



Do you feel like you are being treated unfairly at school, TAFE or university?

Could it be discrimination?

Discrimination is when you are treated unfairly because of something about you. The law says this could be something like your race, age, or sex. These are called 'personal attributes'.

There are a lot of different personal attributes. Race, age, and impairment or disability are only three of them.

Discrimination can happen while you're at school, TAFE, university, or another learning institution. It could happen in many different situations. For example:

- during class
- in group assessments
- when receiving unfair feedback from teachers or supervisors
- being given a lower mark for deserving work.

Racial discrimination

This is when your teacher, professor or classmates treat you unfairly because of your race. This could be because of your skin colour, the way you look, what you wear, how you speak or where you come from.

For example, Cathy is at primary school and would like to learn to play the violin. She has been told she has a good natural ability by the music teacher but needs to borrow a school instrument so that she can practice at home. The music co-ordinator said that she is not prepared to loan Cathy a school instrument, because Aboriginal students always lose or wreck the instruments.



Age discrimination

This happens when you are treated unfairly because of your age. This may be because you are 'too young' or 'too old'.

Impairment discrimination

This is when you are treated unfairly because of an impairment you have. There are many different types of impairment, but can include things like:

- intellectual
- learning
- physical
- sensory
- mental health.

Impairments can be permanent or temporary. They could be conditions that people are born with, that they develop at a later stage in life, or from an injury they have suffered.

For example, Josh has a significant visual disability. He is making subject selections for year 11 and wants to do legal studies. The year co-ordinator told him that he cannot do that subject. He says that the teacher does not have enough time to help him as he has a visual impairment.

Indirect discrimination

Sometimes discrimination can be indirect. This usually happens where a policy applies to everybody (and this may at first seem equal and fair), but a person has a personal attribute that disadvantages them.

When is it discrimination?

It is important to note that being treated unfairly may not necessarily be discrimination. Similarly, while being treated unfairly could be discrimination, it may not be against the law.

If you feel you are being discriminated against, it's important for you to reach out for more information and help. Some of the mobs below may be able to help.

To make a complaint, contact the Queensland Human Rights Commission here:

Email:

General: info@qhrc.qld.gov.au

Complaint information: enquiries@qhrc.qld.gov.au

Phone:

1300 130 670 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4:30pm)

Website:

<https://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au>

Note that the Commission cannot advocate on your behalf and you may need to seek legal representation.

The Commission can provide information on how to make a complaint.

The organisations below may be able to provide advice on your situation:

Youth Law Australia - 1800 950 570 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm (AEST)) or email advice@lawmail.org.au.

Indigenous education

<https://www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/indigenous/>

Student services

<https://www.education.qld.gov.au/student-services/>

YFS respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's first peoples and the traditional owners/custodians of the land on which we meet and work. We recognise the important role they have within community and country, and we pay our respects to the Elders of this land past and present.