Australian
National
University

ANU College of Engineering,
Computing & Cybernetics

CECC
Diversity, Belonging,
Inclusion and Equity Strategy

2023-2025

1. Context

Background

As one of the first Colleges in the Australian National University to have explicit Diversity, Belonging, Inclusion and Equity (DBIE) representation in its senior leadership structure, CECC is deeply committed to advancing initiatives that redress historical exclusion and amplify the voices of historically excluded groups in our community. The formation of the Associate Dean-Diversity, Belonging, Inclusion and Equity (AD–DBIE) position and supporting operational team underscores the College's intention to meaningfully support DBIE initiatives. CECC is setting the benchmark for investment in a specialised DBIE strategic and operational infrastructure.

This investment is critical in responding to the longstanding challenges within CECC, which have created an environment that sees the College struggling to recruit and retain undergraduate, postgraduate, and higher degree research (HDR) students and staff from groups that have traditionally been excluded from our disciplines. More troubling still are the experiences of inequity and discrimination within CECC, as reported by some staff and students in data collection exercises executed by the AD–DBIE and operational team.

The DBIE Strategy provides an overarching vision and principles for CECC, whilst acknowledging that each organisational unit faces different cultural challenges, and therefore requires different action plans. Each organisational unit in CECC (Engineering, Computing, Cybernetics, and the Professional Services Group) will develop an action plan that is contextually relevant, aligned with the Australian National University's Strategic Plan 2021–2025 and the College's strategic priorities, and supports the delivery of the CECC DBIE Strategy 2023-25.

Development

The DBIE Strategy was developed in response to information collected from CECC staff and students on their experiences, concerns, and aspirations for the working and learning culture of CECC. The Vision and Pillars were developed from analysing qualitative data collected during Discovery Workshops (with staff and HDR students), focus groups (with students), and consistent engagement between the AD–DBIE and CECC leadership.

Quantitative data have been critical in establishing the need for a high performance DBIE portfolio within CECC. However, metrics do not (alone) yield meaningful information about the lived experiences of people in our community. Metrics based on 'bodycounts' (e.g the number of women or First Nations people in CECC) cannot explain the complexity of behaviours, values, and cultural norms in the College. These elements of working and learning life in CECC have been explored and explicated through qualitative questions and conversations.

The Strategy has drawn heavily on qualitative information, and therefore provides a qualitative response. This Strategy is informed by quantitative data but is not driven by a goal of achieving numerical representation of certain social groups.

Terminology

A list of common terms used in the Strategy and the broader DBIE space can be found at **Annex A**.

2. Vision and strategic pillars

Vision

Diversity, belonging, inclusion, and equity (DBIE) are integral to the culture of ANU's College of Engineering, Computing and Cybernetics (CECC) and the way that we learn and work together. We aim to attract and retain a staff and student population that is reflective of a diversity of backgrounds, knowledge, experience and perspectives. We aspire to be a College where staff and students know that their perspectives, skills, and lived experiences are valued and respected. Our approach to DBIE will be evidence-based and we will collaborate with academic experts and community partners to advance our vision. We expect our people to work together in a way that honours this commitment.

Strategic Pillars

Pillar One: Foster curiosity, care, and awareness

We will build our collective capacity to understand key equity issues and the role they play in making people feel safe and included in the College.

Pillar Two: Build a culture of belonging

CECC is committed to intentionally building a culture where all staff and students feel like they belong. In other words, our people feel that they are valued and can thrive. Building a culture of belonging is seen by all our people as a shared responsibility.

Pillar Three: Strive for courageous and inclusive decision-making

CECC leaders at all levels will strive to be courageous and inclusive in their decision-making. Leaders will aim to actively listen to staff and student perspectives, communicate decisions clearly and effectively, act on feedback, and regularly review relevant data to ensure that decisions are equitable. Leaders will be accountable for their decisions.

3. DBIE Governance

In implementing the Strategy, it is essential to support the work with an inclusive governance structure that ensures (a) representative decision-making; and (b) transparent communication flow between staff/students and leaders.

Each organisational unit within CECC will establish DBIE Working Groups to develop and execute DBIE action plans that respond to the CECC DBIE Strategy. The constitution and structure of the Working Groups will be flexible and should be customised to the needs of the organisational unit. It is expected that an organisational lead will be nominated to lead the working group and represent the organisational unit on the DBIE Committee. CECC Working Groups should be gender balanced in their composition. The DBIE team will provide expert advice to Working Groups on design and delivery of action plans and related initiatives. Working Groups will be asked to report on their action plans and progress to the AD-DBIE and the CECC DBIE Committee on a quarterly basis. The CECC Executive Committee will have oversight of initiatives and progress via the AD-DBIE and the DBIE Committee.

Student representatives will be involved in developing action plans for organisational units. Student societies and leaders will also be consulted on initiatives where relevant and appropriate.

CECC Executive Committee

Associate Dean DBIE

Student Representation

School/PSG DBIE Working Groups

DBIE Committee

DBIE Team (Advisory Role)
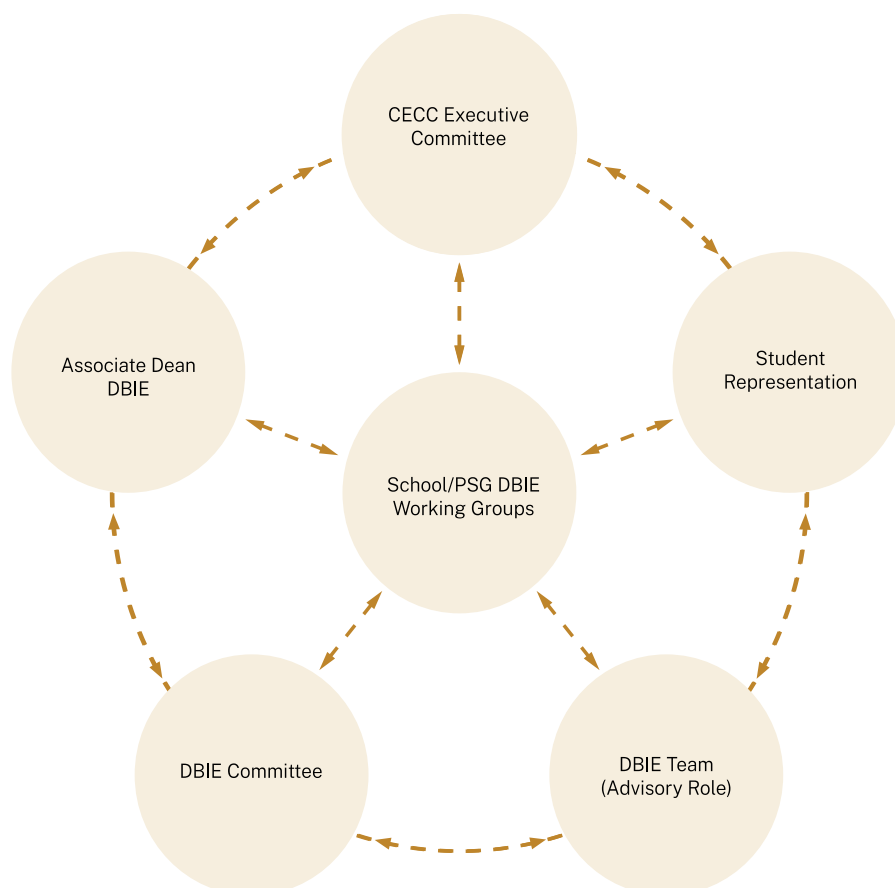
4. Key Objectives

Each pillar is accompanied by three key objectives that create the bridge between the strategic pillars and action plans. The key objectives are goals that, when achieved, will create significant value in the culture of CECC in the long term. Organisational units' action plans should respond directly to these objectives.

Pillar One, *Foster curiosity, care, and awareness*

• Staff and students are encouraged to build their capacities to understand key equity issues
• Leadership in DBIE is recognised as a primary skill for all staff and students
• There is demonstrated awareness and care for students and staff in relation to their identities

Pillar Two, *Build a culture of belonging*

• Our people feel they are valued and respected
• Staff/student-led groups and networks that build community and positive cultural change are enabled
• DBIE is embedded throughout College processes

Pillar Three, *Strive for courageous and inclusive decision-making*

• Strong commitment to courageous and inclusive decision-making processes at all levels
• Strong commitment to transparent communication of decisions at all levels
• CECC organisational units are supported to develop action plans, reporting, and evaluation measures to embed DBIE principles

5. Evaluation and use

This Strategy relies on a phased approach to implementation. Recognising that each organisational unit within the College faces different cultural challenges, the Strategy does not prescribe a list of specific actions. Rather, the Strategy provides high-level guiding pillars or principles, with key objectives. Leaders at all levels will be expected to develop their own bespoke action plans for their organisational units with the support of the by AD-DBIE and the DBIE operational team. The DBIE team will consult with Working Groups to assess and adjust action plans as necessary.

The Strategy is accompanied by an online Evaluation Tool that will encourage leaders, teams and working groups to ask themselves questions to clarify the purpose of their DBIE activities, evaluate their effectiveness, and consider whether they need to be changed. The Evaluation Tool includes reflective questions (see Annex B), space for reflection on possible actions and improvements, and a quick 1-3 star assessment system, so users can identify strengths and areas for improvement. The tool will enable users to see change over time, as well as evaluate whether particular actions have been effective in positively changing culture. The Evaluation Tool will be revised and improved throughout 2023 as organisational units work with the tool and can provide feedback.

Following consultation with the CECC community throughout 2022 and early 2023 and a process of embedding new governance structures, the DBIE team will develop a College-wide baseline culture survey to benchmark sentiment within CECC (in early-2024). In line with our data-informed approach, measures of success will be assessed primarily by qualitative evaluation of initiatives such as pulse surveys, interviews, focus groups, and workshops. This will be a regular, iterative process that requires organisational units to reflect on the input gathered annually.

Belonging	The experience of being accepted and included by those around you. Belonging at ANU means that everyone is included and feels like a full member of the larger community should they choose to be so and can thrive.
Bystander	A person who is present at an event or incident but does not take part in, redirect, stop or otherwise affect the event or incident.
Data-driven	Data-driven decision-making places data at the centre of the process, and data becomes the primary input.
Data-informed	Being data-informed means using data as a factor in decision making rather than using it as the entire basis. Multiple sources of information are taken into consideration in addition to data when making decisions.
Disclosure	A process in which a person discloses an occurrence of assault or harassment to, for example, an ANU staff member or student leader. A disclosure is different from a formal report. It is an opportunity for that person to be provided access to coordinated support, information and referrals to relevant support services. A disclosure does not commit the person to making a formal report to ANU or police, nor does it prevent the person from exploring more formal reporting options.
Discrimination	A distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference resulting in unequal treatment or harm to an individual or group. Under Commonwealth legislation it is illegal to discriminate against someone on the basis of characteristics including sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status.
Diversity	A mix of people in an organisation or community with a range of different personal, social, and professional experiences and identities. This can include differences among people with respect to age, class, ethnicity, gender, health, disability, race, sexual orientation, religion, physical size, education level, job and function, personality traits, and other human differences.
Equity	Fairness, ensuring everyone has access to equal opportunities, regardless of differences in personal experiences or characteristics. This does not always involve treating everyone the same: it involves recognising that everyone is different and providing individuals and communities with the things they need to ensure that everyone has the same opportunities.

Equality	The absence of discrimination and the presence of equal opportunities. Equality means providing the same opportunity to each person, including access to and control of social, economic, and political resources, with protection under the law (such as health services, education, and voting rights).
Inclusion	A state where the diversity of people is respected and celebrated, where goals and contributions can be successfully and safely achieved. Inclusion at ANU means that everyone is visible, heard and considered.
Intersectionality	An approach that recognises the complex interaction of different social markers that create disadvantage and privilege in society. Gender intersects with age, race, ethnicity, class, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation, and geographical location to shape social inequalities.
Neurodiversity	The presence of neurological differences that present in the way individuals act, think, hear and communicate. These differences in neurological conditions can include Dyspraxia, Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Dyscalculia, Autism Spectrum and more.
Psychological safety	A concept where members of a team believe that they are free to speak their minds with work-related ideas and concerns with others in the team. They are encouraged to question, discuss, and evaluate problems and issues, with no fear of negative consequences.
Qualitative evaluation	A process in which qualitative methods are used to measure the impact or effect of a project/programme. Examples of data collection methods include interviews, direct observation, and written documents.
Safe Space	An environment where everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves and participating fully, without fear of attack, ridicule or denial of experience (i.e., a judgment-free zone).
Underrepresented groups	Groups who traditionally (or historically) have not had equal access to economic opportunities because of discrimination or other societal barriers. This may vary by context and geography but can include race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or socio-economic status. Examples of groups that may be considered underrepresented can include women or women of colour in a traditionally male and/or white discipline such as STEMM.

Pillar One, *Foster curiosity, care, and awareness*

We will build our collective capacity to understand key equity issues and the role they play in making people feel safe and included in the College.

Objective	Reflective question
Staff and students are encouraged to build their capacities to understand key equity issues	Do staff and students engage in relevant DBIE training and engagement activities at all levels in the College?
	Do staff know how to manage and respond to disclosures of sexual harassment or sexual assault from students?
	Are DBIE issues raised and addressed as part of regular team discussions and meetings?
	Are staff and students supported to learn more about DBIE in safe spaces?

Objective	Reflective question
Leadership in DBIE is a key skill for all staff and students	Do staff and students see DBIE awareness as a key skill alongside other professional and technical skills?
	Are staff and students expected to demonstrate their understanding of DBIE issues in their performance or assessment items, respectively?
	Are the connections between DBIE issues and our core disciplines clear to staff and students?

Objective	Reflective question
Demonstrated awareness and care for students and staff in relation to their identities	Do people from historically excluded groups feel that they can bring their whole self to work/learning?
	Are we accommodating, flexible and adaptable to staff and students with different needs?
	Is the CECC physical infrastructure sensitised to the needs of people from different groups?
	Do we have robust reporting and support processes to address inappropriate behaviour at all levels in the College?

Pillar Two, *Build a culture of belonging*

CECC is committed to intentionally building a culture where all staff and students feel like they belong. In other words, our people feel that they are valued and can thrive. Building a culture of belonging is seen by all our people as a shared responsibility.

Objective	Reflective question
Our people feel they are valued and respected	What mechanisms are available to amplify the voices of people from historically excluded groups?
	Are there regular attempts to collect data on staff and student experiences of the culture in CECC?
	Is there sufficient understanding of what different members of the community may need to thrive?
	Is the working/learning environment psychologically safe?

Objective	Reflective question
Staff/student-led groups and networks that build community and positive cultural change are enabled	Are there ways for people from historically excluded groups to connect with each other if they wish?
	Are there mechanisms for networks to access funding or other forms of in-kind support from relevant organisational units?
	Are there strategies in place to address feelings of isolation for our staff and students?

Objective	Reflective question
DBIE is embedded throughout College processes	Are candidate pools in recruitment gender-balanced?
	Are DBIE-related days of observance recognised and celebrated at all levels of the College?
	Are DBIE-related achievements included/recognised in awards/ promotion processes?
	Are DBIE-related achievements broadly communicated to staff and students?
	Are there incentives for staff and students to dedicate time and energy to DBIE issues/initiatives?

Pillar Three, *Strive for courageous and inclusive decision-making*

CECC leaders at all levels will strive to be courageous and inclusive in their decision-making. Leaders will listen to staff and student perspectives, communicate decisions clearly and effectively, act on feedback, and regularly review relevant data to ensure that decisions are equitable. Leaders will be accountable for their decisions.

Objective	Reflective question
Courageous and inclusive decision-making processes at all levels	Is there an effective and fit-for-purpose mechanism to listen to staff and student perspectives and experiences?
	Are transparent governance structures in place to embed DBIE principles and implement action plans?
	Do leaders use a data-informed approach to decision making?
	Do leaders actively seek input from appropriate experts inside and outside of CECC?
	Are the views of people from historically excluded groups represented in relevant meetings where decisions are made?

Objective	Reflective question
Transparent communication of decisions at all levels	Are relevant staff/students aware of decisions being made?
	Are there mechanisms for staff and students to contribute views at every level (Schools/PSG/College)?
	Are there regular opportunities to provide constructive feedback on College culture?
	Are various forms of feedback (I.e., written, verbal, secure, anonymous) facilitated and welcomed?

Objective	Reflective question
CECC organisational units are supported to develop action plans, reporting, and evaluation measures to embed DBIE principles	Are all CECC strategies, policies and procedures reflective of DBIE principles?
	Are there mechanisms to ensure leaders are embedding DBIE principles in their decisions?
	Are there supported spaces for leaders to share best practice on their DBIE successes and challenges?
	Are units sufficiently resourced for staff to devote time and energy to DBIE priorities?