

Frequently Used Terms: Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Indigenization

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Inclusion: A situation where disadvantaged communities and designated group members share power and decision making at all levels in projects, programs, and institutions.

Culture: Culture refers to the beliefs, behaviors, objects, and other characteristics common to the members of a particular group or society. Through culture, people and groups define themselves, conform to society's shared values, and contribute to society (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt online).

Intercultural Communication: Communication between different groups based on linguistic and cultural origins.

Prejudice: A set of negative personal beliefs about a social group that leads individuals to *pre/judge* people from that group regardless of individual differences among group members.

Members of "visible minorities"/racialized groups: A member of a "visible minority"/racialized group is someone (other than an Indigenous person as defined above) who self-identifies as non-white in colour or non-Caucasian in racial origin, regardless of place of birth or citizenship. We are using the term "visible minority" less and moving towards the term racialized.

Racism: According to the Ontario Anti-Racism Secretariat, racism is a system in which one group of people exercises abusive power over others on the basis of skin colour and racial heritage; a set of implicit and explicit beliefs, false assumptions, and actions based upon an ideology of inherent superiority of one racial or ethnic group over another.

a) individual racism: the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. Individual racism can occur at both an unconscious and conscious level, and can be both active and passive.

b) cultural racism: those aspects of society that overtly attribute values and normality to the dominant group and devalue, stereotype, and label racialized minorities as "other", different, less than, or render them invisible.

c) institutional racism: the network of institutional structures, policies, and practices, that create advantages and benefits for members of the dominant group and discrimination, oppression, and disadvantage for people from targeted racial groups. The advantages created for the dominant group are often invisible to them, or are considered “rights” available to everyone, as opposed to “privileges” awarded to only some individual and groups.

Discrimination: Discrimination means any form of unequal **treatment** based on one of the following grounds, whether imposing extra burdens or denying benefits: age, creed/religion, gender identity, sexual preference, family status, marital status, disability (both physical and mental), race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, colour, social condition or any analogous ground. It may be intentional or unintentional. It may involve direct actions that are discriminatory on their face, or it may involve rules, practices or procedures that appear neutral, but have the effect of disadvantaging certain groups of people based on the grounds named. Discrimination may take obvious forms, or it may occur in very subtle ways.

Stereotype: A stereotype is a simplistic generalization about an entire group of people based on an image or an idea.

Bias: An unfair prejudice in favor or against a person or a group.

Diversity: Diversity in an institutional context refers to the condition of including and accounting for the academic, educational, and/or career development needs and realities of students, staff and faculty.

Affirmative Action: According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, affirmative action policies refer to strategies used by institutions or organizations to improve opportunities for historically excluded groups in American society, often in the areas of employment and education. Affirmative Action is not practised in Canada.

References

- Fleras, A. & Elliot, J., (1992). *Unequal Relations: An Introduction to Race and Ethnic Dynamics in Canada*. Prentice Hall.
- Henry F. & Tator, C. (2010). *The colour of democracy: Racism in Canadian society*. 4th Ed. Toronto, ON: Nelson.
- Queen University, Human Rights Office, (2007). Kingston, ON, Canada

Glossary of Terms - University of British Columbia
<https://equity.ubc.ca/resources/equity-inclusion-glossary-of-terms/>

2SLGBTQIA+

Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer (or Questioning), Intersex, Asexual. The placement of Two Spirit (2S) first is to recognize that Indigenous people are the first peoples of this land and their understanding of gender and sexuality precedes colonization. The '+' is for all the new and growing ways we become aware of sexual orientations and gender diversity.

Aboriginal

Aboriginal is a general term that collectively refers to First Nations, Métis and Inuit people in Canada, and is found in the Canadian constitution.

■ **Context & Usage**

For more information, refer to UBC's [Indigenous People's Language Guidelines](#).

Accessibility / Accessible

Accessibility refers to the design of products, devices, services, or environments for people with [disabilities](#).

■ **Context & Usage**

In the university context, accessibility – or lack thereof – may impact the capacity for individuals and groups to achieve [equitable](#) results. Please also see [Universal Design](#).

BIPOC

Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (see also "IBPOC", below).

■ **Context & Usage**

While usage of the term 'People of Colour' dates back to the late 18th century, its contemporary usage is rooted in the 1970s when it emerged as an alternative to the then common, and highly contested, terminology of "non-white" to describe all racialized people. In response to critiques that 'People of Colour' (abbreviated as 'POC') erases or conflates the particular histories of Black and Indigenous peoples under colonialism, the additional letters are placed before 'POC' by those who aim to recognize those distinctions.³

Colonialism / Colonization

Colonialism is an intentional process by which a political power from one territory exerts control over a different territory. It involves unequal power relations⁴, and includes policies and/or practices of acquiring full or partial political control over other people or territory, occupying the territory with settlers, and exploiting it economically.

Colonization

Colonization is the invasion, dispossession, and subjugation of one people to another. The long-term result of such dispossession is institutionalized inequality. The colonizer/colonized relationship is by nature an unequal one that benefits the colonizer at the expense of the colonized.

- **Context & Usage**

Canada experienced settler colonialism as Europeans aggressively took lands from Indigenous peoples.⁶ The effects and mechanisms of colonialism continue to impact power structures today.

Conflict Engagement

Conflict engagement is a broad umbrella term that includes conflict resolution, conflict management, conflict intervention, conflict investigation, conflict exploration, and conflict transformation – recognizing that there is a time and place for each.

Conflict Fluency

A set of basic knowledge and skills that allow individuals to identify, work through, and de-escalate conflict as it naturally emerges in the context of their life and work.

This skill set includes (but is not limited to):

- Awareness and conscious expression of emotions,
- Active inquiry and ability to listen to understand,
- Articulation and advocacy for one's own views,
- Perspective taking,
- Effectively exchanging feedback,
- Awareness of rank and power,
- Offering and receiving apologies.
- **Context & Usage**

In the context of diversity, equity, and inclusion, conflict fluency inevitably relies on some measure of [diversity competency](#).

Conflict Literacy

The capacity to engage with conflict productively and creatively, and to help others do the same. Conflict Fluency builds on Conflict Literacy and is an increasingly relevant leadership capacity.

This skill set includes (but is not limited to):

- Solid understanding of policy landscape, including formal and informal processes,
- Acting as a third-party to support others who are in conflict,
- Providing conflict coaching to others, and making referrals as needed,
- Guiding strategic decision-making about the appropriate approach to conflict

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- engagement,
- Advanced capacity for attending to one’s own feelings and the feelings of others,
 - Prevention of conflict escalation through strong team leadership practices,
 - Identifying and addressing systemic issues that reproduce persistent and historic conflicts.

Context & Usage

In the context of diversity, equity, and inclusion, conflict literacy inevitably relies on some measure of [diversity competencies](#).

Cultural Humility

Cultural humility is a process of self-reflection to understand personal and systemic biases and to develop and maintain respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust.⁷ It is a basic knowledge of the diversity, worldviews, spiritual, and cultural values of different peoples, and the historical and contemporary issues that influence them.⁸

- **Context & Usage**

Cultural Humility counters the concept of cultural or diversity “competency,” which may suggest the mastery of knowledge or skills. Cultural Humility implies that we can never know everything about others.

Cultural Identity / Background

Cultural Identity or Background is the identity or feeling of belonging to a cultural group. It is part of a person’s self-conception and self-perception. It relates to any kind of social group that has its own distinct culture and can be defined in groups or individuals, by themselves or others, for example, nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, generation, locality, etc.

Cultural Safety

Cultural Safety is a concept that originated and is primarily used in the healthcare domain. The concept emphasizes the power imbalance inherent in the patient-practitioner relationship. A culturally safe environment is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people; where there is no assault, challenge, or denial of their identity, of who they are, and what they need.

- **Context & Usage**

The term was developed by Maori nurse Irihapeti Ramsden in the context of nursing care provided to Indigenous peoples in New Zealand. The term has since been extended and applied to Indigenous peoples in other countries where service inequalities persist. This concept shifts power and authority to the Indigenous patient receiving care, who is given the ultimate say in whether care provided was culturally safe or not. It centres upon sharing: shared respect, shared meaning, and shared knowledge and experience, of learning together with dignity and attention.

Culture

Culture is a social system of meaning and custom that is developed by a group of people. It is distinguished by a set of spoken and unspoken rules that shape values, beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviours, customs, and styles of communication. It is an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behaviour that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations. It is dynamic and changes with time.¹⁴

Disability / Persons with disabilities

Drawing on UBC's *Policy LR7: Accommodation for Students with Disabilities* a person with disability is someone who:

- Has a significant and persistent mobility, sensory, learning, or other physical or mental health impairment, which may be permanent or temporary;
- Experiences functional restrictions or limitations of their ability to perform the range of life's activities; and/or
- May experience attitudinal and/or environmental barriers that hamper their full and self-directed participation in life.

- **Context & Usage**

The above definition recognizes that barriers to inclusion are often related to a society's norms, attitudes, and beliefs, rather than the capacity of the person.

Diverse Groups / Diverse Students / Diverse Populations

The entire collective that represents the full array of characteristics present within a group of people.

- **Context & Usage**

Interpretation varies widely among these terms, and they are commonly used incorrectly. When using the word diverse, it should only be applied to an entire collective (e.g., the entire student body is diverse), and not for a subset of a collective, nor as a euphemism for historically, persistently, or systemically marginalized people (e.g. "diverse students were less likely to feel sense of belonging" is unsuitable). The latter usage assumes that the other part of the collective is "not diverse", which is rarely accurate and can imply that certain identities or aspects of diversity are fundamentally different from the rest of the group.

Diversity

Differences in the lived experiences and perspectives of people that may include 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, and/or socio-economic situations.

- **Context & Usage**

Diversity is a concept meant to convey the existence of difference. Each person's

unique combination of differences contributes to their experiences in ways that can be both positive and negative. Diversity is not a spectrum or a measure. One person cannot be more diverse than another. Diversity is created when people who are different from one another come together, and includes everyone in the room.

EDI

An abbreviation for equity, diversity and inclusion.

EDI Skills and Competencies

The attributes, knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, values, and/or principles that demonstrate an understanding of equity, a commitment to diversity, and an ability to create inclusive environments. There is no one set of EDI skills and competencies used across contexts.

- Common aspects of EDI skills and competencies²⁰ are demonstrated / observed at an:
 - Individual level (e.g. individual awareness and / or education)
 - Interpersonal level (understanding, valuing and working with others in groups)
 - Organizational / institutional level (understanding inequity and demonstrating skills that foster equitable and inclusive policies and practices)
 - Societal level (contributing to systems change and social justice)
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Engaging across differences

Engaging across difference refers specifically to interactions between people or groups, i.e. working and/or interacting with people who are different from you in ways characterized by reciprocity, mutual understanding, and respect.

- **Context & Usage**

When one engages across differences in a way that enriches learning, we are referring to the collaboration of those who are different from one another, which deepens learning by broadening perspectives.

Equity / Equitable

Equity refers to achieving parity in policy, process and outcomes for historically and/or currently underrepresented and/or marginalized people and groups while accounting for diversity. It considers power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes, in three main areas:

- Representational equity: the proportional participation at all levels of an institution;
- Resource equity: the distribution of resources in order to close equity gaps; and
- Equity-mindedness: the demonstration of an awareness of, and willingness to, address equity issues.
- **Context & Usage**

In the university context, equity requires the creation of opportunities for historically, persistently, or systemically marginalized populations of students, staff, and faculty to have equal access to education, programs, and growth opportunities that are capable of closing achievement gaps. This requires recognizing that not

everyone is starting from the same place or history, and that deliberate measures to remove barriers to opportunities may be needed to ensure fair processes and outcomes.

Equity Seeking

Equity-seeking groups are communities that experience significant collective barriers in participating in society. This could include attitudinal, historic, social and environmental barriers based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation and transgender status, etc. Equity-seeking groups are those that identify barriers to equal access, opportunities and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination and actively seek social justice and reparation.

Historically, persistently, or systemically marginalized

This language was intentionally and carefully chosen during the development of UBC's Inclusion Action Plan to recognize that:

- UBC and other institutions throughout Canada were created at a time when societal norms privileged and included some groups and disadvantaged and excluded others. In Canada, these disadvantaged groups have been defined as Indigenous people, women, people with disabilities, racialized people, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.
 - This history entrains a legacy of day-to-day barriers that contributed to past, and perpetuate current, inequities which compound over time;
 - Our systems, in the form of policies, practices, culture, behaviours, and beliefs continue to maintain these barriers in the ways that they continue to create the institution. It is often not an individual intentional, but rather a systematic effort to discriminate. It is an unconscious, unrecognized practice of doing things as they have always been done (and recreating the historical exclusions).
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IBPOC

Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour (see also "BIPOC", above).

- **Context & Usage**

In Canada, IBPOC may be used (rather than BIPOC, an acronym originating in the USA around 2010) in efforts to recognize 'First Peoples first' because of the unique history and context of colonization, displacement, and cultural genocide enacted upon Indigenous peoples in Canada, and the ongoing national conversation about reconciliation.

Inclusion

Inclusion is an active, intentional, and continuous process to address inequities in power and privilege, and build a respectful and diverse community that ensures welcoming spaces and opportunities to flourish for all.

- **Context & Usage**

It is important to note that inclusion and Indigenization/Decolonization are two

seemingly related concepts with distinct histories, contexts, and frames of reference. It cannot be assumed inclusion is a substitute for Indigenization/Decolonization.

Inclusive Excellence

Inclusive Excellence (IE) is a systems-wide approach to equity, diversity and inclusion. IE states that true excellence in an institution is unattainable without inclusion – and in fact, diversity and inclusion are fundamental to excellence. It moves away from historical approaches to diversity that focused on numbers and representation. Instead, IE helps us think about the institution as a vibrant community that can create excellence by embedding diversity throughout the institution.

- **Context & Usage**

The Inclusive Excellence (IE) model is grounded in work from the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U). Universities Canada adopted Inclusive Excellence principles in 2017. IE appears as a key strategy in *Shaping UBC's Next Century: 2018-2028 Strategic Plan*

Indigenous

The term 'Indigenous' encompasses First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, either collectively or separately, and is a preferred term in international usage, e.g., the 'U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.' In its derivation from international movements, it is associated more with activism than government policy and so has emerged, for many, as the preferred term.

- **Context & Usage**

For more information, refer to UBC's [Indigenous People's Language Guidelines](#).

Intersectionality

The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity as they apply to a given individual or group. Intersectional identities create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

- **Context & Usage**

The term was coined by lawyer, civil rights advocate, and critical race theory scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe the "various ways in which race and gender intersect in shaping structural and political aspects of violence against women of color".

Marginalization/Marginalized

A social process by which individuals or groups are (intentionally or unintentionally) distanced from access to power and resources and constructed as insignificant, peripheral, or less valuable/privileged to a community or "mainstream" society.

- **Context & Usage**

This term describes a social process, so as not to imply a lack of agency. Marginalized groups or people are those excluded from mainstream social, economic, cultural, or political life. Examples of marginalized groups include, but are by no means limited

to, groups excluded due to race, religion, political or cultural group, age, gender, or financial status. To what extent such populations are marginalized, however, is context specific and reliant on the cultural organization of the social site in question.

Systemic Bias/Institutional Bias

Systemic bias or institutional bias occurs when systems or processes within an institution, organization or unit are designed to disparately impact, and result in differential outcomes for, marginalized groups. Systemic bias creates and sustains institutional barriers to equity and social justice.

Systemic Racism/Institutional Racism

Systemic racism or institutional racism refers to the ways that whiteness and white superiority become embedded in the policies and processes of an institution, resulting in a system that advantages white people and disadvantages People of Colour.

Unconscious bias / Implicit Bias

Unconscious (or implicit, hidden) biases are mental processes that operate outside of our consciousness, intentional awareness, or control.³⁵ Unconscious biases include:

- Affinity bias: The tendency to show favour and/or feel more kinship towards people who are more like us. It may be based on some aspect of identity that we share with that person, or it could be similar interests and backgrounds.
 - Attribution bias: How people explain the behaviour or outcomes for themselves or others.³⁶ For example, attributing a person's success to their natural abilities, versus seeing that success as the result of luck or favoritism.
 - Confirmation bias: The tendency to more easily accept, search for, interpret, or favour information that aligns or agrees with one's existing beliefs and opinions.
 - Performance bias: An assessment of people's competence based on some aspect of their appearance or identity.
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Underrepresented

Individuals or groups with insufficient or inadequate representation in various aspects of university life, often determined when compared to their proportional composition in Canadian society, but in the university setting, other considerations may also override strictly proportional representation.

Universal Design

Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability. An environment (or any building, product, or service in that environment) should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to use it. Universal design constitutes the equitable access to spaces, objects, environments, and services.