

RMIT Diversity and Inclusion

DIVERSE GENDERS, SEXES AND SEXUALITIES ACTION PLAN

Introduction

Building a culture of inclusion and diversity for all our staff and students is one of the key organisational values at RMIT, as outlined in Ready for Life and Work: RMIT's Strategic Plan to 2020.

When considering issues of inclusion to focus on at RMIT, we are cognisant of research that identifies the significant mental health and other impacts of homophobic and transphobic attitudes and behaviour on young people and adults. These impacts can range from depression, social exclusion, withdrawal from studies and social activities, unemployment, through to self-harm, violence, and suicide. Further, additional research has documented continuing homophobic attitudes and behaviour by young people.

RMIT recognises its legal obligations to provide a work and study environment that is free from unlawful discrimination and harassment. RMIT also recognises the benefits for the recruitment, retention, innovation, collaboration and productivity of staff and students in an environment that celebrates and welcomes diversity.

In 2015 we identified a need to seek specific feedback from our staff and students, with a focus on those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or queer (LGBTIQ). We wanted to understand their lived experience and get their advice on how to improve their experience at RMIT. Over 1100 staff and students responded to our survey, providing a rich and compelling picture, and clear ideas about areas for improvement.

In response to these issues and aspirations, this Action Plan has been developed. Consultation on this draft Plan highlighted the need to reflect the diversity of the RMIT community beyond the 'LGBTIQ' label, and so this Action Plan refers to people of 'diverse genders, sexes, and sexualities' (DGSS).

Our commitments

Priority actions for this Plan are to:

- Promote a culture of inclusion and respect, through leadership actions, communications, events, training, and professional development for staff.
- Enhance policies and procedures for inclusive clauses, language and benefits.
- Provide appropriate and responsive services and facilities.
- Enhance provision for transgender and intersex staff and students, including the recognition of sex and gender through University systems and processes.
- Maintain and use data collection to understand current practice and identify improvements.
- Support external community groups, charities, and events.
- Contribute to academic knowledge and research in related areas.

Our aspirations

In undertaking these actions to improve the student and staff experience, RMIT will be a place where:

- People of diverse genders, sexes and sexualities are recognised and welcomed.
- Staff and students are free to be themselves and bring their whole selves to work and study.
- Staff and students can benefit from the diversity of our community.

Summary

Action areas	Policy and practice	Culture and visibility	Staff training and professional development	Monitoring	Community engagement	Inclusion beyond RMIT and additional information
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain endorsement for this Plan from relevant University stakeholders and committees. Formalise governance for implementation, monitoring, reporting and review. Allocate resources for implementation, and obtain senior management, executive, and operational support. Review, update and communicate policies and procedures for inclusive clauses, language and benefits. Enhance provision for transgender and intersex staff and students, through policies, procedures, and the provision of resources and training. Audit and update complaints procedures for legal compliance and DGSS inclusion. Provide training and support for those involved in complaint resolution. Monitor complaints and use to inform work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and broaden the DGSS Network, and confirm Terms of Reference. Promote the DGSS Project Plan and its activities on the RMIT website and through various communication channels. Recruit, brief, train and utilise an executive champion and other senior support. Implement an 'Ally' program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> prepare Terms of Reference for Allies recruit, train, and provide ongoing support for a wide range of RMIT staff and students, including non-DGSS-identifying staff, and senior people to participate promote the role of Allies at RMIT. Promote Pride in Diversity membership and GLOBE membership to RMIT staff and students, and encourage utilisation of opportunities provided by these organisations. Demonstrate RMIT involvement and commitment to DGSS inclusion. Acknowledge and celebrate DGSS Days of Significance, such as International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT), and Wear it Purple Day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain membership of specialist organisation Pride in Diversity for support in best practice. Review RMIT developMe and other face-to-face and online resources, training programs and participation for DGSS inclusion. Provide DGSS inclusive training for the RMIT community. Track attendance at relevant training and feedback. Support career development of DGSS staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect and analyse DGSS data in Staff Survey 2018 and annual Pulse Survey and through self-disclosure to inform actions. Compare DGSS employee engagement to other staff to identify issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate and track: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> staff involvement in DGSS-focused community organisations such as JOY FM, Midsumma, GLOBE financial or in-kind sponsorship of research, professional bodies, events, conferences fundraising activities and other in-kind services or products for charities, initiatives, communications groups endorsed participation in DGSS community events participation at conferences and industry events or at other organisations or bodies (for example, as guest speaker). Gather data for all community engagement. Communicate clearly on external website and organisational social media channels RMIT's commitments and actions. Consult with DGSS students around their experience and implement recommended actions. Provide appropriate support services and initiatives for DGSS students. Collaborate with employers around recruitment and addressing workplace concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to academic knowledge and research in related areas. Undertake and track organisational support of issues/ events/ campaigns. Support other organisations in their DGSS-inclusive practice. Collate evidence for initiatives not covered in other sections for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> achievements of DGSS diversity outcomes handbooks DGSS specific campaigns DGSS participation in diversity days.

Action Area 1: Policy and Practice

RMIT University will develop and implement policy and practice that supports an equitable and inclusive experience for staff and students of diverse genders, sexes and sexualities.

Action	Responsibility ¹	Target	Timeline
1. Implement a strategic approach to DGSS diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Human Resources DVC Education 	Obtain endorsement for this Plan from relevant University stakeholders and committees.	Aug 2016
		Formalise governance for Plan development, implementation, monitoring, reporting and review.	Aug 2016
		Submit application for the Pride in Diversity Australian Workplace Equality Index (AEWI) citation.	March 2017
2. Develop accountability and resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Human Resources DVC Education 	Allocate resources for plan implementation, and obtain senior management, executive, and operational support.	Sept 2016, ongoing
3. Embed inclusive policies and benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Human Resources DVC Education 	Review policies and procedures for inclusive clauses, terminology and clarity of benefits and update as required.	Sept 2016, ongoing
		Enhance provision for transgender staff and students, through policies, procedures, and the provision of resources and training.	Sept 2016, ongoing
		Communicate and promote policies and procedures.	Sept 2016, ongoing
4. Respond to discrimination or human rights complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Registrar Executive Director, Human Resources 	Monitor and respond to complaints with Australian Human Rights Commission and Victorian discrimination complaint-handling bodies.	Dec 2016, ongoing
5. Enhance DGSS related bullying/harassment or grievance processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Human Resources DVC Education Academic Registrar 	Review and if appropriate improve bullying, discrimination, harassment and complaints policies and procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> audit and update procedures for legal compliance and DGSS inclusion provide training and support for those involved in complaint resolution monitor complaints and use to inform work. 	April 2017, ongoing

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

Action Area 2: Culture and Visibility

RMIT University will actively promote a culture that is visibly inclusive of the DGSS community.

Action	Responsibility	Target	Timeline
1. Create a DGSS network or resource groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Human Resources DVC Education 	Support and broaden the DGSS Network, and confirm the Terms of Reference (shared between HR and Students Group).	Sept 2016
		Promote Network on the RMIT website including relevant resources, and through different communication methods.	Aug 2016, ongoing
2. Embed executive sponsorship and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Human Resources DVC Education 	Recruit, brief, train and utilise an executive champion and other senior support.	July 2016, ongoing
3. Create Ally engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Human Resources DVC Education 	Prepare Terms of Reference for Allies.	Oct 2016
		Recruit a wide range of RMIT staff and students, including non-DGSS-identifying staff, and senior people to participate in an 'Ally' program.	Oct 2016
		Promote the role of Allies across RMIT.	Nov 2016, ongoing
		Provide training and ongoing support and networking opportunities for Allies.	Oct 2016, ongoing
4. Increase visibility of internal inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Marketing and Communications Executive Director, Human Resources DVC Education 	Promote Pride in Diversity membership and GLOBE membership to RMIT staff and students, and encourage utilisation of opportunities provided by these organisations.	Aug 2016, ongoing
		Promote the DGSS Project Plan and its activities.	Aug 2016, ongoing
		Demonstrate RMIT involvement and commitment to DGSS inclusion.	Dec 2016, ongoing
		Acknowledge and celebrate DGSS Days of Significance, such as International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT), Wear it Purple Day, GLOBE Awards.	Dec 2016, ongoing
		Provide DGSS inclusive training for the RMIT Community, such as Queer 101.	Dec 2016, ongoing

Action Area 3: Staff Training and Professional Development

RMIT University staff will be trained in DGSS inclusive practices, and will have the opportunity to engage in DGSS supportive development opportunities both at RMIT, and within the broader community and corporate sectors.

Action	Responsibility	Target	Timeline
1. Implement DGSS-specific training and leader/manager capability	Executive Director, Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain membership of Pride in Diversity. Review RMIT developMe and other face-to-face and online resources, training programs and participation for DGSS inclusion. 	July 2016, ongoing
		Facilitate the running of DGSS inclusion training as developed by Students Group, utilising internal and external resources and guest speakers.	Feb 2017, ongoing
2. Enhance career development for DGSS staff		Track attendance at relevant training and feedback (as per current process).	Feb 2017, ongoing
		Support career development, for example DGSS network involvement, mentoring, attendance at GLOBE and Pride in Diversity events, opportunities to present at symposiums.	Feb 2017, ongoing

Action Area 4: Monitoring

RMIT University will monitor, review, and evaluate our work on DGSS inclusion with an emphasis on continuous improvement.

Action	Responsibility	Target	Timeline
1. Implement the collection and analysis of DGSS-specific data	Executive Director, Human Resources	Collect and analyse DGSS data in the 2018 Staff Survey and annual Pulse Survey and through self-disclosure to inform actions.	July 2016, ongoing
		Compare DGSS employee engagement to general population or other diversity demographics.	July 2017, ongoing

Action Area 5: Community Engagement

RMIT University will engage with the broader DGSS community, and show our support for related initiatives, policies, events, and reforms.

Action	Responsibility	Target	Timeline
1. Document support of DGSS community groups, charities, events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Human Resources DVC Education 	Facilitate and track: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> staff involvement in community organisations such as JOY FM, Midsumma, GLOBE financial or in-kind sponsorship of research, professional bodies, events, conferences fundraising activities and other in-kind services or products for charities, initiatives, communications groups endorsed participation in DGSS community events. 	Oct 2016, ongoing
		Students Group to monitor external promotion of RMIT's DGSS inclusivity.	Oct 2016, ongoing
		Gather data for all community engagement.	Oct 2016, ongoing
2. Increase the external promotion of DGSS inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Marketing and Communications Executive Director, Human Resources DVC Education 	Communicate RMIT commitment to DGSS inclusion clearly on external website and organisational social media channels, and promote as part of student recruitment activities.	Oct 2016, ongoing
		Survey advertising or promotion in DGSS media and mainstream media.	Dec 2016
		Survey academic, professional and leadership group participation at conferences and industry events or at other organisations or bodies (for example, as guest speaker).	July 2017, ongoing
3. Improve the higher education experience	DVC Education	Consult with DGSS students about their experience and recommended actions.	Dec 2017, ongoing
		Ensure appropriate support services and initiatives are in place to support DGSS students.	Dec 2016, ongoing
		Collaborate with employers regarding recruitment and addressing workplace concerns.	Dec 2016, ongoing
		Evaluate impact and outcomes of work on inclusion.	Dec 2017, ongoing

Action Area 6: Inclusion Beyond

RMIT teachers, researchers and professional staff will support inclusion beyond RMIT through research, community engagement, and professional practice.

Action	Responsibility ¹	Target	Timeline
1. Increase the impact of the organisation beyond the walls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic and professional staff Allies and members of the DGSS Network DVC Education 	Contribute to academic knowledge and research in related areas.	Dec 2016, ongoing
		Undertake and track organisational support of DGSS community issues/ events/ campaigns in the community beyond RMIT.	Dec 2016, ongoing
		Support other organisations in their DGSS-inclusive practice.	Dec 2018, ongoing

Action Area 7: Additional Information

RMIT University will undertake additional activities where these align with and increase the impact of our work.

Action	Responsibility ¹	Target	Timeline
1. Implement any additional work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allies and members of the DGSS Network DVC Education 	Collate evidence for initiatives not covered in other sections such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> achievements of DGSS diversity outcomes DGSS specific campaigns DGSS participation in diversity days. 	Dec 2016, ongoing