



Department of Geography

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee

Terms of Reference, April 2024

Role Description

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee's role is to help to ensure that the Department is meeting its obligations under current University and Provincial equity mandates and policies. From this baseline, we aim to be responsive to Department-specific needs and priorities, and self-governing in our corresponding actions. EDI represents shared values. 'Equity' refers to the core value of treating all individuals fairly by taking their unique circumstances into account. 'Diversity' reflects the value of seeing and supporting the strengths of individuals in terms of their race, ethnicity, ability, gender, culture, religion, sexual orientation, Indigeneity, neurodiversity, age, etc. 'Inclusion' seeks active and intentional engagement and respect for individuals with diverse backgrounds. The goals of EDI are to support a working, learning, and research environment that is inclusive, validating, and enriching that fosters a sense of belonging for all of its members. The Committee aids the Department in enacting the University of Victoria's most current plans related to EDI such as the UVic [Equity Action Plan 2022](#) and the UVic [Indigenous Plan](#). Please see other key links on the Department of Geography Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement document.

Scope

1. Raise awareness of EDI issues, initiatives, events, resources, policies, and practices at the University of Victoria among department faculty, staff, and students.
2. Propose EDI initiatives, events, training, and policies to support UVic's Equity Action Plan.
3. Provide support and advice to the Department in upholding EDI goals and mandates (e.g., EDI hiring practices and actions).
4. Promote accountability for equity practices, initiatives, and commitments within the Department and forward issues to the Equity and Human Rights Office when appropriate.

Responsibilities

1. Ensure that the Department offers a clear pathway and an accessible, confidential, and safe platform for communicating EDI policy and practice concerns of faculty, staff, and students within the unit.
2. Be active and responsive to address systemic EDI concerns for undergraduate students, graduate students, staff, postdoc fellows and faculty.

3. Increase awareness of EDI supports, practices, events, resources, and policies through information exchange channels with unit members. Materials can be shared through email, and via the Department website and list serves, which will need to be regularly updated. Contact names and emails of all current EDI committee members will be indicated on the Department website (with permission).
4. Support EDI activities in the unit and promote and encourage attendance at equity-related workshops and events at the faculty and university levels (e.g., Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation (LTSI) and Equity and Human Rights Office).
5. Update Department EDI policies and procedures every two years
6. Under ideal circumstances, an annual online equity survey questionnaire will be launched in April to see how well the Department is supporting a working, learning, and research environment that is inclusive, validating, and enriching for all of its members.
7. The EDI Committee will collaborate on an annual **EDI report** for the Department, which will be submitted at the end of the Spring term. This report will provide information on activities and departmental progress on EDI initiatives, issues, and survey results (within parameters respecting confidentiality).
8. The EDI Committee responds to systemic issues related to programs, curriculum and research. The EDI Committee will work closely and liaise with the Equity and Human Rights (EQHR) Office for case resolution of issues around discrimination, harassment, harm and trauma arising for students, faculty, postdoc fellows, staff, community members and research associates and those with marginalized identities (See [Equity Action Plan 2022](#)).

Composition and Procedures

1. At the start of each term, the Department Chair will launch an open invitation to all members (students, staff and faculty) to participate in the EDI committee, and report on the selection process with transparency.
2. The ideal Committee will be comprised of four faculty members (one of whom will serve as Committee Chair), one undergraduate student rep, one graduate student rep, and one staff rep. Faculty members will be appointed for two years (ideally with staggered terms for continuity). Students and staff may opt for 1-2 year participation terms. All committee members will support the work of the committee.
3. The Committee composition will include student representatives (undergrad and graduate) from a diversity of geographic areas – human geography, human-environment relationships, physical geography, geomatics, etc. Student representatives represent the voices of the student body. Their role is to offer and contribute advice.
4. Staff person committee member(s) represent the voices of staff members. Their role is to offer and contribute advice.

5. The EDI Committee Chair may add additional ad hoc members as necessary depending on current priorities.
6. As noted above (8), the EDI committee responds to systemic issues; while individual concerns and case resolution about discrimination, harassment, harm and trauma are the responsibility of the Equity and Human Rights office.
7. Two or more meetings per academic term will be held to share information, plan events, etc., but ad hoc meetings will be established based on current needs and planning priorities within the Department.
8. The Chair of the EDI Committee will also serve on the Faculty of Social Sciences EDI Committee.
9. The EDI Committee members will review these terms of reference every two years, and the committee will propose amendments to the Department where warranted.