

INCLUDE IT: Embed EDI Dialogue

WHY IS TALKING ABOUT EDI IMPORTANT?

Messages about equity, diversity and inclusion, when meaningful and authentic, establish a culture where everyone feels they are valued and can contribute. When driven by leadership, these messages set standards for the types of behaviours that are appropriate. These conversations are where culture is forged, and new, EDI-supporting activities can be considered and initiated. As norms of open dialogue, curious engagement and exploration of different perspectives become established, it becomes easier to have those conversations. Talking about EDI embeds these values and principles into a unit's culture.

One great way to keep a unit focussed on equity, diversity and inclusion is to create a regular agenda item in unit meetings with EDI updates.

TIPS FOR ESTABLISHING A STANDING ITEM ON EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

- The first time this item appears on the agenda, include a meaningful presentation about UVic's EDI work and facilitate dialogue on what the unit could do.
- Assign responsibility for this topic to several people with the authority and knowledge to address it on a regular basis. This may be a director or chair, or their deputy; someone in the unit who does specialized work or has a role related to equity, diversity and inclusion; or the unit's equity committee. Shared responsibility for this item helps keep it grounded across the unit's work and ensures it is seen as significant to the unit as a whole, not just the agenda of a single person.
- Explore differences between the three terms—and related ones as well—and address them individually as well as together, so that you address multiple dimensions of a healthy workplace.
- Over time, build in a balance of sharing information with facilitating conversation or gathering feedback. Ensure the group is well prepared for discussion and that wide-ranging perspectives are welcomed. Possible questions for conversation include:
 - What changes have we made recently (or: What practices do we have) that allow us to better meet the needs of the diverse groups we work with?
 - What gaps in our services with respect to EDI have we noticed? How might we address them?
 - What interesting ideas related to EDI have you seen or read about that we could consider?
 - How well are we doing with creating an inclusive culture in our unit? What else should we be doing, or should we stop doing, to create an inclusive culture in our unit? (It is important to set the expectation that members of the unit have different experiences, and that there probably are both things that are going well and things that could be

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improved. Allow space for criticism and contradictory perspectives, and invite feedback outside the meeting for those who may not want to speak up in a group.)

- Follow up on previous items. Reports on actions taken; share information gathered about university practices or supports; reflect on education experiences.
- Similar to other agenda items, the unit leader is responsible for ensuring that there is content for this agenda item, and for following up on items, concerns and plans so that the dialogue in the meetings leads to meaningful effects with respect to equity, diversity and inclusion in the unit.

HERE ARE SOME IDEAS OF TOPICS TO DISCUSS:

- Report from the unit's equity committee (or, discuss how to establish an equity committee; learn more on the [Equity Committees webpage](#)).
- Information on upcoming equity-related events (e.g., National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women; Orange Shirt Day; 5 Days of Action; Pink Shirt Day) and discuss how the unit can support the event or do something themselves for the occasion.
- Discuss the links between equity, diversity and inclusion and the work of the unit
- UVic's commitments to and work towards the Truth & Reconciliation Commitment Calls to Action, including the [President's response](#).
- UVic's [equity statement](#). Consider ways to create a more welcoming process for applicants and those who are hired and ways to learn about the identities listed in the statement.
- Learning about how to integrate EDI in hiring. See the [Hiring Resources webpage](#) for ideas.
- UVic's Expand. Engage. Encourage. Shared Practices.
- Ask staff to read an educational document or watch a video in advance and then share ideas for how it might apply to the work and context of the unit.
- Review [UVic's equity reports](#) (e.g., report to the BC Human Rights Tribunal) and discuss what ideas might be integrated into your unit.
- Provide reports on the diverse experiences and demographics of the populations served by your unit and ideas for initiatives to increase access.

NEXT STEPS FOR EMBEDDING EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION DIALOGUES

Talk with your unit about your interest in adding regular check-ins about EDI and see what ideas they have, as well as who is interested in supporting this. Create a list of relevant topics for the first while and plan a roll-out of this topic with support from key people in your unit. Then, as you implement these ideas over subsequent months, follow up to see what's working and what else is needed.

As this grows, you may find other ways to share EDI information regularly such as through a newsletter, website, or other outlet, as well as expand the people involved, perspectives shared, and actions taken.