

Equal Opportunity Employment Policy



The Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of South Australia

October 2025

Our Values

The Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of South Australia (UCASA) values all personnel involved in the life of the church, including each of its employees and applicants, and recognises that all interactions should be approached through a lens of justice and fairness, care and safety, intentional growth and encouragement and accountability. In this way, the Uniting Church strives for excellence in its stewardship of its people and seeks to value each individual and the unique skills, gifts and talents they possess.

Overview

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to confirm UCASA's commitment to being an Equal Opportunity Employer, to make individuals aware of what constitutes harassment, discrimination, and victimisation, and highlight their responsibilities in preventing and managing such incidents to achieve a harmonious workplace by recognising the right of all people to be treated with dignity and respect.

Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all personnel of the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of South Australia. All Church Body governing councils are to adopt this policy and procedure for their respective workplaces unless they have developed and instituted their own Equal Opportunity Employment policy and procedure.

This policy and procedure replaces all previous versions.

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Applicant	A person who is seeking employment or has expressed interest in a vacancy to provide services (paid or unpaid) with a Church body.
Church Body	As per the definition of Body in the Uniting Church's Constitution, includes council, committee, department, college, board, agency or other institution within the bounds of UCASA, which means: • Synod (Pirie St Office); Yarthu Apinthe (Synod Brooklyn Park College Campus), Uniting Venues SA; Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC); • Presbyteries, Congregations and Faith Communities.
Discrimination	For the purposes of this policy, discrimination in employment means treating a person less favourably than others because of a particular attribute or status, specified in relevant anti-discrimination legislation, which is unrelated to the performance of the position.
Employee	Any person directly employed by the UCASA, or employed by a Church body on behalf of the Uniting Church in Australia, who is remunerated for the work they undertake for their employer.
Executive Officer	An individual who is appointed to lead a UCASA ministry centre by the Synod or its Standing Committee, usually a person who has been delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the UCASA, and is accountable for the delivery of outcomes for a department, function or program within their ministry centre, and reports to the General Secretary.
Manager (Leader/Supervisor)	An individual appointed by an employer or governing council of a Church body, temporarily or permanently, to a supervisory role i.e. has work performance and workplace behaviour oversight of other personnel.
Ministry Agent	These are people engaged in specified ministries within the bounds of UCASA - includes (as referenced in the Uniting Church's 'Regulations' and the 'Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice') Candidates, Community Ministers and Chaplains, Deacons, Deaconesses, Interns, Lay Pastors, Ministers of the Word, Ministry of Pastors, Accredited Youth Workers, and Ministers from other denominations serving in approved placements in the UCASA.
Personnel	Any person commissioned, employed and or engaged in, or contributing to the planning/management/delivery of, or is involved or participates in any functions, programs or activities associated with a Church body (includes Ministry Agent, Employee, Volunteer, Contractor, Member, Visitor, and Guest).
Sexual harassment	For the purposes of this policy, sexual harassment is an unwanted sexual advance, or unwelcome request for sexual favours, or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which results in a person feeling humiliated, intimidated and offended, and under the circumstances, where a reasonable person would have anticipated the possibility of that reaction.
Victimisation	For the purposes of this policy, victimisation means treating someone unfairly because they have made a complaint under this policy, or under workplace law, or because they have supported someone else who acted to make a complaint.
Volunteer	Either a formal or informal volunteer.
Formal Volunteer	A formal volunteer, an individual recognised by the governing council of a Church body, who has actual capacity to influence and control, and who willingly provides work or

Term	Meaning
	performs a service to benefit the mission and objectives of the Church or Church body and receives no payment as a result of their work.
Informal Volunteer	An informal volunteer may not necessarily fit the definition of 'worker' (but rather 'other person') under the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA) as they may not be performing the work of the Church body but rather working for their own religious purposes or values and for the good of the Church body. Meaning an informal volunteer donates their time to support the activities of their Church body through voluntary acts of helping and kindness in local communities.
Uniting Church (the Church)	The Uniting Church in Australia
UCASA (the Synod)	Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of South Australia
Workplace	A workplace is a place where work is carried out for the Church body and includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work. Generally this means in the context of the Church body, but may not be restricted to: • any place of worship within the bounds of UCASA • any UCASA property used by the Church body • any other property owned by The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (S.A.) any other location or workplace (as defined by Section 8 of the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 – SA) where approved Church body work, activities or functions are being conducted.

Policy Principles

The Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of South Australia (UCASA) and Church Body:

- values each individual and the unique skills, gifts and talents they possess.
- accepts responsibility for the wise stewardship of its personnel.
- is committed to ensuring that all employees and applicants are treated fairly and equitably and are not subjected to any form of unlawful harassment or discrimination.
- is also responsible for ensuring that employees are aware of their rights and obligations as outlined in this policy and that UCASA personnel must comply with this policy.
- is committed to ensuring applicants are made aware of this policy.
- will discipline any employee who fails to comply with this policy, up to and including, termination of employment.
- will review and monitor this policy on a regular basis to ensure it remains current to the UCASA and Church Body requirements and legislation.

Equal Opportunity Employment

All levels of management and personnel are responsible and accountable for ensuring that the requirements of this policy are adhered to and that the principles of equal opportunity are upheld in the decision-making process, in the performance of their duties, and whilst acting as a representative of UCASA.

All persons will be afforded opportunities for employment or appointment, promotion, training, transfer or benefit based on merit. This means that an assessment is made regarding the abilities, knowledge, aptitude, experience and relevant qualifications of each individual applicant in relation to the requirements of the particular position/vacancy. The UCASA seeks to appoint the 'best person' for the role.

Efficient, ethical and professional conduct will be demonstrated in all recruitment undertakings, whether applicants are successful or not. The selection of candidates is based on objective selection criteria including competency assessment and must be consistent with the anti-discrimination and equal opportunity expectations contained within this policy.

As part of the employment process, flexible working arrangements will be considered that take into account the individual needs of all personnel and the operational requirements of the UCASA and Church Body.

Conflicts of interest

When forming the selection process for recruitment and/or promotion, Human Resources or the relevant Executive Officer or hiring manager will take into consideration any known potential for conflict of interest.

It is responsibility of the Selection Panel member to report any conflict of interest, or potential conflict of interest, to the Chair of the Selection Panel or to Human Resources as soon as reasonably practicable. Failure to do so may be the subject of disciplinary action.

Conflict of interest associated with inappropriate favouritism or nepotism of any kind is found to occur, either during the recruitment process or during employment, whether for or against family members or friends, will not be tolerated and the person(s) concerned may face disciplinary action.

Discrimination

It is unlawful to discriminate in employment, including in determining who should be offered employment, under the following Federal and State legislation:

- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth);
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth);
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth);
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992;
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Cth);
- Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA);
- Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth);
- Racial Vilification Act 1996 (SA).

Any form of discrimination based on any of the following grounds will not be tolerated:

- sex;
- sexuality;
- race, colour, nationality, descent and ethnic, ethno-religious or national origin;
- physical or intellectual disability;
- family responsibilities;
- age;
- religion;
- political opinion;

- trade union activity;
- social origin;
- medical record;
- pregnancy or potential pregnancy; or
- marital status.

UCASA and the Church Body will ensure that equal opportunity principles are incorporated into, and discrimination is eliminated from all employment matters, including:

- recruitment and selection;
- policies, practices and procedures;
- terms and conditions for work including wages and other benefits;
- training, promotion and transfer of employees;
- the methods and reasons for ending employment, and
- allocation of work and roles.

Victimisation

Legislation prohibits the victimisation of individuals who:

- intend to make a complaint;
- make a complaint;
- intend to provide information as a witness;
- provide information as a witness, and
- support an individual who intends to make a complaint or who has made a complaint.

All necessary steps will be taken to ensure that people involved in a complaint are not victimised by anyone for coming forward with the complaint or for helping to resolve the matter.

Reporting an issue

If any employee or applicant feels that they have been discriminated against or harassed, they may make a complaint by following the [procedure](#) below.

Responsibilities

An Executive Officer or Manager for their respective Church Body, has responsibility for this policy.

A delegate maybe appointed by an Executive Officer or Manager to oversee (provide) the management and implementation of the Equal Opportunity Employment policy within their respective workplaces.

For example, an appointed delegate maybe an Executive Officer Resources delegation to a Synod staff member (such as Manager Human Resources); or a Chairperson of a Presbytery or other Church Body governing council, may delegate to a member of the Presbytery or council.

The **Executive Officer, Resources** is responsible for:

- approval of, and amending, this policy and procedure, in consultation with the Manager, Human Resources and Executive Officers;
- ensuring that this policy and procedure will be regularly reviewed to maintain their relevance and integrity in line with appropriate legislation;

- delegating to a UCASA personnel the responsibility for the management and implementation of the Equal Opportunity Employment policy and to ensure that this policy is adhered to;
- ensuring that the contents of this policy and procedure are communicated to, and accessible to all personnel.

Appointed delegate is responsible for:

- the oversight of the management and implementation of the Equal Opportunity Employment policy within their workplace, ensuring that this policy is adhered to;
- ensuring that all complaints of discrimination or harassment will be investigated quickly and fairly and treated with confidentiality;
- periodically assessing compliance with this policy and procedure to ensure consistency of application across their workplace.

Manager, Human Resources is responsible for:

- supporting the appointed delegate(s) on request, and to review and advise on matters accordingly;
- periodically assessing compliance with this policy and procedure to ensure consistency of application across all ministry centres.

Managers (and hiring managers) are responsible for:

- ensuring they and their employees for whom they are responsible, are aware of and comply with this policy and procedure.
- ensuring applicants are made aware of and have access to this policy.

Employees are responsible for complying with this policy and procedure.

Failure to comply with the policy

Employees should be aware that a failure to comply with the policy and procedure, including any arrangements which are put in place under it, will be investigated and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including, termination of employment.

Issue Resolution

Refer to the UCASA Grievance Policy procedures for further information

- [UCASA Grievance Policy](#)

Dissemination of Policy and Procedure

A copy of this policy and procedure will be made available to all personnel. The intent of this policy and procedure will be explained to each new employee at their induction.

Monitoring and Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed in accordance with legislation changes and UCASA review procedures.

Related Legislation and Documents

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Equal Opportunity Act 1984
- Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Racial Vilification Act 1996
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Uniting Church Constitution and Regulations
- Uniting Church in Australia Member or Adherent Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct Complaints Policy
- UCASA Work Health and Safety Corporate Policy and Procedures
- UCASA Workplace Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)

Procedures

Making a complaint

If UCASA Personnel or an applicant believes a policy or practice contravenes the intent of this policy, (e.g. believes or perceives that they are being discriminated against), they should report the behaviour or incident to their manager, or one of the following contacts:

- Chairperson – for Presbytery and/or Pastoral Relations issues
- Chairperson or Minister - for congregational issues
- Manager, Human Resources (MHR) – for UCASA issues

Following the initial report, if the matter is deemed to warrant further action, the concerned individual will be requested to put their complaint in writing, which will include the action they want taken. This action may include:

- arranging for someone to speak to the person(s) responsible for the alleged discrimination or harassment;
- arranging a mediation meeting where an independent party will assist to resolve the issue(s); and/or
- making a formal complaint, which may involve the conduct of an investigation into the alleged incident(s).

Complaints will be investigated promptly, fairly and confidentially.

All details of complaints of discrimination, and investigations into those complaints, will remain confidential.

All participants in an investigation, will be directed to maintain confidentiality about the fact an investigation is being conducted and the matters under investigation.

Any person who breaches confidentiality may be disciplined.

During any meetings or discussions, the complainant will have the right to be accompanied by a support person of their choice. The support person may be a family member or friend.

Following the investigation, the complainant will be informed of the key findings of the investigation which relate to them.

If the Personnel is not comfortable approaching their manager or the delegated representative of UCASA or the Church Body, in the first instance, or if they are not satisfied with the way their complaint has been handled, they have the right to refer the matter to an external body, such as the Equal Opportunity Commission (SA).

Approval Authority

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Executive Officer, Resources
Advisory Committee to Approval Authority	Human Resources and Remuneration Committee
Administrator	Manager, Human Resources
Next Review Date	2028 (3-years)

Feedback

Employees may provide feedback about this Policy and Procedure by emailing resources@sa.uca.org.au or humanresources@sa.uca.org.au

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