Intentional Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Decision-Making

The purpose of this tool is to support units, departments, faculties, and divisions[1] in intentionally considering equity, diversity, and inclusion as part of their decision-making processes.

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Overview

UBC's strategic plan has named "inclusion" as one of three cross-cutting themes to help guide the university as it moves into its next century of operations. As a way to operationalize this commitment to inclusion, UBC's *Building Inclusive UBC: An Inclusion Action Plan* includes developing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) decision-making principles as a way to advance the goal of systems change at UBC.

By ensuring that EDI is front-of-mind in any decision that is made, you can ensure your decisions reflect both your values and UBC's values. The following questions are designed to support you in applying an EDI lens to your decisions.

USING THE TOOL DURING A CRISIS

In times of crisis, decisions need to be made quickly, and often must be made with imperfect information and without wide consultation, as decision-makers seek to maximize supports for everyone in our diverse community to respond to the challenges and disruptions of the moment.

Before you begin, note that part of making decisions during a crisis is realizing that we are all doing the best we can and that no crisis response is perfect. If you don't know the answers to these questions, you may decide to gather further information, consult with others who may know more, or expand the team involved in making the decisions to increase the diversity of perspectives and types of expertise.

	Questions to Ask

Impacts	• How will this decision differently affect particular individuals and communities, in relation to different aspects of their identities?
	
	   • **Consider:** race, ethnicity, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical disability, mental disability, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, class, socio-economic situations, and any other relevant aspects of identity.
	
	   • **Consider:** overlapping and intersecting aspects of identity.
	
	• How will our decision consider the effects of colonization, racism, homophobia, sexism, ableism, etc.?
	
	• How might unconscious biases and stereotypes be influencing our instincts and gut reactions?
	
	   • **Consider:** the assumptions about people's resources, abilities, and contexts that are embedded in this decision.

Symbols and messages	• What symbolic messages do we send to our whole community as a result of this decision? • How might particular communities or individuals perceive the decision being made? • **Consider:** past histories and current realities • How is this decision aligned with UBC's and our unit's values and commitments to EDI?
Mitigation	• Which of the potential negative impacts of this decision are highest priority to address? • How will we mitigate potential negative impacts and support those for whom our decision may cause harm?
Feedback and response	• How will we invite timely feedback on this decision and be alert to EDI issues within the feedback we receive? • How will we keep track of the impact of this decision on particular communities? • How will we be responsive to emerging unintended consequences as they arise?

Next Steps

Consider using these questions to learn from a decision that has already been made. Plan a debrief session when the pressure on a particular decision has lifted, but when you are close enough in time to remember the details.

Reflecting on past decisions provides an opportunity to consider unintended consequences in more detail or to develop a greater understanding of particular communities and groups. Lessons learned from past experiences may ultimately help enhance the way that EDI is incorporated into future decisions.

Additional Resources

Diversipro, Inc., (2019). Diversity, Equity and Indigenous Lens. Thunder Bay, ON: Confederation College. Accessed at: https://www.confederationcollege.ca/human-resources-services/human-rights-decolonization/diversity-equity-and-indigenouslens.

Partington, J. (2020 Apr 27). A Mindset, Not a Program: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the Time of COVID-19. Academica Forum. Accessed at: https://forum.academica.ca/forum/a-mindset-not-a-program.

Williams, D. (2020). The COVID-19 Crisis Action Strategy Guide: Recommendations to Drive Inclusive Excellence. Atlanta, GA: Centre for Strategic Diversity Leadership and Socia Innovation. Accessed at: https://inclusiveexcellenceacademy.org/deiandcovid19/.

Endnotes

[1] Throughout the document EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) will be used to refer to all/any committees whose mandate and/or responsibility include these areas (a.k.a., equity committees). In creating these guidelines, it is important to attend to the variety names, formations, and histories of these types of committees.