



# Employment Matter Guidelines

## Training and Development

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## Introduction

**Successful organisations recognise the critical importance of investing in their people and increasing their value to their company. It is quality people who provide companies with their competitive advantage.**

Providing an increasing number of female employees with training and development opportunities is a critical success factor in enabling your female employees to contribute to the best of their potential.

Keep in mind that women are not a homogenous group but reflect the growing diversity of the larger population. By recognising and valuing women's differences (such as age, religion, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, disability, sexual orientation, etc) and considering their needs in shaping training and development opportunities, your business stands to benefit from the diversity of their contributions.

The information provided here aims to assist you to start thinking about:

- How you could analyse your workplace to identify any training and development issues for women.
- Suggested actions you could take to address the training and development issues for women you have identified.

Not all issues, actions and examples suggested here are relevant to your organisation. It is up to you to decide what is appropriate and relevant for your organisation to consider when analysing your workplace to identify issues for women, and taking actions to address these.



## Analysing Your Workplace

To assist you analyse your workplace to identify training and development issues for women, we suggest you:

- Revisit your workforce profile to find where your female employees are.
- Consult with your employees.
- Examine your existing training and development policies and practices. Different organisations have different opportunities, depending upon their business needs. However, some examples are:
  - Formal courses (held internally and externally)
  - Critical task force involvement
  - Mentoring schemes
  - Peer support programs
  - Job rotation and multi-skilling
  - Secondments
  - Development assignments
  - Shadowing assignments
  - Temporary transfers and acting roles
  - Multi-disciplinary teams, and
  - Internships.



### Questions to Identify Training and Development Issues for Women

**Remember, your organisation is unique and may have unique issues. However, the following questions may be helpful when analysing your workplace.**

?	Are people able to access a range of training opportunities, for example, both technical and management training, regardless of their gender or family/other responsibilities?	?	Do both men and women get high risk, high visibility development assignments?
?	Are decisions made about who attends training transparent and gender-neutral? Would decision-making processes withstand the rigour of a review by an independent third party?	?	Do part-time staff get trained equitably compared with their full-time peers?
?	Is training offered on the basis of identified training needs, for example, through performance appraisals, training needs analyses, etc?	?	Are similar resources invested in developing your female staff, compared with your male staff, in a given organisational area/level?
?	Are the percentages of female, male, pregnant and temporary employees who receive training representative of their employment in your workplace?	?	Is there a culture where learning is seen as ongoing and part of everyone's job?
?	Are your take-up rates for female employees and their male colleagues similar for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supervisory and leadership programs?</li> <li>- People management courses?</li> <li>- Technical courses?</li> </ul>	?	If you find differences in training and development between men and women, why is this so? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is there a formal consistent approach to offering training and development across the organisation?</li> </ul>
?	Are percentages of female and male employees who are studying externally comparable?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are training and development opportunities allocated to staff objectively (eg, on the basis of their duties, skill development needs, career interests, etc)?</li> <li>- Is training held at a time when employees with family or other responsibilities (for example, related to community responsibilities or religious practice) will easily be able to attend?</li> </ul>
?	Are you using skills audits to identify existing skills of employees that could be tapped for professional development and organisational benefit? (eg. language skills/ cultural experiences of immigrant women?)		



## Suggested Actions to Take to Address Training and Development Issues for Women

To **comply** with the Act, you need to take actions to address the training and development issues for women you identified. You do not need to do everything all at once and you can aim to achieve equal opportunity over time.

To be **waived** from reporting in following years, you must demonstrate that you have taken all reasonably practicable measures to address training and development issues for women you have identified (for example, your issue might be no women in management roles).

**The following suggestions will help you start thinking about actions you could take to address any training and development issues you have identified.**

Keep in mind that:

- Not all of these actions may be relevant to your organisation. You will need to decide whether you choose to do all, some, or none of the suggested actions, and whether you wish to tailor suggested actions to suit the needs of your workplace.
- If your workplace analysis demonstrates your organisation has no issues for women in this employment matter, you would not need to take any actions.



### Developing Policy and Procedures

- Put in place a general policy on how training and development opportunities are provided.
- The policy could also include an organisational commitment to training about workplace diversity issues (such as valuing employee differences, managing diversity and work/life balance).
- Develop a quality, consistent process for providing training and development opportunities (eg linked to performance appraisals or skills audit etc).
- Monitor both female and male employees' access to training and development opportunities to identify inequities which may be experienced by particular groups of women, for example, women with language difficulties, or with disabilities.



### Reviewing Access to Training and Development Opportunities

- Review the emphasis you place on different courses (for example, people management, core technical, business skills training) for both your female and male employees.
- Identify the jobs men and women choose not to do, and investigate why these choices are being made (eg sales jobs with bonus schemes which encourage staff to poach customers from each other, inappropriate entertaining venues being used for customers etc).



- Survey employees about the equity of training and development opportunities.
- Identify who is and is not taking up training and development opportunities. Make sure that access to opportunities is not impeded by unintentional barriers, such as limited English language skills preventing an employee from upgrading other skills. (See [Workplace Diversity Case Studies](#) of PSMP website).

### Providing Training and Development Opportunities

- Require all staff to have a career discussion with their manager/supervisor that includes an annual training and development plan.
- Train your managers to effectively and objectively use the performance and development process for both men and women (eg how to give positive and negative performance feedback to female and male staff).
- Encourage managers to discuss training and development interests and opportunities for the future with both female and male employees.
- Hold managers accountable for implementing the development plan by including it in their workplace and/or performance agreement.
- Challenge management assumptions about why women are not provided with the same access to training and development as their male peers.
- Provide employees with access to different modes of training (eg on-the-job, rotation, coaching, distance education).
- Encourage staff to participate in learning experiences that build diverse skills and broaden career options.
- Provide managers and employees with diversity training, covering diversity awareness and diversity management issues such as teamwork, conflict resolution, and interpersonal skills.
- Suggested training bodies:
  - Australian National Training Authority (ANTA)  
<http://www.anta.gov.au/>  
ANTA is a Commonwealth statutory authority providing a national focus for vocational education and training. Training is available for all employees from entry-level and apprentices through to management. Industry-based training is also available.
  - Industry Training Advisory Board (ITAB)  
<http://www.directory.actu.asn.au/index.php3?page=education&datatype1=ITAB>  
Provides a directory of industry-specific training bodies.

### Providing Access to Training to Employees with Family Responsibilities

- Provide training when both your male and female employees can access it, for example, during normal work hours.
- Consider paying for/subsidising dependant care costs, if staff have family responsibilities that prevent them attending training held out of normal work hours.



- Hold training courses on days when employees who work flexibly can be available for training.



### Developing High Potential Employees

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- Encourage managers to coach talented female and male employees in their group.
- Use a tracking system to identify talented female and male employees and assist them gain a broad range of experience that will help their career advancement.
- Ensure both female and male employees get on-the-job experience in functional and line management positions.
- Encourage men and women to consider a wide range of career options within the organisation, such as in non-traditional areas.
- Provide both female and male high potential staff with training and development experiences that will assist them to fast track their career.
- Provide internal and/or external career development training.
- Tailor additional training to address any skill gaps identified in skills audits.
- Allow all staff a particular allocation of training of their choice.
- Support both female and male staff wishing to take on formal study, for example, management support, financial support, and time support.
- Make managers accountable for developing both female and male staff through their performance appraisal or bonus system.

“We identified a lack of mentoring and networking opportunities for women and decided on the Ultimate and Top Steps programs – run by an outside group - to help us.

“One woman was promoted within a month of completing the course and another was sent on a 12 month overseas assignment.”

Helen Hovenga  
Personnel Manager  
Mars Inc



### Supporting High Potential Employees

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- Ask senior managers to act as mentors to both female and male employees. Consider the benefits of having mentors from different backgrounds available to provide mentoring support.
- Put mechanisms in place to hold managers accountable for supporting employees when they are placed in a new assignment (eg regular feedback sessions, personal development plans).
- Ask senior women to act as role models to encourage women to continue to train and develop. Again, consider the benefits of being able to provide role models that correspond to women’s diversity.
- Support attendance at women’s network functions – or set up your own women’s network – where female staff can hear from, meet and be inspired by a range of other women.



### Recognising Talent for Training and Development

- Check you are investing in both female and male staff to improve their effectiveness in their current job and enhance their future development.
- Conduct skills audits to identify existing skills of employees that could be further developed for professional and organisational benefits (eg, recognise and develop second language skills of immigrant women).
- Review requirements for formal qualifications. Ensure that these and/or other credentials are not an unnecessary barrier to further training and advancement. Consider qualifications acquired overseas where relevant.
- Recognise prior learning so that existing skills and informal education are recognised.
- Review your processes to ensure they are inclusive of women's life experiences and skills as well as men's.

At Sea World, management has overcome gender perceptions and stereotypes to train and promote women into non-traditional roles: as well as a polar bear trainer, there's a female security guard, horticultural trainee, diver and helicopter pilot.



### Communicating Training and Development Opportunities

- Advertise training opportunities widely, not just within those areas judged to be immediately relevant.
- Provide training for managers and supervisors on work/life issues (eg, needs of part-time and shift workers, and flexible work considerations).
- Use training forums to 'mainstream' EEO issues (eg, cover 'valuing and managing difference' and 'harassment-free workplaces' in induction training)
- Communicate company commitment to valuing and managing differences through induction training, and by providing diversity training for managers and employees at all levels of the organisation.
- Encourage managers to discuss training and development opportunities and interests when providing feedback or conducting performance appraisals.
- Publicise your training and development policy/procedures widely in the organisation. Consider making them available in other languages for employees who have difficulty with English language fluency.
- Ensure both female and male employees, and employees on long-term leave have access to information on training and development policy/procedures. Educate managers on how to allocate training and development opportunities effectively and in a non-discriminatory way.
- Hold managers accountable for developing female and male employees by including this requirement in managers' workplace and performance agreements.
- Encourage managers to lead by example with respect to providing equal opportunity in training and development.



### Predominantly Male Workplace Issues

An equal opportunity program must deal with the specific needs and issues of your organisation. Such a program identifies and outlines the issues you are addressing and the initiatives you will put in place to achieve results. The most significant issues facing organisations with a majority of male employees may be:

- A lack of applications from female employees.
- A low proportion of women in management.
- A low proportion of women in non-traditional occupational categories eg. trades, labouring, plant and machinery operators.
- Problems retaining female employees.

?	Is information about training available and accessible?	?	Have you identified a gap in skills/experience of women wanting to progress into management?
?	Are trainers and training materials non-sexist?	?	Do you have a mentoring scheme for women?
?	Have you identified the training needs of staff?	?	Have you introduced cross-skilling and job rotation?
?	Do you encourage women to do in-house training?	?	Have you trained all employees on the nature and purpose of an equal opportunity program?
?	Do you encourage women to attend management courses?	?	Are employees supportive of the program?



### Predominantly Female Workplace Issues

EOWA is aware that some organisations have been implementing very good Human Resources policies for a number of years but have under reported on this information because they don't see it as relevant to equal opportunity for women. All HR policies and practices, whether formal or informal, affect all the people in your organisation and, therefore, are relevant to equal opportunity for women.

?	Do women access training in a proportion that is reflective of the total number of women employed?	?	Would it be useful for women staff to attend training on identifying and valuing their skills?
?	Are there particular female-dominated occupations that have less access to training? If so, can anything be done to rectify this?	?	Do you have funding allocated for training?



## Case Studies

All case studies are available from [www.eowa.gov.au](http://www.eowa.gov.au)

### Mixed Gender

At **John Wiley and Sons**, an educational textbook publishing and distribution company, annual performance appraisal and development assessment was not seen as a fair process by some staff. In addition, there was a lack of information about internal training resources. What did they do about these issues? [Read on!](#)

**Sara Lee Household and Body Care Australia** was one of Business Review Weekly's Top 20 Australian Employers in 2001. It is also on EOWA's Employer of Choice for Women list and was a finalist in the 2001 EOWA Outstanding EEO Practice for the Advancement of Women Business Achievement Award category. [Why? Find out here.](#)

**Sea World's** HR Manager knows only too well that it is important that women want to be given choices and that everyone needs broad-based skills to allow them to grow and move in employment. This ideology has resulted in a staff member appointed as qualified Polar Bear trainer through training and development opportunities. [Find out how you can do this for your business too.](#)

### Predominantly Male

**Baulderstone Hornibrook**, a large predominantly male construction company, become conscious that female employees were not receiving regular performance reviews and feedback and to support the career development of female employees. How did they find this out? What did they do? Did it work? [Find out more!](#)

**SAP Australia Pty Limited**, a major information technology business, has always believed that there is a need for career paths for traditionally female held, non-skilled positions and that encourage is needed to establish career mobility from functions such as administration to other roles within the company. Their beliefs have now become reality. [How? Find out here.](#)

### Predominantly Female

At the **Australian National Credit Union (ANCU)**, staff and customers are grouped together and collectively called members. The commitment to staff and customers shines through with no issues recognised in training and development, however the ANCU believe that there is a need to continue to provide staff with training and development. [Find out exactly what they are doing.](#)

**Autoliv Australia's** aim was to create more promotional opportunities for female staff. Now, women mainly fill the Engineering Production Certificate course, and they have two women team leaders who started on the production line. How can you do this in your business? [Read on!](#)

At **Bevilles Jewellers** staff committee groups and staff surveys identified that regular, constructive feedback on performance was needed with staff. Therefore, development needs were identified needs and strategies implement for improvement and change. Performance of new recruits was so great that 78% of Christmas casuals were offered continuing employment through the following year. [Read on...](#)



**Country Road** analysed their workplace profile, information from enterprise bargaining focus groups, exit interview data and data on length of service and salary and realise that they needed to improve career development opportunities in the Sales area, where 76% of women work. [Find out what they did ...](#)

**Jetset Tours Pty Ltd** experienced a difficult period with economic restrictions and a need for economic survival and change management. Through analysis of their workplace profile and focus groups, Jetset needed to modify training hours to enable improvement in employee attendance and train potential leaders in leadership and management skills. This resulted in senior roles being filled by existing female employees. [Read more...](#)



## Related Links and Resources

### Training and Development

Australian National Training Authority (ANTA)

<http://www.anta.gov.au/>

ANTA is a Commonwealth statutory authority providing a national focus for vocational education and training. Training is available for all employees from entry-level and apprentices through to management. Industry-based training is also available.

Industry Training Advisory Board (ITAB)

<http://www.directory.actu.asn.au/index.php3?page=education&datatype1=ITAB>

Provides a directory of industry-specific training bodies.

Council for Equal Opportunity in Employment

<http://www.ceoe.com.au/>

The Council for Equal Opportunity in Employment Limited is Australia's leading diversity organisation. We focus on creating workplaces where differences are respected and valued; and there is no discrimination or harassment.

[Diversity Australia](#)

[www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au)

[www.diversityaustralia.gov.au](http://www.diversityaustralia.gov.au) is a newly developed portal for diversity management, directed mainly to business, including business educators. The site is provided by the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and complements another new portal that has a government and community focus. Both sites will be available in April 2002.

[A Business Case for Diversity](#)

Making a strong case for benefits of workplace diversity, this report elaborates on considerations and strategies (related to leading, recruiting, training, etc) for achieving and managing a diverse workforce. (CANADA)

[Workplace Diversity: Case Studies](#)

Examples of business training practices that worked (as highlighted by the Public Service and Merit Protection Commission.)

*"...An audit revealed that two thirds of factory staff were below the level of English language needed to undertake TAFE accredited training for the workplace. Since providing English language training for this group, the company is finding demand for training has exceed availability and is also reaping business savings related to accreditation."* (AUST)

### Leadership Development

[Catalyst: Research – Women of Color](#)

Reports from a 3-part study of the impact of racial/ethnic background on opportunities and barriers for women in management. Examined issues of organisational cultures, advancement opportunities, etc. faced by African-American, Asian-American and Latina women and explored 'tools' such as mentors, role models, and personal resilience. (USA)

[Mentoring Relationships Through the Lens of Race and Gender](#)

A 4-page 'Briefing Note' from Simmons Graduate School of Management that looks at the mentoring experiences of women and, in particular, looks at how racial/ethnic background impacts on the experiences and challenges of women. Draws on the 'Women of Color' research study from Catalyst. (USA)



### [Chief Executive Commitment: The Key to Enhancing Women's Advancement](#)

This study explores the gap in perception between women employees and chief executives concerning women's advances in business world. Part of the Gender Diversity Tool Kit developed by the Conference Board of Canada. (CANADA)

### [Effective Leadership: An Assessment Tool](#) (pdf)

How effective is leadership in your organisation? The following two templates (organisational leadership and personal leadership) provide a tool that you can use to assess how you are doing – a 'starter set' to help you take a quick pulse check and map a plan for action. (CANADA)

### [The Leadership Network](#)

A public sector website that provides links to tools and resources on leadership, equity and diversity, and other issues, suited to public and private sector application. (CANADA)

### [Leadership and HRM](#)

An address to the 1998 National Convention of the Australian Human Resources Institute that poses useful questions about organisational leadership and how to support it. (AUST)