
Equity and Diversity Policy

Academic Policy

1 Purpose

The purpose of this Equity and Diversity Policy is to support Victoria University in achieving its Strategic Objectives and, in particular, those relating to equity and diversity and articulated in the Equity and Diversity Strategy 2010-14. The policy responds to the government priorities for the tertiary education sector, as set out in the Tertiary Education Strategy 2010-15, by supporting the provision an inclusive environment for a diverse student body.

2 Organisational Scope

The Equity and Diversity Policy is a University-wide policy.

3 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

Equity: Principles and practices that ensure fairness to all students and staff members, irrespective of gender, race, religion, and disability in providing the opportunity for them to participate in the activities of the University and successfully fulfil their roles.

These principles and practices include respect and inclusiveness, ensuring fairness and making sure that barriers, overt or covert, which stand in the way of under-represented groups are eliminated wherever possible.

Diversity: Understanding, appreciating and realising the benefits of individual differences, backgrounds and experiences, reflected in members of the University community. These may include differences of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs or political beliefs.

Equity groups: The following have been identified as equity groups for targeted actions in the period 2010–14:

Māori students and staff

Pacific students and staff

Students and staff members with disabilities

Men, or women, in disciplines, or professions, in which they are under-represented

Students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

The student equity groups are the groups identified in legislation and regulation, and are under-represented and/or disadvantaged in gaining access to, and succeeding at, University.

The staff groups are the groups identified on the basis of current under-presentation in the University's staffing complement and on the principle of non-discrimination.

4 Policy Content and Guidelines

4.1 Overview

- (a) The University is committed to providing all of its staff and students with an inclusive and accessible environment for work and learning and an environment that gives them equal opportunities to fulfil their potential and make their contribution.
- (b) The University recognises that the presence and success of a broad range of talented students and staff members of different backgrounds and experiences will help to link it more meaningfully to the local and global communities that it serves.
- (c) The University accepts that it plays a role in ensuring that the New Zealand community is able to draw upon the abilities and the contributions of all sectors of its diverse populations.

4.2 Principles

The following principles will inform equitable practice at Victoria.

- (a) Supporting all staff and students by providing an inclusive and accessible environment with equal opportunities for all to fulfil their potential, and make their contribution, and making a commitment to embrace and understand diversity and equity.
- (b) Ensuring that merit is the overriding criterion for decisions affecting individuals. In doing so, Victoria will give careful attention to definitions of merit, recognising that the distribution of talent does not favour any particular class, gender or ethnic group.
- (c) Recognising that diversity enables the University, and members of its community, to benefit from encountering and understanding people from a wide range of backgrounds, holding a multiplicity of beliefs and opinions, and contributing in a variety of ways.
- (d) Instilling a culture of respect, with no tolerance for unfair discrimination or harassment.
- (e) Acknowledging that equity does not mean treating everyone in exactly the same way. Systemic disadvantage should be recognised and addressed.
- (f) Meeting our obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi by providing fair and equitable distribution of resources to achieve equitable outcomes for Māori, as well as consulting and ensuring autonomy over all things Māori.

4.3 Student practices

- (a) Student practices will need to reflect a consideration of equity and diversity matters and contribute to the achievement of equity outcomes in areas, including student recruitment and advice; selection; admissions; support services; retention; progress; completion; transition; international opportunities including exchanges; built spaces; and practices in teaching and learning, including assessment practices.
- (b) Students will be admitted to the University on the basis of merit, either as demonstrated through prior academic achievement or as assessed by special admission processes. Methods of assessment to determine admission for students from the equity groups will

include assessment of the potential to succeed. These methods may include interviews, recognition of prior learning, and measurement through written or other tests.

- (c) Targeted admission schemes for students from equity groups underrepresented in particular programmes will be established by Council on the recommendation of the Equity and Diversity Committee.

4.2 Staff practices

- (d) Due to its commitment to quality employment practices and to achieving success through diversity, the University is recognised as an Equal Employment Opportunities “Employer of Choice”. Staff practices will need to reflect a consideration of equity and diversity matters and contribute to the achievement of equity outcomes in areas, including staff recruitment; selection; appointment; development and training; recognition; career progression and promotion; workload allocation; and retention. Staff are required to apply the Equal Employment Opportunities Guidelines.
- (e) Selection and progression of staff will be on the basis of merit. The interpretation of merit is broad, recognising that the distribution of talent does not favour any particular class, gender or ethnic group, and may include experience and personal qualities as well as formal qualifications. The University aims to avail itself of as wide a cross-section of talent as possible to deliver on the Strategic Plan and work programmes.

4.3 Monitoring and reviewing

- (f) Formal responsibility for equity and diversity lies with the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic). The University’s strategic and annual planning processes will embed equity and diversity principles and practices. The Equity and Diversity Strategy provides a framework to ensure that equity and diversity actions and initiatives help to meet the University’s strategic goals. A commitment to actions, accountabilities, targets and timelines is articulated in the unit plans of faculties, schools and central service units.
- (g) Actions will be monitored through the University’s normal review processes. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will co-ordinate an end-year review of progress against the equity actions and report this to the University Council.

5 Legislative Compliance

[Employment Relations Act 2000](#)

[Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994](#)

[Human Rights Act 1993](#)

[Privacy Act 1992](#)

[Education Act 1989](#)

[State Sector Act 1988](#)

[New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990](#)

6 References

[Victoria University Strategic Plan 2009 – 2014](#)

[Equity and Diversity Strategy 2010 – 2014](#)

[Tertiary Education Strategy](#)

[Kia Orite: Achieving Equity. New Zealand Code of Practice for an Inclusive Tertiary Education Environment for Students with Impairments](#)

Victoria University Equal Employment Opportunity Guidelines

[Victoria University Staff Development Policy](#)

[Victoria University Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments Policy](#)

[Treaty of Waitangi Statute](#)

7 Appendices

None

8 Approval Agency

Vice-Chancellor

9 Approval Dates

This policy was originally approved on: 17 June 2010

This version was approved on: 17 June 2010

This version takes effect from: 17 June 2010

This policy will be reviewed by: 17 June 2013

10 Policy Sponsor

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)

11 Contact Person

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