

CQC²T Equity plan

CQC²T values diversity and believes that an inclusive and collaborative culture underpins research and teaching excellence.

Our goal is to create a Centre where students and staff are accepted, regardless of their gender, disability, cultural background, sexual orientation or gender identity, enabling them to reach their full potential.

Certain groups, such as women or ethnic minorities, are under-represented in science careers, and the disparity worsens with seniority. The disparity in the proportion of female researchers is particularly pronounced in physics, and even more so in quantum physics, where there is only a 5% ratio of females in certain fields.

As a leading quantum technology organisation in Australia, CQC²T recognises that we have a responsibility to try and address the gender imbalance in our discipline. Our plan has four key areas:

- Addressing the pipeline
- Equity in recruitment
- Supporting career progression; and
- Improving workplace culture

Below are the key initiatives in each of these areas. Our goal is to achieve real, quantifiable change in each of these areas over the seven-year life of the Centre. As such we will monitor the success of these measures and publish the results in the Annual Report.

Addressing the pipeline

Since the inception of the Centre in 2018, we have endeavoured to address the gender imbalance in science. From as early as primary school, girls are disproportionately diverted off the pathway to scientific careers. As a result, the Centre will focus on developing school Open Days to its facilities across its nodes. In 2018, an Open Day was established and trialled at UNSW, with a plan to target both primary and secondary school students. This builds on other existing initiatives, such as the annual Griffith University/CQC²T outreach program for young women. Each year the Centre aims to add 1-2 nodes with active Open Days targeting female students to visit our facilities and learn about quantum science and engineering.

Equity in recruitment

CQC²T is committed to the principle of merit-based selection where the best people are recruited based on their skills, knowledge and experience. We will implement Centre-wide hiring guidelines aimed to improve diversity in both the student and staff cohorts.

Initiatives

- Each selection committee must contain an observer from that node's equity committee who will ensure these guidelines are followed.
- Each selection committee must consist of at least 30% female members. We do not request a 50/50 quota to not overburden the existing female staff in the Centre.
- Members of the equity committee will be required to undergo training on equity principles in hiring and the effect of unconscious bias in decision-making at their node. Such training is available at all host institutions.
- All CQC²T position advertisements must contain a statement describing the commitment in our workplaces to improving diversity and providing flexible working conditions (subject to individual university policies).
- We will implement a 50/50 policy. All candidate shortlists must have a 50/50 gender balance. If this ratio is not achieved, the selection committee chair must provide written justification to the equity committee. This should include a plan for how a 50/50 ratio will be achieved in future hiring.
- The Centre will offer competitive scholarship top-ups specifically for female PhD students to grow the female postgraduate cohort (subject to individual university policies).
- The Centre will offer competitive scholarships specifically for female Honours/Masters students to grow the female student cohort (subject to individual university policies).

Tracking

- We will track the representation of different groups, including women, in our Centre and present the results annually at the Centre workshop.
- For each hire, we will record the proportion of female applicants and the gender of the chosen candidate. We will also track whether a 50/50 shortlist was achieved.

Targets

- Improve the proportion of women in our Centre, both staff and students

Supporting career progression

Women, particularly those raising families, face barriers to career progression in research. We aim to remove some of these barriers and help women to progress to more senior roles.

Initiatives

- The Centre will run mentoring sessions at our annual workshop, where PhD students and early career researchers can talk individually with Chief Investigators from across the Centre about career progression. One of these sessions will be specifically for female researchers.
- CQC²T will participate in the jointly organised of Career Days together with other ARC Centres of Excellence and run quantum-specific events.

- The Centre relies on the host universities for travel support to cover childcare costs or family travel costs to enable researchers with caring responsibilities (both male and female) to attend key conferences.
- The Centre will assist female early career researchers to obtain competitive bursaries from their host institutions to attend professional development events. If such programs do not exist, the relevant Centre node coordinator can directly request support from the executive.

Tracking

- We will record take-up of mentoring, travel & development support, and monitor participation in Centre-organised career events

Targets

Strong participation of early career staff in mentoring and career advice programs. Strong participation of female staff at conferences, ensuring that participation is not hindered by carer obligations.

Improving workplace culture

We recognise that people do their best work in an environment where they feel included and where their contributions are valued. We aim to promote an inclusive, diverse culture not only in our own workplaces but also at any events supported by CQC²T.

Promoting an inclusive workplace involves such simple measures as actively moderating group discussions to ensure interactions are respectful and all members can equally participate

Initiatives

- We will promote family-friendly workplaces:
 - CQC²T seminars will be required to occur between 10 am and 3 pm, and Chief Investigators will be encouraged to schedule meetings between these times.
 - Subject to university policies, children will be welcome in our workplaces, particularly during school holidays.
 - We will consider school holiday periods when planning workshops, conferences or events.
- We will educate Chief Investigators on the benefits of flexible work arrangements and encourage researchers to take up these arrangements when needed.
- We will actively encourage Chief Investigators to take up university-offered training on creating inclusive workplaces, e.g. on LGBTQIA+ awareness, cultural awareness, physical and mental health, and gendered language
- We will educate Centre members on equity and diversity issues in regular all staff communications and during dedicated sessions at Centre-wide events such as the annual workshop.
- We will aim to ensure that all events hosted or sponsored by CQC²T to conform to event guidelines, including an appropriate gender ratio for all invited speakers/panel members

- Subject to university policy, we will implement an exit interview for departing staff, to find out their experience of the workplace culture.

Tracking

- We will monitor the workplace culture in CQC²T with regular surveys, results will be disseminated to the Centre annually.

Targets

- High take-up of the culture survey
- All CQC²T events meet equity guidelines