



## ACTIVATING INCLUSION TOOLKIT

# Using an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Decision-Making Lens

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

---

May 2023

## Overview

Many units and leaders at UBC share the goal of applying an equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) lens to their work to ensure that EDI informs their day-to-day decision-making. It can be challenging to meet this goal in practice, however, as our decision-making practices and processes are shaped by the systems in which we operate and the habits we have formed. We have to intentionally seek opportunities to apply an EDI lens to our decisions to counteract ingrained patterns and power structures.

This tool contains a list of questions that are designed to support decision-makers in applying an EDI lens to decisions. Many highly skilled and knowledgeable professions, such as surgeons and pilots, use checklists to support their practice. Although confident in their abilities and expertise, they also know that it can be helpful, particularly in times of high stress or urgency, to have a tool that invites them to slow down and take a more methodical, intentional approach.<sup>1</sup> The questions below are designed to support a similar approach to decision-making at UBC, so that EDI considerations play a larger role in shaping decisions across the university.

## Overview

When making a major planning decision, make time to slow down and collaborate or consult with rightsholders and stakeholders about the below questions. Involving

---

<sup>1</sup> Gawande, Atul. (2009). *The checklist manifesto: how to get things right*. New York, N.Y., Metropolitan Books.

a diverse group of people will give you more insight into the potential effects of your decision. Incorporating a stronger EDI lens to your decision will ultimately support better outcomes for the wider community.

Sometimes, such as during a crisis or an externally-imposed deadline, decisions need to be made quickly, with imperfect information, and without wide consultation. When making decisions in these circumstances, it is important to recognize that no crisis response is perfect. If you don't know the answers to all of these questions, use a targeted approach to gather further information or expand the team involved in making the decisions within the constraints of your context. structures.

	Questions to Ask
<b>Decision-making team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What perspectives and areas of expertise are needed to make this decision?</li> <li>▪ How will we ensure we have access to these perspectives and areas of expertise?</li> </ul>
<b>Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How will this decision differently affect particular individuals and communities, in relation to different aspects of their identities?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Consider:</b> 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.</li> <li>▪ <b>Consider:</b> overlapping and intersecting aspects of identity.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ How will our decision consider the effects of colonization, racism, homophobia, sexism, ableism, etc.?</li> <li>▪ How might unconscious biases and stereotypes be influencing our instincts and gut reactions?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Consider:</b> the assumptions about people's resources, abilities, and contexts that are embedded in this decision.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Symbols and messages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What symbolic messages do we send to our whole community as a result of this decision?</li> <li>▪ How might particular communities or individuals perceive the decision being made?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Consider:</b> past histories and current realities</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ How is this decision aligned with UBC's and our unit's values and commitments to EDI?</li> </ul>

	Questions to Ask
<b>Mitigation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Which of the potential negative impacts of this decision are highest priority to address?</li> <li>▪ How will we mitigate potential negative impacts and support those for whom our decision may cause harm?</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback and response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How will we invite timely feedback on this decision and be alert to EDI issues within the feedback we receive?</li> <li>▪ How will we keep track of the impact of this decision on particular communities?</li> <li>▪ How will we be responsive to emerging unintended consequences as they arise?</li> </ul>

## 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.