



THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY UNIT THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

SPRING 2014



*For all our differences, we
make a complete world!*

ROLES OF AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ADVISOR (EOA)

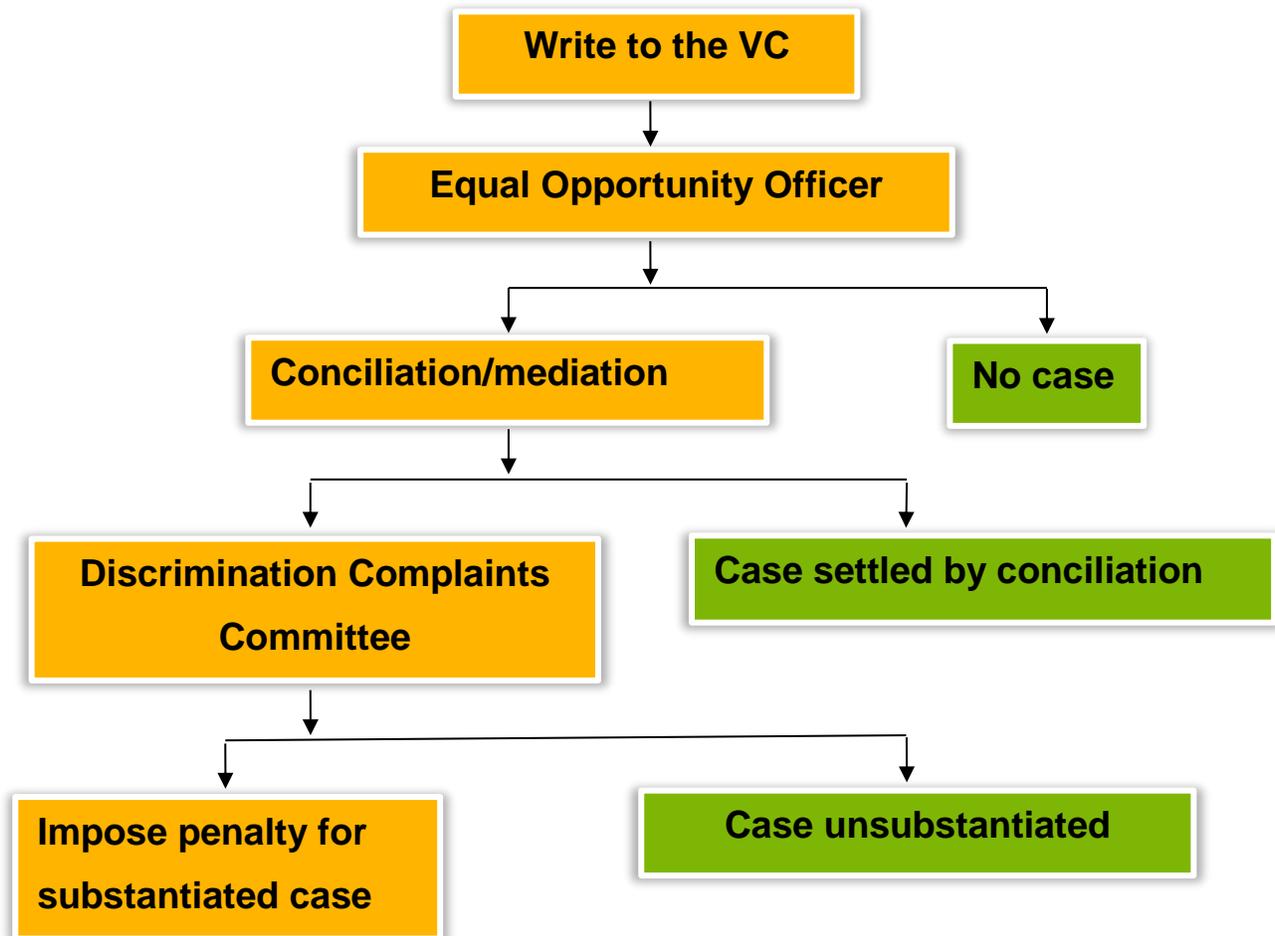
1. First contact point in a department to give advice on equal opportunity issues.
2. May be invited to serve as a member of the Discrimination Complaints Committee to conduct formal investigations.
3. Can help to promote equal opportunity in the department by:
 - Attending events of Equal Opportunity Festival held annually.
 - Encouraging staff members of the department to participate in the events of Equal Opportunities Festival.
 - Checking whether the website of the department is in line with the standing guidelines on web accessibility and if not, the EOA can help to amend the website or ask the departmental staff member to amend. Websites that are inaccessible to persons with a disability could be a kind of disability discrimination and under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance, this could be a kind of unlawful act.

As an EOA is the first contact person in a department to give advice on equal opportunity issues, what are the Dos & Don'ts in handling complaints?

- ❖ Refer the case to the Equal Opportunity Unit or seek help from the Equal Opportunity Unit whenever you consider appropriate
- ❖ Do not act as a judge
- ❖ Write down the alleged events chronologically

- ❖ Analyze the facts objectively
- ❖ Be impartial
- ❖ Examine whether the allegations could constitute to prohibited discrimination/harassment
- ❖ Explain the possible channels and let the Complainant choose the next step
 - Report to the Equal Opportunity Unit
 - Act in accordance with the Procedures in handling discrimination/harassment complaints of HKU
 - Complain to the Equal Opportunities Commission
 - Report to the police
 - start civil proceedings at the District Court

What are the procedures for handling discrimination/ harassment complaints at HKU?



For more details, please refer to paragraph 18 to 58 of Procedures for handling discrimination/harassment complaints, which can be found at <http://www.hku.hk/eounit/eng/procedures.htm>.

What are the guidelines on web accessibility?

READING USING THE PC

1. For persons with visual impairment (PWVI) using a PC, a software known as a "screen reader" is used. The output is in the form of synthesised speech and/or Braille through a refreshable Braille device. The most common screen reading software is "JAWS" which is available in many languages including English and Chinese.



READABLE FORMAT

2. Essentially, JAWS will read anything on the screen that has a text base. It will not read images-based material, e.g. graphics and photos. File formats containing text components (hence readable by PWVI) include, MS Word (doc), simple text (txt), email (eml), Excel (xls), Power Point (ppt), webpages (htm/html) and text-based (called searchable) PDF (PDF). Of these, the most readable ones are the doc and txt, the doc being preferred for its ease of navigation with the cursor keys.
3. If there is a choice, it is infinitely preferable to provide the doc format to students with visual impairment.

FIGURE CAPTION (OR ALT TEXT)

4. A brief text descriptive caption by an image or figure would be immensely helpful to readers with visual impairment. This would inform them of the existence of an unreadable image.

PDF FORMAT (cont'd)

6. Any PDF file containing a pure image has no text base and hence unreadable by PWVI. This is said to be unsearchable. A sighted person just looking at the screen cannot tell the difference as an unsearchable PDF image may appear to contain text although, in actual fact, the apparent text is part of an image. The screen reader JAWS would say "empty document, as it sees no embedded readable text base."

PDF FORMAT

5. Files in such formats as Microsoft Office, plain text and searchable PDF are readable by the Braille devices used by people with visual impairment. PDF files produced by most scanners are not readable by Braille scanners.

We can produce a searchable PDF file simply by clicking "save as" in Microsoft Office.

Alternatively, the following procedure will produce a searchable PDF file from Microsoft Office:

- Click "File → Print" just like printing a hard copy.
- Select "Adobe PDF" as the printer.
- Click "OK" just like printing a hard copy.
- Enter a name for the PDF file when asked to do so.
- Click "Save".

DOCUMENTS FROM SCANNING

7. Most older scanners will scan a document and generate an image (unsearchable) PDF file. This is definitely useless to students with visual impairment. In fact, this is the major source of undesirable (unsearchable/unreadable) PDF files.

SEARCHABLE PDF FROM SCANNING

8. With newer models of scanners, the user has a choice of either an ordinary (unsearchable) or a good searchable output. The latter is normally obtained under the option called "scan document" rather than "scan picture". Basically the latter (searchable option) has built in an additional text-recognition procedure known as optical character recognition (OCR) which embeds the text base in the PDF file making the latter searchable for PWVI.

CONVERTING FROM BAD TO GOOD PDF

9. For the technically minded, it is possible to convert an image (bad) PDF into searchable (good PDF format using an OCR software. The software called Omnipage or Omnipage professional would perform this task. This procedure is only used as last resort (e.g. if the original doc file has been lost) as, apart from being time consuming, the accuracy of (OCR) is always limited.

GOOD PRACTICE RE PDF

10. To avoid the trouble mentioned in 6 and 9 above, it is infinitely preferable and more efficient to have a good PDF (searchable) file generated using the direct technique mentioned in 5. This would do away with the extra procedures of printing, scanning and OCR with an inferior output.

ONLINE ELECTRONIC MATERIALS

11. Most online electronic materials, e.g. electronic journals, online newspapers and library resources are text-based, hence readable for PWVI.

NON ASCII (NON-TEXT) CHARACTERS

12. In MS Word, apart from standard ASCII text characters, most of the symbols entered under the "insert/symbol" menu are readable with a special keystroke.



Further information/ enquiries

To learn more about the Equal Opportunity Unit, please visit <http://www.hku.hk/eou/nit/enq/index.htm>.

For enquiries, please contact the Equal Opportunity Unit at **3917 5115** or eouunit@hku.hk.