



5 Minute Fact Sheet

Unconscious Bias

Unconscious biases are learned stereotypes that are automatic, unintentional, deeply ingrained, universal, and able to influence behaviour. They are also known as implicit biases, i.e. the underlying attitudes and stereotypes that people unconsciously attribute to another person or group of people that affect how they understand and engage with a person or group.

There are many different types of unconscious bias, e.g.:

1. **Affinity Bias** - also known as similarity bias, is the tendency people have to connect with others who share similar interests, experiences and backgrounds.
2. **Confirmation Bias** - is the inclination to draw conclusions about a situation or person based on your personal desires, beliefs and prejudices rather than on unbiased merit.
3. **Attribution Bias** - is a phenomenon where you try to make sense of or judge a person's behaviour based on prior observations and interactions you've had with that individual that make up your perception of them.
4. **Conformity Bias** - is the tendency people have to act similar to the people around them regardless of their own personal beliefs or idiosyncrasies - also known as peer pressure.
5. **The 'Halo' effect** - is the tendency people have to place another person on a pedestal after learning something impressive about them.
6. **The 'Horns' effect** - is the tendency people have to view another person negatively after learning something unpleasant or negative about them.
7. **The 'Contrast' effect** - is when you compare two or more things that you have come into contact with — either simultaneously or one-after-another — causing you to exaggerate the performance of one in contrast to the other.



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9. **Age Bias** - is the tendency to have negative feelings about another person based on their age.
10. **Name Bias** - is the tendency people have to judge and prefer people with certain types of names — typically names that are of Anglo origin.
11. **Beauty Bias** - is a social behaviour where people believe that attractive people are more successful, competent and qualified.
12. **Height Bias (heightism)** - is the tendency to judge a person who is significantly shorter or taller than the socially-accepted human height.

Learned stereotypes and deeply ingrained beliefs impact on decisions and actions you make, without you realising, and this is the definition of unconscious bias.

Unconscious (or implicit) biases, unlike conscious biases, are the views and opinions that we are unaware of. They are automatically activated and frequently operate outside conscious awareness and affect our everyday behaviour/decision making. Our unconscious biases are influenced by our background, culture, context and personal experiences. Increased awareness of unconscious bias aims to:

- reduce implicit/unconscious bias towards members of a group denoted as having a '[protected characteristic](#)'
- reduce explicit bias towards members of a group denoted as having a protected characteristic';
- change behaviour, in the intended direction, towards equality-related outcomes.

Additional Resources include:

[Unconscious Bias examples and how to avoid them in the workplace](#)

[KSCMP e-learning—Unconscious Bias](#)

[Unconscious bias training: an assessment of the evidence for effectiveness](#)