Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Considerations for Programs & Certificates

Guiding Prompts

Overview

"[S]tudent experiences vary, and for some students, exceptional experiences are only attained after systemic barriers to equity and access are addressed"
—Igniting Purpose: The Student Experience Action Plan, p. 11

The development of new programs and certificates at the undergraduate and graduate levels along with substantive changes to existing programs provide an important opportunity to respond to and enact institutional commitments to remove barriers to student success, improve the student experience and support the recruitment and retention of students with diverse backgrounds, identities, experiences and access needs. This document offers an approach to addressing some of these opportunities, and is intended to inspire reflection on potential improvements to proposals.

Equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (EDIA) cannot be seen as items in a checklist, nor can the opportunities be separated solely into a distinct category. Instead, attempts to address EDIA should be woven into each aspect of the proposal. The below will support you in doing just that. If this work is new to you, we offer a few resources at the bottom of this document to help shape your thinking and learning.

How to use the below prompts to complete the proposal template

The below questions have been grouped according to specific categories where there is an identified opportunity to remove barriers to student success, enhance the overall student experience, and increase a sense of belonging for new and existing students. The prompts are intended to shape your responses in the proposal template. While the template still includes a separate box for EDIA, we encourage you to approach each section through an EDIA framework by using the questions as a starting point. Not all questions or categories below will apply to every proposal, and some may be missing. This guide will be adjusted regularly.

Process for receiving advice on proposals prior to submission

Once you have developed your draft proposal using the guidance in this document, please reach out to an EDI and/or programs person in your college to discuss your plans for incorporating

EDIA into the proposal. Recommended contacts in the Colleges whose responsibility is related to EDI and/or programs:

- College of Natural and Applied Sciences (CNAS)
    - Tara McGee (Associate College Dean, EDI)
    - Carlos 'Lobo' Cruz Noguez (Associate College Dean, Education)
- College of Social Sciences and Humanities (CSSH)
    - TBD (Associate College Dean, EDI)
    - Monisha Vinod (Strategic Initiatives Officer, EDI)
    - Helen Vallianatos (Associate College Dean, Education)
- College of Health Sciences (CHS)
    - Alex Marshall (Strategic Initiatives Officer, EDI)
    - Patricia Manns (Associate College Dean, Education)

These contacts will offer feedback in consultation with EDI leads within your unit as appropriate. For the faculties of Augustana, Campus Saint-Jean, and Native Studies please reach out directly to the Office of the Vice-Provost (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) for support.

Guiding Prompts

Students

- Have you discussed how to recruit students from equity-denied or underserved groups in your field?[1]
- How will students entering the program be selected?
    - Has there been a discussion about barriers posed by admission requirements for people from equity-denied groups, and how to overcome barriers?
- Once in the program, how are students being supported so they can excel?

Instructors

- Representation is important and can increase the willingness of students with a diversity of backgrounds and experiences to consider applying to your program.
    - Describe efforts in your department/faculty to recruit and retain faculty and instructors from equity-denied groups.

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[1] Equity-denied groups may include Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of African descent, racialized people, people with disabilities, members of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, members of religious minority groups, women and gender-diverse people. Underserved include also those students – first generation, rural – who may encounter barriers to their studies.

- How will all instructors in this program be informed about EDIA and inclusive course design principles? How will they be supported in implementing these principles?
  - Will they complete the university's equity, diversity, and inclusion modules?
  - Will instructors utilize EDIA resources, such as those provided by the Centre for Teaching and Learning?
- What training is provided to clinical and sessional instructors about expectations related to EDIA (for example to ensure that students are learning in settings that are anti-racist, gender-inclusive and without bias)?

Program structure

- Is there potential for flexibility in delivery to reach equity-denied students (eg. using different modalities, online, evening, etc)?
- What considerations have been given to ensure learning opportunities in this program are accessible to all students including those with disabilities?
- Can a reduced course load for a student be accommodated?
- Career pathways and relationship to external partners
  - Does the program include work-integrated learning? Are those administering work-integrated learning programs aware of tools to ensure safety of all students?

Curriculum

- EDI principles built into curriculum
  - How will diverse perspectives be incorporated into the curriculum?
    - Reading list
    - Content
    - Guest speakers
  - What are the alternative ways that students can participate in classes?
  - Do assessment practices take EDIA into consideration? How will you know these practices are working?

Inclusion, discrimination and harassment

- Are there classroom climate, discrimination and harassment concerns that have been raised by current students about their learning environment that will be addressed through the proposed program? If so, how does the program help address these concerns?
- Are there specific EDIA issues within the field of study? If so, how does the program help address these?

- Will classroom climate, discrimination and harassment, and belonging efforts and expectations be discussed with students? Will the development of community guidelines for classrooms or cohorts be encouraged?
- What activities occur within the department/faculty to foster an inclusive environment for students?
- How are students involved in decision-making within the department?
- How will students be made aware of existing safety (discrimination, harassment, sexual violence) resources on campus? Will any new program-level supports be provided?
- What training is provided to work-integrated learning supervisors about expectations related to EDIA? (eg. to ensure that students are learning in settings that are anti-racist, gender-inclusive, and without bias; to ensure the workplace is accessible.)
- How are EDIA concerns (eg. harassment, biases) within experiential learning settings addressed?

Additional considerations for professional degrees/programs

- How do EDIA considerations for this program align with or exceed professional accreditation requirements?
- How might alumni from equity-denied groups be engaged to support current students and program development?

Reporting on implementation

- How will you track and report on your progress towards implementing these EDIA activities, goals, and outcomes?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
University of Alberta Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Module
Centre for Teaching and Learning EDI resources
Centre for Teaching and Learning: EDI for Assessment
Centre for Teaching and Learning: Accessibility Resources