USQ Employee Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

2018-2020
We acknowledge the cultural diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and pay respects to Elders, past, present and future. We celebrate the continuous living cultures of First Australians and acknowledge the important role played by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australian society.
Welcome from the Executive Director, Human Resources

At USQ we believe diversity and inclusion work together. Our focus is on building an inclusive culture to support our diverse workforce and leverage the diversity of thought, backgrounds and experiences.

Diversity requires inclusion to engage every element of our operations and our people. The University aspires to create an inclusive environment where every person is respected, connected, progressing and contributing to the University’s future.

Achieving an inclusive culture will not only provide a work environment that espouses our values of Respect, Integrity and Excellence, but will also ensure our employees are able to reach their full potential.

Mrs Jane Farmer
Executive Director (Human Resources)

Introduction

The University of Southern Queensland (USQ) seeks to ensure that its employees are able to perform to their full potential. USQ is committed to providing a framework that supports employees to achieve this aspiration in a fair, inclusive and diverse environment enabled by robust workplace diversity and inclusion strategies, policies and initiatives.

What is Diversity?

Diversity can include characteristics such as cultural background and ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, language and education. Diversity also includes characteristics such as professional skills, working style, location, and life experiences. Diversity recognises all the ways we differ. Some of these differences we are born with and cannot change. Anything that makes us unique is part of this definition of diversity.

What is Inclusion?

Inclusion involves bringing together and harnessing these diverse forces and resources, in a way that is beneficial. Inclusion puts the concept and practice of diversity into action by creating an environment of involvement, respect, and connection - where the richness of ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives is harnessed to create effective results.

Why does Diversity and Inclusion matter?

Inclusion is crucial in creating an exceptional organisational culture. It enables diversity, and it also enables increased employee engagement, innovation, collaboration, agility, employee safety and wellbeing, and increased customer engagement.
**Governance**

Building an inclusive culture can only be achieved with cross unit cooperation, strong leadership and executive support.

The Vice-Chancellor's Executive, as the key advisory committee to the Vice-Chancellor on all matters of University strategy and management, has overall responsibility for this strategy. The Vice-Chancellor, as Chair of this committee, acts as the advocate for strategies that support equity, diversity and inclusion at the University. The Social Justice Strategy Board provides a key advisory and support role in the implementation, oversight and monitoring of this Strategy.

The Human Resources Department will coordinate regular reporting on progress on strategies and activities, and on outcomes against performance and accountability measures to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive, through the Social Justice Strategy Board.

**Implementation**

In order to experience the benefits of diversity, the University needs to cultivate an inclusive workplace. Creating an inclusive workplace that is open and curious, flexible and responsive, relational and identity aware, requires every employee adopting shared responsibility for their actions and behaviours. Whether this be through leading self, leading others, leading leaders or leading organisation, everyone can seek to engage in their own and others wellbeing, engagement, knowledge of self and others, knowledge of discrimination and harassment, and be responsible for flexible and agile thinking that incorporates differing points of view.

Through inclusive behaviour across all leadership levels at USQ, including self-leadership, all employees – regardless of their position - are encouraged to commit to the strategy and ensure appropriate priority is given to diversity and inclusion outcomes.

Operationalising the Employee Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is further enabled by the Social Justice Strategic Plan, Disability Action Plan, Multicultural Action Plan, Reconciliation Action Plan and all other relevant supporting action plans, strategies and activities throughout the organisation which provide more detail of underlying activities, tasks and deliverables for key actions.
Inclusion Guiding Principles

USQ recognises that diversity and inclusion is considered a core business ingredient and that everyone has a role to play in supporting a diverse and inclusive workplace.

USQ’s values of Respect, Integrity and Excellence assist each employee to bring diversity and inclusion to life in the workplace. USQ employees live out the values every day through the positive, supportive and meaningful relationships they create with their peers, students and the community.

This values-driven culture offers a workplace that is built around relationships and community, mutual respect, diversity, and a strong commitment to ethics and integrity, collaboration, creativity and innovation. The guiding principles operate in conjunction with the values to establish a broad philosophy which guides USQ employees through all workplace interactions, irrespective of their position. These principles seek to enable an inclusive workplace, across all elements of the USQ Employee Diversity and Inclusion Framework.

Flexible and responsive

Inclusion occurs in the workplace when employees are accommodating and accepting that people do things differently. Being flexible and responsive incorporates openness to different perspectives and experiences of a diversity of people, and is supportive of a work environment that is flexible to meet the needs of a diversity of employees.

Development and growth-focused

Workplaces are subject to continuous change and increasing level of ambiguity and uncertainty. Employees who focus on development and growth see the value in constructive disruption and embrace change as an opportunity to learn and grow. Employees who seek to challenge accepted practices, and incorporate different perspectives and diverse views into outcomes, actively work to create a workplace in which diversity and inclusion are at the centre of the culture.

Additionally, inclusion occurs when a diversity of people has opportunities to develop their career and fulfil their full potential.

Connect and share

A workplace is inclusive when everyone, no matter their identity, feels a sense of belonging, connectedness to co-workers, and is accepted as their ‘whole self’.

Connection and sharing is achieved when a diversity of perspectives is viewed as a valuable resource that can shape strategy, work practices, management and operating systems, core values and norms for success.

Identity aware

Our identity influences our perspective. Our various identities – age, cultural background, gender, profession, sexual orientation and so on – are important aspects of ourselves that can influence our perspectives, attitudes, behaviours, worldviews, and experiences. Our identity can also influence the way others view and treat us. A culture of inclusion exists when individuals who vary across all dimensions of diversity (e.g. age, cultural background, gender) report feeling safe, trusted, accepted, respected, supported, valued, fulfilled, and engaged in their working environment, both as individuals and as members of particular identity groups.

A workplace environment is regarded as inclusive when employees feel they can be authentic at work, that is, bring their ‘whole self’ to work and not feel that they need to conceal who they are in order to contribute and succeed.

(Source: Building Inclusion: An Evidence Based Model of Inclusive Leadership, Diversity Council Australia)
Employee Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2018-2020

The premise of the Employee Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is that all USQ employees are responsible for creating an inclusive environment. The strategy focuses on a framework of ‘Leadership, Infrastructure and Connectivity’ to create an inclusion enabling culture. The focus of each of these framework elements is:

Leadership leaders exist at all levels within the University. Leadership behaviours look different depending on each employee’s position. Creating an inclusive environment needs strong role models and leaders demonstrating and embodying inclusion and inclusive behaviours. Inclusive leaders provide clear direction and constant dialogue, create an open and inclusive team culture that values diversity of thought from a diverse range of individuals, and empowers employees. Inclusive leaders develop and coach others to be more inclusive and understand the value of every employee, their different motivators, and different ways they can contribute to organisational performance – in every situation.

Infrastructure language is a powerful tool for building inclusion at work. It can be used to create a sense of being valued, respected and part of the team. Inclusive infrastructure seeks to critically review and interrogate the current systems, structures and processes within USQ and ensures the way in which we use and implement this infrastructure is inclusive. This is an important and continual element of the framework as it contributes at a structural level to underpin and frame the environment to allow inclusive behaviours and attitudes to flourish.

Connectivity the concept of inclusion involves every employee across the University – no matter their position – to demonstrate and value inclusion to truly create an inclusive culture. Connectivity aims to connect all employees, the University and its communities, in a values-based environment.

The University also acknowledges that focusing on key diversity groups is important to contributing to a diverse and inclusive workplace. The following have been identified as key diversity areas for USQ:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- Gender Equity
- Disability
- Sexuality and gender diversity, including LGBTIQ (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer)
- Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)
- Mature Age
Inclusion at USQ

Goal: Shape an environment that is community connected and aligns employees with USQ values and principles

Goal: Continuously improve systems, policies, processes and facilities to enable a diverse and inclusive working environment

Goal: Build leadership capability to be flexible, agile, relational and inclusive

RESPECT INTEGRITY EXCELLENCE

DEVELOPMENT & GROWTH FOCUSED

FLEXIBLE & RESPONSIVE

CONNECT & SHARE

IDENTITY AWARE

CONNECTIVITY

LEADERSHIP

INFRASTRUCTURE
Strategic Indicators of Success

In addition to monitoring and reporting on the performance and accountability measures for each of the key goals in this Strategy, the impact of initiatives will also be reported against the relevant Strategic Success Indicators (SSIs) in the University of Southern Queensland Strategic Plan 2016-2020:

SSI-8: Identified workplace diversity targets for the University are met or exceeded.

USQ’s workforce diversity indicators and targets currently focus on gender representation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, specifically:

- Women at senior levels – increasing representation at Executive, Academic Levels D and E, and Professional Levels 9 and 10; and decreasing the gender pay gap across the workforce; and
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees - increasing representation as a percentage of the total workforce in a way that is reflective of USQ’s overall work profile, in all areas of the University. The University’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Workforce Strategy sets this target as 3% over 2018 to 2020.

The initial diversity groups and targets have been established on the understanding that they will be subject to review and revision from time to time in response to changes both internally and externally over the life of the Strategy, and to reflect different priorities and areas of focus.

Additional metrics will be developed over the life of the Strategy to measure success across expanded indicators of diversity and inclusion at USQ.

Measuring success through focused action

To create an inclusive culture, USQ seeks the commitment of all employees towards the key components of the framework: Inclusive Leadership, Inclusive Infrastructure and Connectivity.

Over the life of the Strategy, success in these elements can be demonstrated through trends and changes in the University work environment, outcomes and relationships, which may include:

- Continued growth in gender equity at senior levels, and across the University workforce more broadly.
- Attainment of established growth targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment across all employee cohorts and work areas.
- Increasing diversity of the USQ workforce profile across all key diversity areas.
- Growth in inclusive leadership practices.
- Continued support for flexible work and increasing utilisation of flexible work practices.
- Accessible, safe and healthy work environments that allow equitable participation.
- Growth in internal employee networks, and meaningful community engagement.
- Demonstrated values-based decision making.

To drive change in these areas and engage leaders and employees in creating an inclusive environment, the University will focus on and prioritise the goals, objectives and key actions of this Strategy.
Strategic Alignment

The USQ Talent Management Framework provides the platform to align USQ’s people practices across the talent lifecycle. The intent of the Employee Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is to guide inclusive behaviour and decisions aligned to the talent management framework as follows:

- **Align** - Succession planning and career pathways are based on equity and fairness.
- **Plan** - Our data and metrics are inclusive, reflective and transparent of diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
- **Attract** - Our workforce reflects the diversity of the communities in which we operate.
- **Develop** - Equitable access is provided to diverse and inclusive learning and development opportunities.
- **Engage** - Positive inclusive behaviours are recognised and rewarded.

Goals and Objectives

**LEADERSHIP**

**Goal:** Build leadership capability to be flexible, agile, relational and inclusive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Key Actions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Leaders are inclusive in their communications to encourage</td>
<td>1. Leaders publically advocate, promote and communicate about diversity</td>
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<td>innovation and diversity of thought.</td>
<td>and inclusion and its value to USQ.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Leaders have increased knowledge of how to be inclusive and how</td>
<td>2. Key performance indicators for leaders are developed and implemented.</td>
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<td>diversity supports innovation and performance.</td>
<td>3. Develop and implement an ‘Inclusion in Action’ leadership program.</td>
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<td>3. Leaders engage people to build positive, inclusive</td>
<td>4. Leaders receive coaching and feedback on identity awareness and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationships, and support colleagues, peers and direct reports</td>
<td>inclusive practice.</td>
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<td>to do the same.</td>
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**Performance and accountability indicators**

- Positive employee engagement survey results on relevant topics such as leadership, inclusion, culture, and equity.
- 95% of leaders within the executive structure have attended Inclusive Leadership programs by 2020.
- 80% of leaders complete identity awareness development and coaching by 2020.
- SSI8 workforce diversity targets are achieved.
INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal: Continuously improve systems, policies, processes and facilities to enable a diverse and inclusive working environment.

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<tr>
<td>1. Communication, systems, policies, processes and facilities are reflective of best practice diversity and inclusion.</td>
<td>1. Conduct a workplace audit on facilities, systems, policies and procedures and develop a plan for continuous improvement for equity of access and inclusion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Technology is used creatively to increase participation and two-way communication with employees on equity, diversity, inclusion and wellness in the work environment.</td>
<td>2. Inclusive language and inclusive practices incorporated into all elements of the employment lifecycle.</td>
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<td>3. Employer of Choice status is enhanced through adoption of best practice programs, accreditation and/or standards relating to diversity and inclusion.</td>
<td>3. Development of data and metrics which benchmark diversity and inclusion within the University.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Implementation of diversity action plans, and development of plans to address gaps including a USQ Employee Gender Equity plan.</td>
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Performance and accountability indicators
- Attainment of diversity and inclusion standards and/or accreditation programs as a key feature of USQ’s strategic outcome to be an Employer of Choice.
- Reporting of diversity and inclusion data and metrics is available and transparent, and reflects the needs of the University and the communities that we serve.
- Infrastructure (policies, procedures, training, support etc.) is regularly reviewed and available to enable managers and supervisors to create an inclusive environment.

CONNECTIVITY

Goal: Shape an environment that is community connected and aligns employees with the USQ values and principles of inclusion.

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<td>1. Inclusion is demonstrated through enhanced focus on self-awareness, awareness of others, and values aligned behaviour.</td>
<td>1. Develop and implement an ‘Inclusion in Action’ training package for employees at all levels.</td>
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<td>2. Greater connection and inclusion is created within the University and between the University and its communities.</td>
<td>2. Develop behaviour based inclusion resources that will enable employees to demonstrate the USQ values and inclusion guiding principles.</td>
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<td>3. Capability aligned development opportunities meet the needs of employees for inclusion and connection.</td>
<td>3. Build and implement communication platforms which enable increased cross-unit cooperation across the University and more effective utilisation of current employee skills and knowledge.</td>
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<td>4. Enhance community connection through engagement in diversity and inclusion related events.</td>
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Performance and accountability indicators
- High levels of employee participation in development opportunities and engagement in events and activities relating to diversity and inclusion.
- Positive employee survey results on topics such as leadership, inclusion, culture, and equity.
- High levels of attendance by employees at the ‘Inclusion in Action’ training by 2020.
- University engagement in the following events, including but not limited to:
  - Harmony Day
  - IDAHOT (International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia) Day
  - Disability Action Week
  - Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month
  - White Ribbon Day
  - International Women’s Day
  - NAIDOC (National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee) Week
  - R U Ok Day

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Conclusion

USQ’s goal is to reflect the diverse community in which we operate and to create a great place to work for everyone. We aim to do this by embracing the individual skills, perspectives and experiences our people bring to the workplace and harnessing these for high performance and improved service delivery.

Achieving an inclusive culture and workplace at USQ will ensure employees feel included, valued and respected and have access to equal opportunity, which supports full participation at work. Through these efforts we will see the retention of diverse talent in our workforce and ensure that our employees achieve their full potential.

Everyone at USQ has a role to play in supporting a diverse and inclusive workplace.

Reference Materials

Social Justice Strategic Plan 2017 -2020
USQ Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples Workforce Strategy 2018-2020
USQ Workforce and Talent Management Plan 2016 -2020
USQ People Capability Framework
Multicultural Action Plan
Disability Action Plan
For more information

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#USQInclusion