

UQ Staff Diversity Data Collection Form

I appreciate the sensitivity of the material we are asking people to voluntarily provide to us and the fact that people had to identify themselves. I hope the following will explain the rationale behind aspects of the survey.

Frequently Asked Questions referred to on the survey form are at http://www.uq.edu.au/equity/docs/faqs_collection_uqstaff_diversity_data.pdf

1. Personal identifiers

Personal identifiers are required primarily to enable us to analyse the data by a range of variables, such as gender, language spoken at home, level of appointment, area or discipline etc. Some of this information is already collected by HR and held in Aurion, which we can access for cross referencing purposes, however without an identifier, it is impossible to do this. We would therefore only be able to collect what amounts to generalised data, which would not in fact be of very great use and certainly wouldn't justify the costs involved in running the survey.

2. Provision of personal information

We wish to develop as full a picture of the diversity of our staff as is possible. To this end, we attempt to gather information related to a wide range of personal attributes including gender, ethnicity, disability, Aboriginality, age, carer responsibility and sexuality. As noted, some of this data is collected by HR, and this survey seeks to obtain the additional data, which is provided on a voluntary basis through my Office. This type of survey, including the question on sexuality, is carried out by a number of universities around Australia.

There are a range of self identifiers and categories within various attributes, including disability, sexuality, languages spoken and so forth. This survey attempts to provide suitable options for people to respond to within these categories.

3. Question 6: sexuality

Inclusion of this question in the survey removes the 'invisibility' of staff with alternative sexualities and gender identities – so often ignored – and simply acknowledges that these attributes along with all the others as a recognised aspect of the diversity of all people and have implications for policy development and strategic initiatives.

Commonly accepted definitions of the terms used in the form are:

Bisexual	A person who has a sexual attraction to people regardless of gender.
Gay	A male homosexual (gay man), but more recently may be used as a broad term to include gay men and lesbians.
Heterosexual	A person who has a sexual attraction to people of a different gender.
Lesbian	A female homosexual. There are a number of terms (mostly derogatory) used to describe lesbians, including 'dyke', a term that has been reclaimed by the lesbian community. Sometimes incorporated under the general term 'gay community'.
Queer	This originally derogatory term used to describe gay and lesbian individuals has been reclaimed by some members of LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans communities). Some LGBT people prefer the term 'Queer' to 'gay', 'lesbian' or 'bisexual', although others may object to being so described (as is also true of other 'reclaimed' words).
Transgender	The terms transgender or transexual may be used by someone who identifies as a different gender to the one they have been assigned by society, often living their lives as that gender, and who may or may not choose to undergo surgery that more closely aligns their body to their gender identity.

4. Data usage

This data provides The Equity Office with capacity to inform policy development and assists us in a range of other matters. For example, the results of our last staff diversity survey (conducted over 5 years ago) assisted us revising the Parental Leave and Carer's Leave policies and informed us in raising issues related to child care. Our responses on disability have significantly informed the development of the University's Disability Action plan and we are now hoping to work closely with HR in improving the capacity of the university in employing and catering for the needs of staff with disabilities.

My Office is also able to use this data to assist us in staff development activities – in working with supervising staff, in raising awareness about the needs of our staff who identify as having an alternative sexuality or in developing strategies to assist people transitioning from their biological gender to an alternative gender.

A great deal of this type of work goes on 'behind the scenes' and the links between data collection and the policy/strategic work may not ever be particularly obvious to the wider university community.

5. Privacy

We have set in place the most stringent privacy framework possible with advice from our Legal office and the University Privacy Officer – for example all original forms are destroyed and access to the data is highly restricted. The Director, The Equity Office is the only person authorised to access the data to develop statistical reports (or my authorised delegate).

The information is only used for statistical purposes and The Equity Office does not disclose individual information to any other party without your consent or where such supply is required by law. Staff are bound by the University's Privacy Management policy #1.60.2

<http://www.uq.edu.au/hupp/index.html?page=24999>.

If you wish to discuss any additional matters relating to the UQ Staff Diversity Data Collection Form, please contact The Equity Office on 3365 3052 or email equity@uq.edu.au.

Dr Ann Stewart
Director

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