 3: Women's Career Advancement

RMIT fosters an environment that supports the Career Advancement of women to ensure develop and retain our talent.

Action	Responsibility	Target	Timeline
1. Increase women's application and success rates in academic and professional promotion	HR DVCE Executive Champion	Analysis of academic promotion application and success rates by gender and level University-wise and by College	September 2016 ongoing to December 2016
		Produce an Annual Report on academic promotions by gender applying for promotion and success rates and key areas for focus to improve rates	February 2017
		Analysis of professional staff advancement data by gender, level and area	September 2016 ongoing to December 2016
		Produce report on professional staff advancement including reclassification, higher duties and secondments and key areas for focus to improve rates	February 2017
		Conduct 2 x women-only promotion information sessions each year that includes a panel of women who have successfully achieved promotion at RMIT	March 2017 ongoing to December 2019
		Academic promotion committees to include at least 40% female membership of appropriate seniority	October 2016 ongoing to December 2019
		Develop and update academic promotion guidelines on how to measure and how to make a case for 'achievement relative to opportunity'	October 2016 ongoing to February 2017
		Provide resources and instructions to Managers to ensure that performance discussions with women include plans for advancement and promotion	October 2016 ongoing to December 2019
		Provide sample successful promotion applications to staff who are preparing their own promotion applications	October 2016 ongoing to December 2019

Action Area 2: Employment Conditions

Action	Responsibility	Target	Timeline
2. Increase financial support for women in research	HR PVC R&I Executive Champion	Offer 20 x grants per year to support women's research productivity (\$10,000 each total \$200,000)	August 2017 ongoing to December 2019
		Offer 2 x \$50,000 (total \$100,000) fellowships per year to support women who have had career interruptions in the prior year	August 2017 ongoing to December 2019
3. Review and maintain RMIT Leadership programs for gender inclusivity and participation	HR	Review RMIT Leadership programs for gender inclusivity in content and delivery	October 2016 ongoing to November 2016
		Report on women's participation rates and undertake actions to include more women when they are under-represented	November 2016 ongoing to November 2019
4. Provide enabling opportunities and forums for women	HR	Develop an innovative career advancement professional development program for women at RMIT including online resources	June 2017 ongoing to December 2019
		Offer an RMIT Women's Mentoring program through the RMIT Mentoring software portal	February 2017 ongoing to December 2019
		Deliver an annual RMIT Women's Forum that promotes collegiality, networking and women's career development	June 2017 ongoing to June 2019