# Gender Inclusive Membership of University Committees Policy

# Section 1 - Introduction and Purpose

(1) This Policy reflects the University of Newcastle's (University) commitment to the values of equity, diversity and inclusion in alignment with the principles of the University's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

(2) The University seeks to provide equal opportunity to staff and students of all genders by addressing gender bias in attitudes, practices and structures affecting accesss to and participation and progress across all aspects of the University's learning, working and research operations.

(3) The University welcomes the participation of all genders including cisgender, trans and gender diverse, non-binary staff and students on its committees.

(4) This Policy seeks to:

a. ensure that membership of the University's committees reflect gender diversity to inform inclusive decision-making; and
b. mitigate opportunities for unconscious bias to occur.

# Section 2 - Scope

(5) This Policy applies to all key decision making and advisory committees of the University and it's controlled entities, including the Executive Leadership Team; working parties, consultative committees; boards; recruitment panels, promotion committees, "local" (i.e. College, School and Division) committees, sub-committees and review committees, from hereon in referred to as committees.

(6) This Policy does not apply to University's Council or Academic Senate and their respective standing committees which operate under separate governance arrangements.

# Section 3 - Definitions

(7) In the context of this document the following definitions apply:

a. "gender" is a social construct of how people identify themselves. Gender includes identity, expression and experience. Gender can change over time and within this policy trans and non-binary genders are recognised and included;
b. "non-binary" refers to a person who may sit within, across or outside of the female or male gender binary (men or women);
c. "trans and gender diverse" refers to a person whose gender is different to what was presumed for them at birth;
d. "cis-gender" refers to someone whose gender matches the one presumed for them at birth.

# Section 4 - Policy

(8) Committees shall have a membership that is gender inclusive.

(9) The University will rely on the staff or student member ‘self-reporting’ their gender. If a person identifies as non-binary, they will not be recorded as either men or women in the calculation of gender balance for the purposes of committee membership.

(10) The membership of all committees must not be comprised of more than 60% of a single gender, with the exception of 3 person committees where it must not be more than 67% of a single gender. For example:

a. a 4 person committee must not have more than 2 people of the same gender;
b. a 5 person committee must not have more than 3 people of the same gender.

(11) For targeted recruitment for women in an underrepresented area (e.g. STEM), representation of women on the committee must be a minimum of 50% but not greater than 67%.

(12) For identified recruitment for women, representation of women on the committee must be a minimum of 50% but not greater than 75% representation.

(13) It is the responsibility of the Committee Chair to ensure appropriate gender inclusiveness and to report any exceptions to the Senior Manager Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and record the exception in the meeting minutes or report. Exceptions include instances when a panel member becomes unavailable at short notice due to illness, or another reason which may impact gender diversity but where rectifying the exception would significantly delay proceedings. Where gender inclusiveness is not achievable in the first instance due to members being elected or appointed ex-officio, the Chair may seek to adopt one of he strategies listed in Clause 14.

(14) Strategies to achieve gender inclusiveness may include, but are not limited to:

a. the appointment of a Deputy Chair who is a gender different to the Chair;
b. providing for ex-officio members to be represented by a nominee who is a member of the underrepresented gender group;
c. appointing or co-opting additional member(s) of a underrepresented gender;
d. appointing or co-opting suitably qualified member(s) of a underrepresented gender from outside the University;
e. appointment of member(s) from an underrepresented gender to balance ex officio appointments; or
f. where membership is by election, nominations may be encouraged from a minority gender or persons, including those who identify as trans, gender diverse or non-binary. If the result of elections leads membership that is not gender inclusive, as established by this Policy, the Chair may propose the appointment of additional members where appropriate; or
g. contacting the Equity Diversity and Inclusion Unit, Human Resource Services or College Associate Dean Equity Diversity & Inclusion for advice or support.

# Section 5 - Monitoring

(15) The Senior Manager Equity, Diversity and Inclusion will collate an annual report (via sample audits of key collection points) to the Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee to measure performance against the requirements of this Policy.

(16) The Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee will monitor annual trends when required, and work with Convenors, Chairs of committees and decision making bodies to support them to meet the University's requirements.

## Status and Details

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## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"University"** - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

**"Controlled entity"** - Has the same meaning as in section 16A of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

**"Student"** - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

**"Research"** - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or document.

**"School"** - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

**"Staff"** - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

**"College"** - An organisational unit established within the University by the Council.