

# Gender Equity & Diversity

## Guide for Meetings, Conferences & Workshops



Ensuring JCU is an inclusive and respectful places requires gender equity and diversity conversations to be an everyday part of the work we do across the institution. This guide is designed to assist staff who plan and host meetings, conferences and workshops to ensure these events are respectful and inclusive, and to encourage staff to consider gender equity and diversity in their work.

### Know about JCU's Gender Equity Commitment

JCU has articulated its [commitment to gender equity](#). Review this commitment before organising any meetings, conferences or workshops. How can your meeting, workshop or conference actively demonstrate JCU's commitment?

### Points to Consider

- Think about the composition of your meetings – is there appropriate gender balance among attendees?
- Are meetings considerate of participants who work part-time in terms of the days and hours they are scheduled?
- Do meetings occur during core business hours so as not to disadvantage participants with responsibilities outside their JCU work?
- Do all participants have equal 'air time'? Is the Chair of the meeting ensuring all voices are heard? Ensure all members are encouraged to participate.
- If there are power differences among participants be mindful of how this could impact participation and adjust the chairing style appropriately by inviting members to speak equally.
- Ensure that previously 'gendered roles' are not reinforced. For example, ensure women alone are not tasked with arranging tea, coffee or catering, nor tasked with cleaning or setting up for the meeting if this is not ordinarily their role. If this work needs to be done, rotate tasks equally among participants.
- Allow appropriate meeting preparation time. Don't assume that all participants can review materials the night or morning before the meeting.
- Pay attention to the words, images, and examples that you use in meetings. Avoid images, memes, or video clips in presentations or meeting materials that rely on stereotypes (see the [guide for training](#) for further tips).
- Inviting participants to add to the agenda prior to the meeting can ensure discussions remain structured with equal opportunity for contribution.
- For long virtual meetings or online webinars ensure adequate comfort breaks are provided.

All staff at JCU are worthy of respect and we seek to create the conditions for them to participate fully in an inclusive university.

If your meeting participants might have caring responsibilities outside of school hours, aim to schedule meetings between 9.30am and 2.30pm

Make sure to evenly distribute or rotate;

- Meeting participation
- Distribution of actions
- Note or minute taking responsibilities
- Responsibility for refreshments, catering or cleaning

If you use titles for someone, use them for everyone, like "This is Professor Lily Chan, and this is Professor Michael Jones". If you're not sure about titles, pronunciation, or affiliations, check in advance.

## Virtual Meetings

Online or virtual meetings add another level of complexity in terms of gender equity. With limited opportunity to rely on body language extra onus is placed on the convenor or chair to ensure all parties have the opportunity to contribute. [Research](#) has shown that men interrupt women 33% more than they would interrupt their male colleagues. Other research shows that women students are less likely to participate in a classroom but more likely to participate via discussion board so using the chat function may enable quieter participants to still participate, particularly if the meeting is large or the discussion is robust.

It is the responsibility of the Chair to manage contributions and use technology tools such as the mute function or hand raising function to establish speaking [protocols](#) and ensure equal 'air time'. Tips for how to manage participants during a Zoom are available [here](#).

Asking specific people to respond to questions may also enable women to participate. For instance, the Chair might ask if anyone has anything to add to create equal airtime however what may be more effective is to ask women specifically, "What do you think, Amy?" as this will have a very different outcome.

[Women frequently report](#) that their comments in a meeting are ignored, but when a man repeats the same point subsequently, the point is then taken up for discussion by the group. When this occurs, it can be helpful to thank the second speaker for reiterating the women's contribution. "Thanks John, yes as Amanda had just observed, the ....."

## Conferences and Workshops

Conferences and workshops can present additional opportunities to ensure that gender equity is practiced.

Consider whether there is equal gender representation among panellists or guest speakers. If you are invited to present at a conference, ask the organiser about the gender balance of the program and highlight your commitment to diversity. Read more here about the [Panel Pledge](#).

Ensure the facilities and timings selected for the conferences or workshops are appropriate for those who may have caring or other requirements.

If pre-workshop or conference networking functions are planned, or a conference attendance requires interstate travel, determine if on-site crèche or childcare can be made available for participants. If not, highlight a few local childcare options in your conference information pack.

## Plan Ahead

Think critically about the ways that gender inequity might manifest in the context of the topic your discussions are about. These will vary widely between meetings, but chances are high that the topic you are discussing has some gendered implications.

How can your meetings incorporate a focus on JCU staff working together to change this inequity?

## Further advice

Further support and advice is available via email to [gear@jcu.edu.au](mailto:gear@jcu.edu.au) or [staffequitydiversity@jcu.edu.au](mailto:staffequitydiversity@jcu.edu.au)