



## ACTIVATING INCLUSION TOOLKIT

# Using an equity and anti-racism lens in decision-making

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, as well as to assist in surfacing and mitigating biases and to identify and remove barriers in policy and program design and decision-making.

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## 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, as well as their policy and program planning and design. 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.

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

Consideration	Questions to Ask
<p><b>Decision-making team</b> (e.g., review committee, leadership team, etc.)</p>	<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> <li>▪ How will the membership of the decision-making team be constituted to include HPSM groups and individuals who are proficient in critical or equity analysis?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Data</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What data or information will be collected to inform whether and how the policy or program is relevant to, and impacts, HPSM groups of students, faculty, and/or staff?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Impacts</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What features or changes aim to mitigate biases and remove barriers?</li> <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> <li>▪ How will we assess and remediate the decision, policy or program in terms of accessibility standards?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Symbols and Messages</b></p>	<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>▪ What language, images, or messages associated with the policy or program might reinforce stereotyped narratives or dominant cultural norms, and how will these be assessed and remediated?</li> <li>▪ How might specific communities or individuals perceive the decision being made?</li> </ul>

Consideration	Questions to Ask
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Consider:</b> past and current narratives that are relevant to the decision</li> </ul>
<b>Mitigation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Which of the potential negative impacts of this decision are within our ability to influence or address?</li> <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>Community engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How will we consult <i>and</i> engage HPSM groups in the decision-making process?</li> <li>▪ How will we communicate key factors and rationale guiding the decision?</li> <li>▪ What community-engagement principles or protocols will we use to inform the method of consultation and engagement, well as recognition of and compensation for community members of HPSM groups?</li> <li>▪ How will we incorporate the advice or direction provided by HPSM groups that were consulted and engaged?</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? 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> <li>▪ If this decision-making process identifies systemic EDI challenges, how will we follow up on these systemic challenges beyond the scope of this particular decision?</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.