

### INFORMATION SOURCES

**Fact sheet:** *Equal opportunity* [worksite.actu.org.au/equal-opportunity](http://worksite.actu.org.au/equal-opportunity)

**Video:** *Hot Chick* [worksite.actu.org.au](http://worksite.actu.org.au)

Equal opportunity is about ensuring that everyone in the workplace gets a fair go and is not discriminated against.

That means making sure that important things like pay and promotion are based on skills, ability and work performance rather than things like gender, religion, political opinion or race. It wouldn't be fair if the only people who could get the job or promotion were...

### Activity 1. Check out the Equal opportunity fact sheet

Take a couple of minutes to look at the fact sheet. What are the basic rights and wrongs about discrimination at work?

Look at these statements and say which ones are RIGHT or WRONG according to equal opportunity at work.

People of Asian background are not suitable	<b>right</b> or <b>wrong</b>
No Muslims, Jews or Hindus need apply	<b>right</b> or <b>wrong</b>
Good communications skills required	<b>right</b> or <b>wrong</b>
Only married people with children need apply	<b>right</b> or <b>wrong</b>
Don't apply if you voted for Tony Abbott	<b>right</b> or <b>wrong</b>
Don't apply if you voted for Kevin Rudd	<b>right</b> or <b>wrong</b>
Suitable qualifications and experience required	<b>right</b> or <b>wrong</b>
Only people born in Australia need apply	<b>right</b> or <b>wrong</b>
We only hire 15 year olds	<b>right</b> or <b>wrong</b>
Computer and internet skills required	<b>right</b> or <b>wrong</b>
This job is not suitable for parents	<b>right</b> or <b>wrong</b>

When companies advertise for employees they usually say the skills they want and also the type of experience. This is a good idea because it encourages suitable applicants to apply. But it is important that the selection criteria not discriminate in ways that are not allowed under the Equal Opportunity laws.

**\* Career in fashion \***  
 Want to work at one of the trendiest clothes shops in Australia? Chicks HQ Fashion is looking for an enthusiastic and lively retail assistant to join our team on a part-time basis. Only hot chicks need apply. Fashion flair and personality required.

**Video: Watch the Hot Chick video**

**Activity 2. From this list, ~~cross out~~ the selection criteria you think might be wrong**

Ability to communicate with customers	Good looking	Tall, over 180 cm	Dress size less than 10
Appreciation of fashion trends	Reliable and punctual	Able to use a computer in a retail setting	Single (not married no boyfriend)
Under 21 years of age	Able to do basic cash transactions	Long hair (preferably blonde)	Well presented

What could an applicant seeking a career in fashion do in response to this advert?

- Look elsewhere
- Ring and ask if they are joking
- Dress up as a hot chick
- Call the Equal Opportunity Commission and register a complaint
- Apply anyway

Briefly explain your answer.

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**TRICKY QUESTION:** Every year dozens of casual staff are hired to play Santa in shopping centres. Santas are traditionally white, male and old – is that a fair basis for employment selection? What do you think? What can be done about situations like this?

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**Activity 2. For each of the possible questions in a job interview, say if the question is fair or unfair, give a reason for your answer in the column**

Possible question	Fair	Unfair
Have you had any similar job experience?		
Do you plan to have a baby soon?		
What relevant training or education have you had?		
Do you have a boy or girl friend?		
What is your religion?		
Who do you vote for?		

**What is an appropriate response to an inappropriate question?**

It's always important to be polite in job interviews, but you are entitled to say that some questions are not fair or irrelevant. For example, if asked if you have a boyfriend or girlfriend, you could say that you can't see how that could be relevant in this job interview.

### Activity 3.

Visit the Humans Rights Commission website at [www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)

[humanrights.gov.au/work-out-your-rights-info-employees](http://humanrights.gov.au/work-out-your-rights-info-employees)

[humanrights.gov.au/complaints-information-young-people](http://humanrights.gov.au/complaints-information-young-people)

Look at the information in the 'Complaints' section, especially the information for young people and work rights.

Make a list of types of discrimination that the Human Rights Commission can take action on (there are at least 8 topics listed).

1
2
3
4
5

In these examples listed on the website, which type of discrimination is involved with each?

*Tanya works as a receptionist and claims her supervisor constantly makes comments about her clothes and her body, leans over her and offers to take her out for a drink. Tanya has told him she is not interested but he keeps hassling her.*

Sex	Disability	Race	Age	Sexual preference
Religion	Criminal record	Trade union activity	Political opinion	Sexually harassed

*Tarik went to a local nightclub with his friends but they were refused entry. He claims they were told that only people aged over 20 were allowed in to the club.*

Sex	Disability	Race	Age	Sexual preference
Religion	Criminal record	Trade union activity	Political opinion	Sexually harassed

*Michael, who is Aboriginal, was researching information on the Internet for his university course and found an internet site which allowed people to publish offensive comments about Aboriginal people.*

Sex	Disability	Race	Age	Sexual preference
Religion	Criminal record	Trade union activity	Political opinion	Sexually harassed

*Julie uses a wheelchair and cannot get into her local video store because of a step at the front door.*

Sex	Disability	Race	Age	Sexual preference
Religion	Criminal record	Trade union activity	Political opinion	Sexually harassed

## Stop pretending: dressing sexy comes with a price

By Miranda Devine, *Sydney Morning Herald*

Good on Sarah Freeman, the 20-year-old Melbourne assistant store manager who refused to wear the provocative t-shirt her employer provided for her.

Westco Jeans had issued staff the skin-tight, v-neck t-shirts with "Stop Pretending You Don't Want Me" emblazoned across the chest. The accompanying memo instructed: "NO t-shirt equals NO work. Any team member that does not dress correctly will be sent home."

Freeman was sent home last weekend for refusing to wear the t-shirt after a customer made lewd comments and stared at her breasts. "I said, 'Hello,'" she told *The Age* newspaper, "and he said hello to my face, and then he had a good look at my chest and said, 'Well, hell-o', and I ran away."

After a public outcry, the company withdrew the t-shirts. "If you put slogans like that on a t-shirt," the federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner said, "you can't expect your staff not to be harassed."



## Do more (extension activities)

1. Change the Chicks HQ Fashion job advertisement to make it fairer.
2. Find out what people can do if they think a job advertisement or selection process goes against equal opportunity principles.
3. Play detective and use job websites to try to find job advertisements you think may be unfair. Report any finding backs to the class – explaining why these adverts go against equal opportunity.
4. Organise a classroom debate. Have two teams with three people on each and, using one of the examples provided, debate in turns on the topic: 'This job advertisement is unfair'.

### Receptionist Wanted

Fantastic Fitness is looking for a fit and energetic person to join the reception team at our renowned gym. The successful applicant would take customers sales, do administrative duties and be the first point of contact for patrons. Prospective employees must appear fit and be able to work flexible hours.

### Santa Wanted

Cityside Shopping Centre is looking for an experienced actor to play Santa Claus during the Christmas season.

Must resemble the traditional look of Santa Claus and be able to speak with similar voice.