RMIT DGSS Recruitment Guide

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Supporting the recruitment and inclusion of potential, new and existing employees of diverse genders, sexes and sexualities (DGSS)
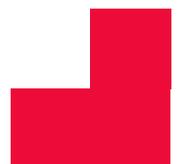
Purpose

At RMIT University, *inclusion* is a key organisational value, as outlined in *Ready for Life and Work: RMIT's Strategic Plan to 2020.* As part of this commitment, the University has developed six action plans supporting the Diversity and Inclusion Framework. The Diverse Genders, Sexes and Sexualities Action Plan (2016-2020) outlines the University's ongoing commitment to the inclusion of DGSS staff and students.

Recruitment is usually a potential or new employee's first contact with RMIT. During the recruitment process, Human Resources and the University must work collaboratively to create an environment and culture where potential, new and existing employees feel included and welcome to bring their whole selves to work.

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1 DGSS terminology

Acronyms such as LGBT, GLBTI and LGBTIQ+ are commonly used to describe lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer individuals and communities. Collecting such a diverse group of identities into a singular acronym is a challenging task, and is often debated throughout these communities.

Through guidance from the RMIT Diversity and Inclusion Working Parties and the wider community, the University refers to individuals and communities of *diverse genders, sexes and sexualities* or DGSS. We feel that this language is more inclusive of the diversity that makes up our RMIT community of staff and students.

1.1 Understanding the terminology

Sex, gender identity, gender expression and sexuality are all distinct characteristics of a person's identity. Each of these terms is a spectrum on which we all fit.

It's important to note that each of these terms are exclusive and unlinked. For example, sex does not determine gender identity, and gender identity does not determine sexuality.

Even when people have the best of intentions, these sex and gender terms are often used incorrectly, or interchangeably.

- *Sex* is a biological term and is relating to a person's physical form, which can be female, male or intersex.
    - *Intersex or intersex characteristics* is when someone's biological sex is neither wholly male nor female.
- *Gender identity* is an innate personal and social identity, which underpins how we relate to others, and links into a range of assumptions about behaviour and norms. Gender identities may include woman, man, non-binary, gender queer or others.
    - *Cis or cisgender* describes a person whose gender identity aligns with the sex assigned to them at birth.
    - *Trans or transgender* is a term used to describe a person whose gender identity does not align with the sex assigned to them at birth. *Trans* is the most inclusive term, though both are fine.
    - *Gender diverse* is a term often used to encompass individuals who identify as trans, intersex, gender queer, non-binary or other identity.
- *Gender Expression* is how an individual demonstrates and communicates their gender identity i.e. clothes, make up, gestures, voice.
- *Sexuality* refers to whom people are intimately attracted to. It can range from opposite-sex attracted (heterosexual or straight), same-sex attracted (gay, lesbian), attracted to men and women (bisexual), attracted to all genders (pansexual) or attracted to none (asexual or aromantic).

2 Respecting DGSS identities during recruitment

Gender identity, gender expression and sexuality are all pieces of an individual's identity that they should feel included to present at work.

While it is sometimes argued that an employee's sexuality is not a workplace matter, this is flawed. A heterosexual person can freely discuss their family or their partner without fear of discrimination, in something as simple as describing their weekend or having family photos on their desk. We all deserve the right to be ourselves at work.

2.1 Never assume identities

Always avoid making assumptions about a person's identity.

No matter how obvious it may seem to you, never assume that someone belongs to the DGSS community because of the way they look or present themselves.

Additionally, if someone does identify as a member of the DGSS community, don't act surprised or react in a way that could make them feel uncomfortable. Acting surprised that they identify as DGSS implies heteronormative assumptions.

> » *Heteronormativity* is the assumption that everyone is heterosexual and cisgendered until they identify otherwise.

Using terms like partner instead of husband/wife or boyfriend/girlfriend and parents instead of mother/father are simple changes that are more inclusive of the DGSS community.

2.2 Respect confidentiality

If an individual comes out to you as a member of the DGSS community throughout the recruitment process, it doesn't necessarily mean that they immediately wish to be out to a new manager or team. They may wish to determine that their new work environment is safe and welcoming of the DGSS community before being open to everyone.

For this reason, it's important to respect confidentialities.

2.3 Discuss RMIT's commitment to inclusion

As one of the first points of contact at the University, the recruitment process serves an important role in making potential and new employees feel welcome. Take time to talk about culture, respect and inclusion at RMIT.

Regardless of someone's identity, everyone associated with the University needs to be aware of RMIT's values and what this involves. Our code of conduct requires all employees to practice respectful behaviour toward all individuals.

Unfortunately, some circumstances might place a new employee in a team whose culture differs to the wider University or a role where they will encounter members of the public who may not always be respectful. Be mindful of the environment a new employee is entering, and make sure to address the expectations of their team. Behaviour that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable is not acceptable.

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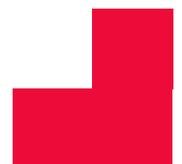
3 Gender diverse applicants

Applicants who are gender diverse can face considerable barriers throughout the process of securing employment. These barriers might be real or perceived but regardless, they significantly impact gender diverse applicants throughout the recruitment process.

3.1 Preferred pronouns

We all use the pronouns that we feel best reflect our gender identity. She/her, he/him, they/them, or others. Being addressed by the incorrect pronouns would be upsetting for anyone.

For those who are gender diverse, their preferred pronouns may not align with the gender listed on their legal forms. Again, never assume someone's pronouns.

Some gender diverse individuals may choose to use gender neutral pronouns like they/them. Sometimes this can take some getting used to since gendered pronouns are more common. It's important to be respectful of someone's preferred pronouns as it reflects their identity.

If you accidentally call someone the incorrect pronoun, simply apologise and move on. A simple, "excuse me, they" or "I'm sorry, she" will suffice. Drawing more attention to the error will only cause more distress to the person who has been incorrectly gendered.

If you are unsure of someone's preferred pronouns, ask them privately.

3.2 Preferred name

One common complexity is regarding a potential, new or existing employee's first name. Gender diverse individuals may use a preferred name that differs from their legal name, or their current legal name may differ from a former name.

As always, never assume that they are out to everyone. All information provided to you about someone's identity should be seen as confidential unless they say otherwise. When introducing them or sharing information about them to a colleague, always use their preferred name and pronouns.

3.3 When current name differs to former name

An employee's legal name may have been changed for a number of reasons. The former name of gender diverse individuals should be treated with the utmost confidentiality. An appearance of someone's former name can be incredibly distressing, as this could out them to their new colleagues without their consent. The University has a duty of care to do all possible to keep former names confidential.

When requesting identification documents, bank accounts, qualifications and other necessary materials for the hiring process, new employees may have to disclose their previous name to you. This does not necessarily mean they will explain their gender identity or status as a DGSS individual. Knowledge of their former name should not be shared with the new employee's manager or colleagues unless consent is given.

3.4 When preferred name differs to legal name

For some gender diverse individuals, their preferred name may differ to their legal name. Although a significant amount of work has been done to improve our processes, this situation causes some challenges within the University's current systems.

Similar to the example above, when requesting materials for the hiring process, new employees will have to disclose their legal name. It is not required for them to explain why they use a preferred name.

Their legal name should be kept confidential, and all communications to their manager or other team members should use their preferred name.

Again, it's important to remember that an appearance of someone's legal name in this case is the equivalent of outing them to their new workplace. Only share their legal name in the event that they give you consent to do so. The University has a duty of care to do all possible to keep their legal names confidential.

3.5 Communicating sensitively

Whether a gender diverse applicant has come out to you during the recruitment process or not, if unsuccessful, applicants may feel this is due to their gender identity and conscious or unconscious bias. It's important that you consider how you will discuss their unsuccessful application with them in a way that is sensitive and effective.

4 Resources, advocates and getting involved

RMIT is fully committed to maintaining a respectful, inclusive culture where the diversity of our community is celebrated. There are several resources in place to help employees engage with our DGSS community.

4.1 Staff DGSS Network

All RMIT staff who identify as DGSS are welcome to join the Staff DGSS Network. The DGSS network is committed to building awareness across the University by bringing our LGBTIQ+ community together, so that staff can meet, share, connect, recognise and celebrate their passions, experiences and ideas.

To become a member, contact Luke.Coster@rmit.edu.au or Diversity.Inclusion@rmit.edu.au to receive an invitation to the network.

4.2 RMIT Ally Network

All RMIT staff, regardless of identity, are invited to join the RMIT Ally Network. The RMIT Ally Network trains and brings

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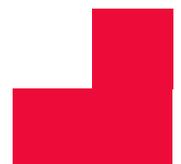
together staff who wish to act as visible, active advocates and supports for our staff and students who are from our DGSS community.

To become a member, employees must undertake training to have the basic understanding and good practice to support DGSS staff and students, and create an inclusive and welcoming study and work environment. Training is available through Learning and development.

All staff are welcome to reach out to the Ally Network for support and information regarding the DGSS community. The general contact is inclusion@rmit.edu.au and all members listed on the DGSS webpage are available as well.

4.3 Learning and development

RMIT's professional development services offer diversity trainings available to all employees, including DGSS 101 and RMIT Ally, DGSS Masterclass for people managers, DGSS training for new starters and many more. See Learning and development for more details.

4.4 DGSS resources

All RMIT employees are encouraged to view our Diversity and Inclusion page for more details and resources regarding inclusion at RMIT.

The DGSS page includes information on joining the DGSS and Ally networks, current and previous DGSS initiatives at RMIT and other resources available.

Relevant resources linked on the DGSS page include, but are not limited to:

- RMIT Gender Transition Guide
- RMIT LGBTI and Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination
- Inclusive Language Guide
- Employers' Guide to Intersex Inclusion

Resources specific to Human Resources staff are available in the share drive, under Diverse Genders, Sexes and Sexualities Resources for HR.

4.5 Diversity and inclusion team

If you, a colleague, or a potential, new or existing employee have questions regarding the DGSS community, diversity and inclusion, or inclusive practices, the Diversity and Inclusion team are available for questions through HR Assist (hr.assist@rmit.edu.au or 9925 0600) or Diversity.Inclusion@rmit.edu.au.

AWEI BRONZE EMPLOYER 2017

AWEI GOLD EMPLOYER 2018

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