



ACTUARIAL SOCIETY
OF SOUTH AFRICA

Advancing Actuarial Excellence

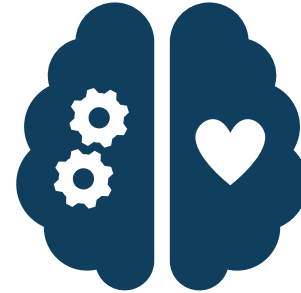
Bias, Brilliance and Boundaries: Professionalism for Today's Actuary

May 2025

OBJECTIVES



Explore how **unconscious bias** influences professional judgment



Understand and appreciate **neurodiversity** in the workplace

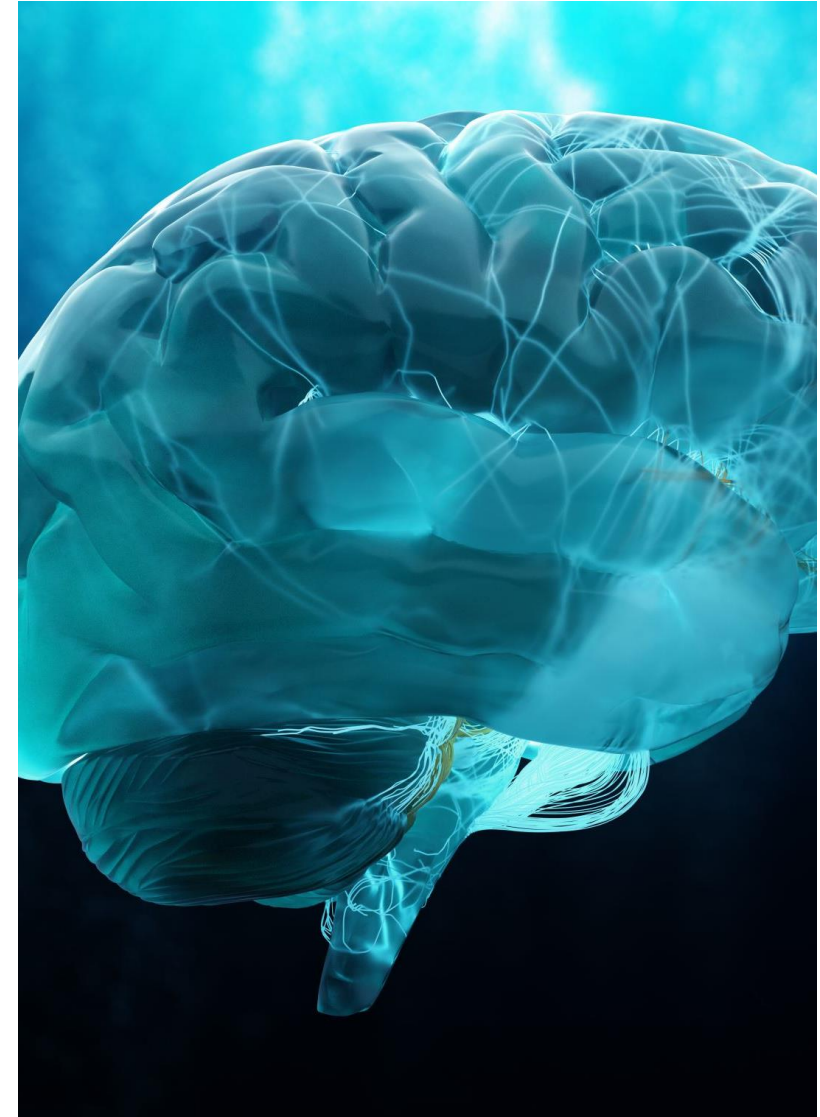


Navigate **grey areas** with clarity and integrity

WHAT IS UNCONSCIOUS BIAS?



- Mental shortcuts our brains take
- Not always aligned with our values
- Often based on societal norms or personal experiences



AUDIENCE QUESTION



How many unconscious biases does the average person have?"

- A. 10–50
- B. 100–200
- C. Over 1000



BIAS IN ACTION



Scenario: Two CVs — same qualifications, different backgrounds.

Reflection: What assumptions might influence your reaction?



BIAS AT WORK



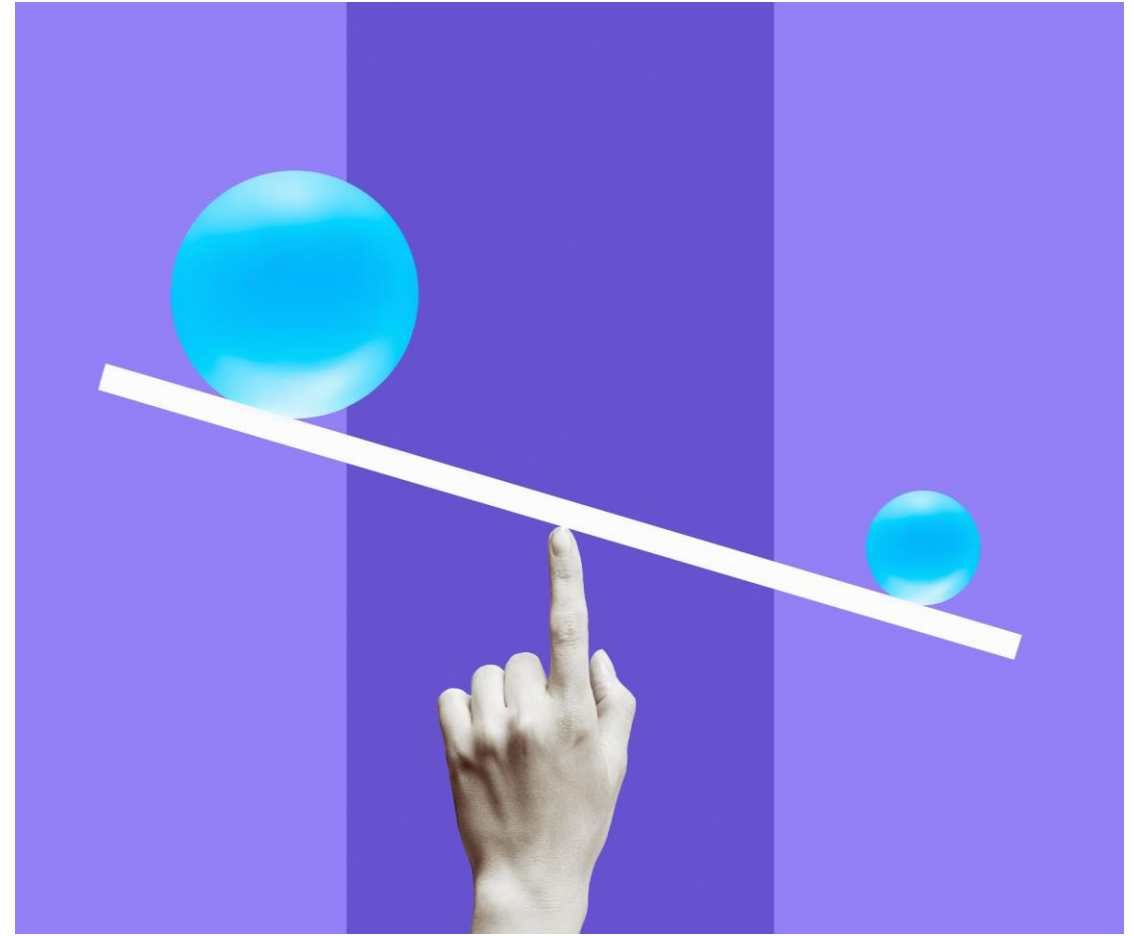
Unconscious Bias

Individual beliefs or reactions influence how systems are created or applied



Structural Bias

Systemic outcomes that reflect those biases



ADDRESSING BIAS



UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

1. **Raise awareness** e.g. Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT).
2. **Interrupt bias in decision-making** e.g. Focus on outcomes and observable behaviours, not style or “fit.” in performance evaluations.
3. **Build inclusive habits e.g. check assumptions and ask:** *‘What assumptions am I making? Would I react the same way if this person looked different?’*

STRUCTURAL BIAS

1. **Audit systems and policies** e.g. hiring, and ask *‘Who benefits from this policy? Who is unintentionally excluded?’*
 2. **Standardize and de-bias processes** e.g. structured interviews and blind CVs.
 3. **Embed inclusion into culture** e.g. Train managers in inclusive leadership practices.
-

WHAT IS NEURODIVERSITY?



- Spectrum of how people think, learn, and interact
- Includes autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, etc.
- Not a deficit, but a difference.



MYTHS VS. REALITY



Myth: Neurodivergent people can't work in teams.

Reality: Neurodivergent people can thrive with clarity and structure

Myth: Neurodivergent people all need special treatment.

Reality: Small adjustments benefit everyone



INCLUSION IN PRACTICE



- Use inclusive language
e.g. APA.org
- Involve neurodiverse voices
- Normalize flexibility and diverse work styles



WHAT WOULD YOU DO?



Scenario 1:

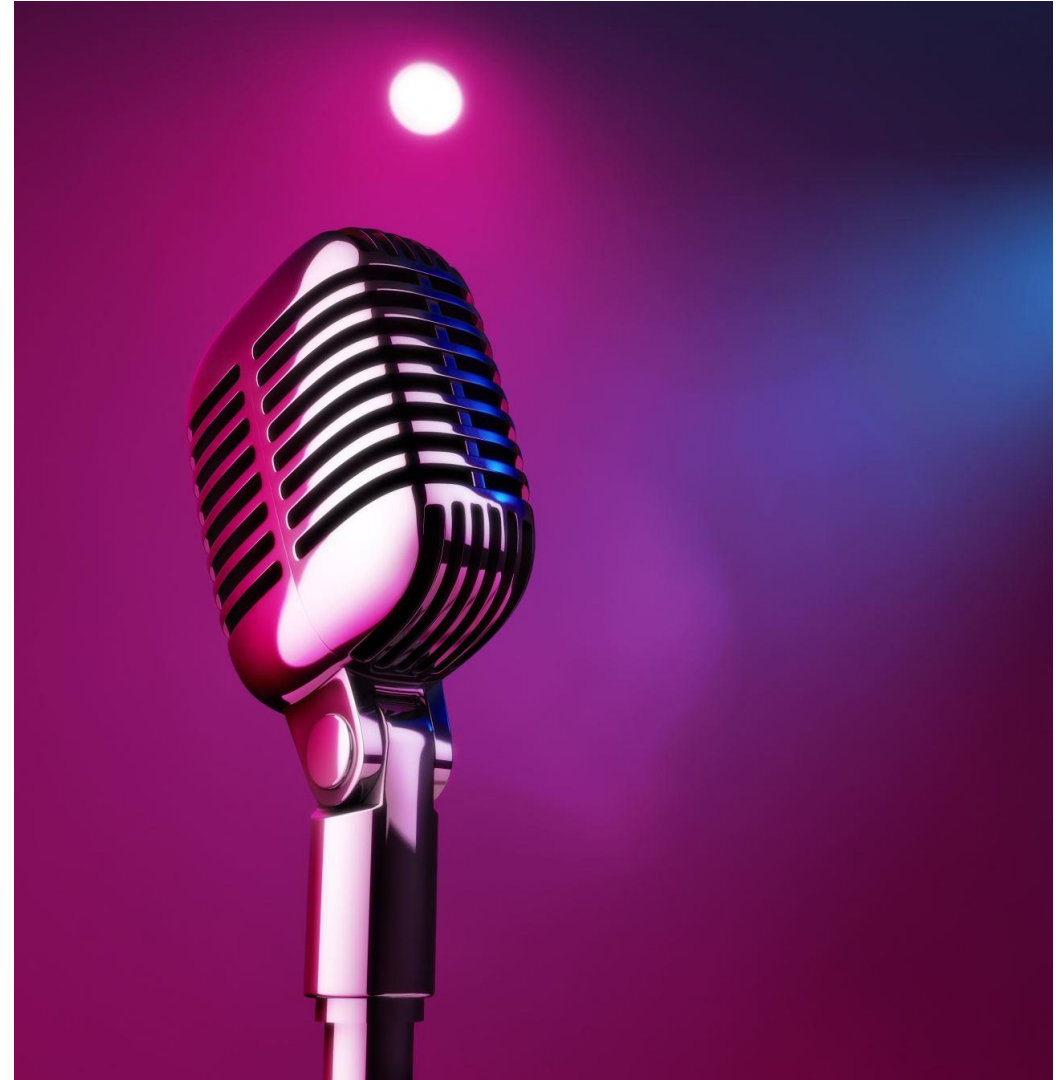
Nepotism

Scenario 2:

Regulatory non-compliance

Scenario 3:

Promotion dilemma



NAVIGATING ETHICAL DILEMMAS



- Know your values
- Be familiar with your professional code
- Ask for support



TO WRAP UP



- 1. Bias is natural, but not neutral.** Be aware.
- 2. Diverse minds strengthen teams.** Include intentionally.
- 3. Ethics lives in the grey.** Stay conscious.



QUESTIONS



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



- Harvard Implicit Association Test:
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
 - Neuroinclusion at work:
<https://www.cipd.org/en/knowledge/guides/neuroinclusion-work/>
 - APA language guide:
<https://www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/language-guidelines>
-