



UNIVERSITY HOUSE

UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

University House is the home of The University Club at The University of Melbourne

Summary of the University House Equal Opportunity Policy and Procedures (Updated June 2007)

1. General Principles

University House is committed to a policy of equal opportunity. It will take care to ensure that its operations are founded in respect for human diversity and dignity and that unfair and unlawful discrimination and harassment are avoided or met with a firm response.

Under the University House Equal Opportunity Policy and Procedures:

- Members and staff can expect that the House management will implement anti-discrimination strategies and equal employment opportunity practices.
- Staff can be confident that the House's employment practices, from recruitment to the end of employment, will be based on principles of equal opportunity.
- Members and staff are expected to avoid behaviour which could cause offence or distress in others, and to treat each other with courtesy and respect.
- Members and staff can expect that any discrimination or harassment complaint they might make will be dealt with quickly, fairly and sensitively.

2. Specific Attributes

The House accepts its responsibilities in relation to State and Federal legislation to ensure that its structures and practices are free from direct or indirect unlawful discrimination based on any of the following attributes:

- Sex and lawful sexual activity
- Status as a parent or carer
- Age
- Race
- Industrial activity
- Pregnancy
- Marital status
- Physical features
- Impairment
- Political and religious belief or activity

University House will also not discriminate against someone on the basis of their personal association with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes.

3. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is special kind of unlawful sex discrimination. It is sexual behaviour which the perpetrator should realise could make the recipient feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. It includes unwelcome and unreciprocated physical contact, sexual comments or jokes, the display of offensive material and other behaviour which creates a hostile environment. Sexual harassment, being unwelcome, is different from friendships, sexual or otherwise, which may develop between staff and members. Some sexual behaviour, which might seem trivial, can offend, especially when the relationship involves authority or power of one over another, as between staff and member or employer and employee.

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4. Procedures for prevention and responding to complaints.

The House will implement its Equal Opportunity Policy both pro-actively, through *strategies for respecting diversity and preventing discrimination* and responsively, through its *procedures for handling complaints*. The former will include the use of gender-neutral language in its publications and employment based on merit.

5. If you think you may have been treated unfairly or harassed:

Complaints of *discrimination* relating to an *action of the House* [eg. alleged unfairness in an appointment] will be carefully investigated. They should be taken to the General Manager/Licensee or the President of the House Committee or the Chair of the Equal Opportunity Committee as appropriate.

Complaints of *harassment* about the behaviour of a member or staff member should be taken to a House Grievance Officer, or the General Manager. The matter will then be dealt with according to the wishes of the complainant under the Grievance Procedure. Whilst complaints can usually be dealt with most effectively internally, anyone with a discrimination or harassment complaint has the right to lodge it with the Equal Opportunity Commission. When an allegation is of sexual assault or other criminal behaviour the complainant will be strongly encouraged to take it to the police.

6. The Grievance Procedure

The University House Grievance Procedure aims to resolve complaints confidentially and quickly, with fairness, care and understanding. Complaints may be resolved through informal advice and assistance or through formal investigation and determination.

Informal Process

If possible, the matter is settled in an informal, non-adversarial way, with the intention of ensuring that the behaviour, which gave rise to the complaint, is not repeated, and that there are no reprisals for having complained. A complainant might simply receive confidential advice and support, or if they wish, the respondent (whom the complaint is about) may be informed and mediation or conciliation can be undertaken.

Formal Process

Where informal intervention is refused by the complainant or respondent, or is unsuccessful or where the nature of the allegations is such that informal intervention is inappropriate, the Chair of the House EO Committee can appoint a suitably qualified investigator to investigate the matter. The Chair will make a determination on the basis of the findings.

If a complaint is substantiated, the President may determine upon disciplinary action for the respondent. Harassment, under certain circumstances, can constitute grounds for dismissal or recommendation of suspension from membership. If a complaint is unsubstantiated and has been brought with malice the complainant may be subject to disciplinary action.

7. The University of Melbourne Sexual Harassment Procedures

Members of the House who are University of Melbourne staff members may be eligible to lodge complaints under the University's procedures if the respondent is also a member of the University's staff and if they believe the alleged harassment has a bearing on their work within the University. They should not complain concurrently under both sets of procedures, and can discuss the best approach with a University House Sexual Harassment Adviser, the University House General Manager or a House Grievance Officer.

8. Guests of Members

Members bringing guests to the House should understand that guests must also abide by the Equal Opportunity Policy. The House will attempt to ensure that no one (staff, member or guest) is subjected to discrimination harassment while they are in the House.

COPIES OF THE COMPLETE UNIVERSITY HOUSE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY AND PROCEDURES MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE OFFICE.