



SAEF

Securing Antarctica's Environmental Future

Australian Research Council Special Research Initiative

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan

Introduction

Securing Antarctica's Environmental Future (SAEF), an ARC Special Research Initiative (SRI) in Excellence in Antarctic Science, is developing the future Antarctic research workforce. Over seven years, SAEF will directly fund the training and development of around 150 postdoctoral fellows, postgraduate researchers, Honours students, research assistants, and professional support staff.

SAEF has a fundamental commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion and expects participants to uphold these values when representing SAEF. SAEF promotes a safe and inclusive environment for its diverse community. It celebrates and recognises its community's diversity of identities bring crucial experience, knowledge, and perspectives. Our success and impact will be driven by the diversity of backgrounds and perspectives of our team.

This plan outlines how SAEF will promote equity, diversity, and inclusion and create a community where everyone has a sense of belonging. From recruitment practices through the development of our researchers and support staff to the broader management of the program, we are committed to providing equal opportunities to all participants and equitable access to groups who are currently underrepresented in the STEM disciplines.

The SAEF Program Executive Group will review the plan annually.

Scope

This plan applies to all SAEF activities and all SAEF participants. SAEF is a collaboration between many universities and partner organisations, both within Australia and overseas, and this plan is intended to complement the equity, diversity, and inclusion policies and plans of all these organisations. Where there is any inconsistency, the home organisation policy will override this plan. Grievances will be managed under the policy of the institution that applies to the respondent.

Goals

Our overarching goals are to:

- create an inclusive environment and culture
- provide and promote a fair and inclusive working environment, free from discrimination, bullying and harassment
- ensure all SAEF participants feel valued, respected, and supported
- provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and recognise the significance of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples perspectives and knowledge
- remove structural barriers preventing underrepresented groups such as First Nations peoples, women, people with disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse cohorts, and members of LGBTIQ+ communities from advancing their careers, and recognise that there are intersections between different identities, and
- provide assistance to SAEF participants to access appropriate grievance resolution processes.

Governance & Committees

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion will be a standing agenda item on the Program Executive Group meetings.
- The Program Executive Group will oversee the implementation and regular review and revision of this plan and its implementation.
- The Program Executive Group will conduct an annual survey to gauge the satisfaction of SAEF participants with this plan.
- The Program Executive Group will monitor and report on equity, diversity, and inclusion, including on gender balance in the Annual Report to ARC.
- SAEF will consider diversity, career stage, and gender balance when selecting members for all our committees, including Advisory Committees and the Program Executive Group.

Recruitment

- Job advertisements, position descriptions, and selection criteria will use gender-neutral and inclusive language.
- Selection panels should be gender-balanced, subject to organisational policy. Where a candidate for interview is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage, then the Selection Panel will include an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander member.
- All members of selection panels are encouraged to undertake training on equal employment opportunity or similar and to be alert to unconscious biases in decision-making.
- Selection panels should reflect the diverse community that SAEF represents.
- Selection panels will make good faith efforts to include appointable members of underrepresented groups on longlists and shortlists and consider performance or achievement relative to opportunity.
- SAEF will work with home organisation equity, diversity and inclusion teams and consult other organisations in the polar science community on possible strategies for recruiting HDR students and staff from underrepresented groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and First Nations peoples and strengthening pipelines to these roles (e.g. Honours students, paid research assistantships).
- Keeping with anti-discrimination regulations, SAEF may seek to advertise positions or scholarships targeting underrepresented groups.

Potential Measures

- Diversity of personnel (number and percentage)

Working Conditions & Environment

- SAEF will foster a workplace culture that is safe, inclusive and collaborative where students and staff can feel recognised and valued for their distinct backgrounds, talents, and perspectives.
- SAEF encourages all participants to be aware of their own privilege.
- SAEF is committed to addressing the gender pay gap. SAEF is committed to equal pay for men and women. This applies to all categories and levels of employment.
- SAEF supports and promotes flexible working arrangements. As required and in line with home organisation policies and operational requirements, participants are encouraged to

propose flexible working hours, work-from-home plans, and other flexible arrangements to accommodate their family commitments and other personal circumstances.

- SAEF will consider the metric of Achievement Relative to Opportunity when evaluating SAEF members performance assessments.
- SAEF supports the right of people with a disability, injury, or health condition to fully participate in the program, while also respecting their right to privacy and confidentiality. In particular, SAEF recognises that field teams in Antarctica need to demonstrate medical fitness to levels determined by the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD), but SAEF will strive to provide reasonable adjustments for all staff to participate wherever possible and will explore alternative means of participation, such as remote exploration of Antarctica through visualisation and other technologies.
- Participants are encouraged to draw on parental, carer's, sick, annual, and other leave (subject to their home organisation's leave policies) to ensure a healthy work culture and work-life harmony.
- SAEF will use exit interviews with departing staff and an annual survey of all participants to monitor the overall culture of the SRI, with a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- SAEF participants are welcome to bring their children into the workplace (excluding Antarctica) if childcare is not available, subject to organisational policy, health and safety requirements and appropriate supervision.
- SAEF encourages open general discussion about mental health at work and sharing of information about local Employee Assistance Programs and other mental health services and resources.

Potential measures

- Proportion of underrepresented groups receiving additional project funds within SAEF or via leveraging, relative to opportunity (or a measure reflecting all the additional opportunities we expect to arise over the life of the SRI).
- Diversity in field teams (career stage, gender identity, etc).
- Percentage of SAEF participants who are satisfied or very satisfied with the overall culture and inclusion of SAEF, as measured in the annual survey.

Training & Development

SAEF's training and development program is outlined in the SAEF Leadership, Mentoring and Career Development Plan. The program includes the following major elements, where SAEF will aim to include topics related to equity, diversity, and inclusion:

- Leadership development opportunities
- Mentoring programs
- Facilitation of leadership, shadowing, and deputising opportunities for EMCRs, and
- Training for SAEF leaders to focus on their own leadership style.

Meetings & Events

- SAEF aims to schedule meetings at times that suit all participants. All core SAEF meetings (such as regular committee and group meetings) will be held between 9.30am and 2.30pm, with specific consideration given to the needs of Western Australian and international participants. Options for recording meetings will be explored on a needs basis.

- SAEF meetings online and in person will begin with an appropriate Acknowledgement of Country and significant SAEF meetings will commence with a Welcome to Country delivered by a local community, where possible.
- Children can attend meetings if childcare is unavailable, subject to home organisational policy.
- SAEF conferences, workshops, seminars, and other events will have diverse and gender-balanced panels and speakers.
- SAEF will consider school holidays and religious calendars when scheduling events.
- SAEF will not organise social events where the primary focus is the consumption of alcohol or where there is unlimited access to free alcohol. Where alcohol is available at social events, suitable non-alcoholic options will also be provided.
- Where practical, SAEF will live-stream its major events and make recordings available online to make them more accessible.
- SAEF participants with caring responsibilities will be supported to apply for funding to support at-home or on-site care during conferences, workshops, or field trips in Australia.
- Meeting and event chairs and facilitators have a responsibility for ensuring that all attendees have an opportunity to contribute and be heard.
- Where practical, SAEF will utilise available technology to make live-streamed and recorded events accessible to the hearing and sight impaired communities.
- SAEF participants will consider the gender policy of external events and the gender and cultural balance of speaker lists before accepting invitations to speak and will communicate any concerns to the event organisers.
- Organising staff/committees will consider and respect equity and diversity when choosing the place and time of social activities.

Communications

- SAEF will profile a diverse range of researchers across all our communication channels (website, newsletter, annual reports, social media, etc), particularly groups who have traditionally been underrepresented among Antarctic scientists and explorers.
- SAEF will actively promote the visibility of all career stages within the program.
- SAEF will not disclose personal information without consent (e.g. age and marital and parental status) in introductions, reference letters and media coverage. SAEF will also respect the cultural perspectives and preferences of people who would like to share some personal information, including First Nations peoples.
- SAEF recognises that language is critical to inclusion and participants will use the language that is culturally appropriate and respectful of the diversity of SAEF participants and avoids the use of words or expressions that might be considered to exclude particular groups of people.

Potential measure

- Number and percentage of underrepresented groups profiled on SAEF communication channels.

ENDS