

Overview of Equal Employment Opportunity at Murdoch University

Is about...

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment from the workplace, and
- Ensuring that all employees are treated fairly, and
- Treating people equally means that you have to treat people differently.

What is unlawful discrimination?...

- Unlawful discrimination occurs when a person or group is treated less favourably than another person or group because of any of the grounds that are specified in the WA EO Act (1984).
- Discrimination may be direct and obvious, or
- Indirect in the form of policies or practices that appear fair on the surface, but actually have an adverse impact on a particular group.

What is unlawful harassment?...

- Unlawful harassment occurs when someone is made to feel intimidated, insult or humiliated because of one or more of the grounds that are specified in the WA EO Act (1984).

What are these grounds?...

- The grounds mentioned are the various basis on which the WA EO Act (1984) specifically prohibits discrimination and harassment. They are:

Race	Sex
Racial Harassment	Sexual Harassment
Impairment	Sexual Orientation
Age	Gender History
Religious Conviction	Pregnancy
Political Conviction	Marital Status
Family Responsibility	Family Status
<i>[Responsibility to care]</i>	<i>[Being a particular relative or the relative of a particular person]</i>

What does all this mean?...as a staff member you have the right to:

- A workplace free from unlawful discrimination and harassment,
- Fair practices and behaviour in your workplace,
- Competitive merit-based selection processes,
- Appropriate training and development,
- Equal access to benefits and conditions,
- Fair allocation of workloads, and
- Fair processes to deal with work-related complaints and grievances.

As a staff member you have the responsibility to:

- Work to the best of your ability,
- Recognise and respect the skills and talents of other staff members,
- Act to prevent harassment and discrimination against others in your workplace,

- Respect cultural differences among your colleagues and students; and
- Treat other staff and students fairly.

What happens if things go wrong?...The EEO Grievance Handling Procedure

- This process has been established to help to resolve discrimination and/or harassment grievances here at Murdoch University.
- It can be used where complaints involve one or more of the grounds listed in the WA EO Act (1984).
- It is a guide only and can be amended to suit the particular circumstances of each complaint.

Some Useful definitions...

- **Grievance:** a work related complaint, concern or dispute about an act, behaviour, decision, situation, omission or problem that someone perceives to be discriminatory, harassing, unfair or unjustified.
- **Complainant:** the aggrieved person/people; the person/people lodging an Equal Employment Opportunity [EEO] grievance.
- **Respondent:** person/people against whom the grievance is made.

What are the steps?...

- In the first instance, complainants should familiarise themselves with the details of the grievance procedure online:
http://www.murdoch.edu.au/hr2/eoo/eoo_complaints.html
- They should then contact one of Murdoch's Information Officers who will identify whether the complaint is EEO related, explain both the complaints process and the importance of confidentiality and then present them with their available options. These are:
 - Self-management,
 - Informal processes,
 - Formal processes, and
 - External processes
- The primary role of an Information Officer is to provide information and support to the Complainant [or to the Respondent] so that they can make an informed decision about how they would like to resolve the grievance.
- The role is not to advise on a course of action.
- All of the information that they require [including the pros and cons of each option] can be found on Murdoch's EEO web pages:
http://www.murdoch.edu.au/hr2/eoo/eoo_home.html

Some important points...

- Discrimination/harassment can occur as a result of a single incident,
- A person has a right to complain even if the conduct in question was not specifically directed at them,
- As an employer, Murdoch must ensure that the workplace is not sexually or racially 'hostile',
- Murdoch can be held vicariously liable for discrimination/harassment that occurs in the workplace and at functions that we sponsor.
- Murdoch's Information Officers are listed at:
http://www.murdoch.edu.au/hr2/eoo/eoo_contacts.html
- Equal Employment Opportunity Complaint Form link is at:
<http://www.hr.murdoch.edu.au/eoo/complaintform.pdf>
- More information is available from Prue Bedford, Human Resources and Equal Employment Opportunity Advisor, by phone: 9360 7368 or by email:
p.bedford@murdoch.edu.au.