

EDUCATING FOR EQUALITY: KEY MESSAGES

This document sets out a range of key messages to support your work to promote gender equality and prevent violence at your university. It is written for those who are leading the implementation of *Educating for Equality* to assist in engaging all members of the university community in this work.

Key messages are short, powerful messages you want your audience to hear, connect with and remember.

The key messages in this document outline the rationale for this work and support all members of the university community to understand how they can play a role in promoting gender equality.

Members of the university community include:

- the University Executive and other people in senior leadership positions
- the University Council
- managers
- academic staff, including sessional and contract staff
- professional staff, including corporate services, human resources, student support services, and college residence staff
- contractors, including security, cleaning, grounds and maintenance, café staff and transport service providers
- research, development and innovation partners, such as other universities or research centres, medical research institutes, and corporations
- domestic and international students, sports groups and teams, clubs and societies, and student leadership bodies
- the broader community.

Different key messages will resonate with different members of the university community depending on their position, motivation, level of interest and ability to contribute to promoting gender equality. It can be helpful to consider each of these factors when deciding which key message/s are the ones your particular audience needs to hear.

The *Educating for Equality* key messages are divided into three themes:

1. Gender equality is fundamental to the university’s mission and the personal and professional success of students, staff and alumni.
2. Everyone within the university has a role to play in promoting and modelling gender equality and preventing gender-based violence.
3. Universities are leaders in gender equality and preventing gender-based violence.

Depending on your audience, you might select key messages from one or more themes.

While the supporting information included in this document considers the university sector generally, you can include specific information about your institution, staff or student cohort, and other relevant factors to assist in connecting to your audience and making these key messages meaningful, engaging and memorable.

Gender equality is fundamental to the university’s mission and the personal and professional success of students, staff and alumni

Key message	Supporting information
Gender equality is good for everyone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender equality makes communities safer and healthier. It means everyone can reach their full potential and flourish, including in education. • Gender inequality affects everyone, and everyone has a role to play in preventing it by promoting a safer, fairer and more respectful world. • When women are supported to reach their full potential, their talents and skills benefit the whole population and help drive economic growth. In 2018, KPMG modelling estimated that halving the gap between men’s and women’s workforce participation in Australia would produce an additional \$60 billion in GDP by 2038, and cumulative living standards would increase by \$140 billion.¹ • Gender balance in leadership leads to improved decision-making and performance. • While more women are in paid work, they still undertake most of the unpaid domestic and care work. Improving flexible working arrangements improves productivity and gives all families more choice about how to manage work and care.
Gender inequality sets the scene for violence to occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beliefs and attitudes about the roles of men and women in society drive gender-based violence. • Higher rates of violence are consistently predicted by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - condoning violence against women - men’s control of decision making and limits to women’s independence - rigid gender roles and stereotypes - male bonding that emphasises aggression and disrespect towards women. • Alcohol and drug use can worsen the severity and frequency of violence, but it does not drive it. • Everyone is responsible for creating a culture where discrimination and harassment are not accepted, and everyone is respected. • The total economic cost of violence against women and their children in 2015–16 was \$26 billion.²

Everyone in the university community should be safe and well.

- Recent research indicates that rates of violence and abuse against women and LGBTIQ people in Australian universities are unacceptably high.³
- Young women are more likely to experience sexual and intimate partner violence than other cohorts of the population.⁴
- Violence is experienced differently by different women. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience both far higher rates and more severe forms of violence compared to other women. For example, Indigenous women are 32 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family and domestic violence related assaults than non-Indigenous women.⁵
- Evidence also indicates that LGBTIQ communities are at increased risk of sexual assault and harassment compared to people who do not identify as LGBTIQ.⁶

Family and domestic violence is a workplace issue.

- Family and domestic violence affects all workplaces, impacting not only on the safety of workers but on their ability to undertake their work. It can result in reduced productivity, absenteeism and lower retention. Family and domestic violence can enter the workplace through texts, emails, abusive phone calls and safety concerns for the person experiencing violence and other staff.⁷
- Family and domestic violence can also occur at work and is a serious workplace health and safety issue that causes significant physical and psychological injury to women workers.⁸
- Australian employers are losing \$1.9 billion annually because of violence against women.⁹
- Having gender equality policies and procedures can assist victims/survivors of family and domestic violence and violence against women.¹⁰
- Workplace sexual harassment affects around one in five people aged 15 years and older, and four out of five harassers are men. Employers have a legal responsibility to create safe work environments.¹¹
- Workplaces that respond effectively to family and domestic violence experience many benefits, including:
 - improved outcomes for employees affected by family or domestic violence
 - improved productivity, staff engagement and work satisfaction
 - reduced illness and absenteeism
 - reduced staff turnover, resulting in lower recruitment and training costs
 - reduced legal liabilities.¹²

Good leaders know that gender equality is not only the right thing to do, but also the smart thing to do.

- Organisations committed to gender equality have:
 - improved productivity
 - increased organisational performance
 - enhanced ability to attract talent and retain staff
 - enhanced organisational reputation.¹³
 - Organisations that promote gender equality are employers of choice for both women and men:
 - Organisational policies that support gender equality are an important tool for attracting and retaining talented staff. High performing staff are attracted to companies that have a positive reputation for promoting gender equality.¹⁴
 - People value positive cultures and environments that offer gender equality policies and practices, flexible working arrangements and support for people with family and caring responsibilities.
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Everyone within the university has a role to play in promoting and modelling gender equality and preventing gender-based violence

Key message

Supporting information

Everyone in the university community needs to work together to promote gender equality, whether they are staff or students.

- Work is already underway across many universities to promote gender equality and prevent violence, including *Respect. Now. Always.*, Science in Australia Gender Equity, and other initiatives.
- Evidence shows the most effective way to promote gender equality and prevent violence is through a whole-of-institution approach.¹⁵
- A whole-of-institution approach aims to bring about systemic and sustainable transformation, so that changes in people's attitudes and behaviour are reinforced by supportive response mechanisms, policy frameworks, and the institution's formal and informal culture.¹⁶
- This approach means working across the entire university community – including students, staff (whether contract, casual or sessional), residential colleges and halls, research partners, and clubs and sporting organisations, among many other parts of the university community.
- It includes assessing who holds leadership and support roles in the university and examining the gendered norms, practices and structures of the university as a whole.

All aspects of teaching and learning can model respect and equality, including *what* is taught and *how* it is taught.

- By considering how to promote and model gender equality within their teaching practice, academic and teaching staff can contribute to an environment that is safe, equal and respectful.
- Regardless of the course they undertake, students' understanding of respect, gender, power and consent can be influenced by the curriculum that is delivered and the environment in which they learn.
- Gender equality can be reinforced and modelled – formally and informally – across the university if academic staff are supported to analyse curriculum for gender bias and consider the ways they can challenge the drivers of gender-based violence.

Every part of student life can reinforce gender equality and contribute to the prevention of gender-based violence.

- The environments in which students study, work, socialise and live influence their attitudes towards gender-based violence, harassment and discrimination and what is seen as 'acceptable' behaviour for men, women, and LGBTIQ people.
- In turn, these attitudes and beliefs influence the environment in which gender-based violence occurs, both within the university and in the workplaces and communities that students are part of outside the university.
- Universities can ensure that gender equality is promoted consistently across all settings, including colleges and residences, clubs and societies, student services, sports organisations, extra-curricular and social activities, study abroad opportunities and campus facilities.

As workplaces, universities have a vital role to play in creating an environment free of violence, where people are safe, respected, valued and treated as equals.

- All university employees have a right to a work environment where they are safe from violence, harassment and sexism, and where they feel respected, valued and treated as equals. This includes academic staff, professional staff and students in paid positions.
- People's experiences in the workplace have a significant influence on their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours, both personally and professionally.
- Every workplace conversation, policy and action can either reinforce or challenge gender inequality and the attitudes, norms and practices that drive violence.

Universities can champion gender equality and prevent gender-based violence through research programs.

- By addressing unconscious and structural biases in research applications, grants and programs, universities can enhance women's representation and retention at all levels of their academic careers. Carefully and deliberately examining the implications of decisions and processes in terms of gender – known as applying a 'gender lens' – can help universities identify areas for improvement.
- Promoting a gender analysis of research content can also advance gender equality across academic fields.
- As leaders in research and knowledge creation, universities are in a unique position to support research and evaluation on gender-based violence, and contribute to the growing evidence base for effective primary prevention initiatives.

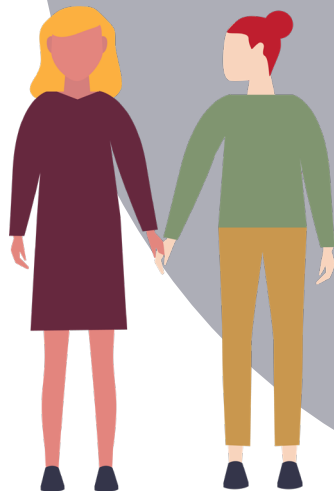
Universities can take active steps to ensure their business and operations reflects their commitment to gender equality and violence prevention.

- Universities are economic institutions with reach far beyond their individual campus or related organisations.
- How universities operate and engage – both within their own institute and with the broader business community – provides a platform to model and promote their commitment to gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence.
- This includes marketing and communications, transport and campus facilities and infrastructure.
- It also includes corporate partnerships and suppliers and external contractors.
- Universities can choose to partner with service providers who share their commitment to gender equality through their procurement tendering or competitive bidding processes.

Universities can promote gender equality by having a response system in place that is victim/survivor-centred and trauma-informed.

- A safe and effective university response to violence includes:
 - a victim/survivor-centred approach that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of staff and students interacting with this response system
 - a clear, accessible response system that meets legal and regulatory obligations, including reporting and support structures, policies and practices
 - a good practice response system centres around and is accountable to victims/survivors, and holds perpetrators to account, sending important messages about what is and isn't acceptable in the university's culture and community.¹⁷





Universities are leaders in gender equality and preventing gender-based violence

Key message

Universities can use their influence and expertise to inspire and support gender equality initiatives in the broader community.

Universities are in a unique position to help future workforces achieve gender equality.

Universities have an important role to play in keeping gender equality at the forefront of responding to and rebuilding after the pandemic.

Supporting information

- As employers and education providers, universities are in a unique position to promote gender equality to a significant number of people across Australia.
- As young people make up 60% of the student population, universities can play a significant role in shaping our cultural and social norms and future direction of our society.
- Universities are in a unique position to work with partners and stakeholders to identify opportunities to contribute to improving gender equality within industry, including through education and training.

- Universities provide education and employment pathways into a diverse range of industries and sectors, including those that are traditionally male or female dominated, or do not historically feature women in leadership. Such historical gender divisions in industries will need to break down if future industry needs are to be met.¹⁸
- By demonstrating how gender equality applies across all industries, universities are in a unique position to see these messages carry into a range of fields by supporting students to become gender equality voices for change.
- There is a growing demand and expectation across all industries and sectors that workers will have a strong understanding of gender equitable work practices to meet legal and ethical obligations and ensure all workplaces enjoy the benefits of gender equality.

- The impacts of the pandemic on Australian workplaces, the economy and society have a disproportionate impact on women, highlighting and amplifying existing inequalities that drive gender-based violence.
- Throughout the pandemic, women have been disproportionately affected by higher rates of job loss, reduced financial security, the increased burden of unpaid care, and exacerbated experiences of violence. This is heightened further for women who experience other forms of discrimination, including women with disabilities, older women, young women, women on temporary visas or living in poverty.¹⁹
- The pandemic also offers a unique opportunity to change structural inequalities that have consistently held women back.
- For universities, this means continuing efforts to achieve gender equality and ensuring existing inequalities are not deepened and new inequalities are not created.

NOTES

- ¹ KPMG, *Ending workforce discrimination against women*, KPMG Australia, 2018, accessed 8 December 2020.
- ² KPMG, *The cost of violence against women and their children in Australia: Final Report*, report prepared for the Commonwealth Department of Social Services (DSS), DSS, 2016, accessed 20 July 2020.
- ³ Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), *Change the course: National report on sexual assault and sexual harassment at Australian universities*, AHRC, 2017, accessed 2 February 2019.
- ⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Personal Safety Survey, Australia, 2016*, ABS, 2017, accessed 18 January 2021.
- ⁵ Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2016*, Productivity Commission, 2016, accessed 18 September 2020; Our Watch, *Primary prevention of family violence against people from LGBTI communities: An analysis of existing research*, Our Watch, 2017, accessed 20 January 2021.
- ⁶ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), *Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story 2019*, AIHW, 2019, doi:10.25816/5ebcc837fa7ea.
- ⁷ Victorian Trades Hall Council, *Understanding Family Violence as a Workplace Issue: Your Guide*, Victorian Trades Hall Council, 2018, accessed 4 February 2021.
- ⁸ Victorian Trades Hall Council, *Stop gendered violence at work*, Victorian Trades Hall Council, 2020.
- ⁹ KPMG, *The cost of violence*.
- ¹⁰ SCRGSP, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage*.
- ¹¹ AHRC, *Working without fear: results of the Sexual Harassment National Telephone Survey*, AHRC, 2012, accessed 11 March 2020.
- ¹² Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), *The business case for gender equality*, WGEA, 2018, accessed 2 November 2020.
- ¹³ Victorian Government, *Building Gender Equality: Victoria's Women in Construction Strategy 2019–2022*, Victorian Government, 2019, accessed 15 October.
- ¹⁴ WGEA, *The business case for gender equality*.
- ¹⁵ See 'Further reading' in *Educating for Equality: A Whole-of-University Approach*.
- ¹⁶ E Fulu, A Kerr-Wilson and J Lang, *What works to prevent violence against women and girls? Evidence Review of interventions to prevent violence against women and girls*, Medical Research Council, South Africa, 2014, accessed 18 February 2021.
- ¹⁷ Universities Australia, *Guidelines for university responses to sexual assault and sexual harassment*, Universities Australia, 2018; P Sen, *What will it take? Promoting cultural change to end sexual harassment*, UN Women, 2019, accessed 5 June 2020.
- ¹⁸ Victorian Government, *Building Gender Equality*.
- ¹⁹ Our Watch, *Our Watch statement on the COVID-19 crisis*, 19 March 2020, Our Watch website, accessed 4 April 2020.