

Equity Diversity and Inclusion Lexicon - Principles and Definitions*

Equity: Fair and just treatment of all potential and existing members of the university community through the creation of opportunities to address historic and current disadvantage for underrepresented populations. These opportunities will lead to equitable outcomes in the context of learning, teaching, research, service and employment, including closing representation and participation gaps within our university community. Equity requires an intentional commitment to strategic priorities, resources, respect and civility, and ongoing action and assessment of progress towards achieving specified goals.

Diversity: Individual differences (e.g., personality, learning styles, thought and life experiences) and group/social differences (e.g., Aboriginal, race/ethnicity, class, sex, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, ability as cultural, political, religious/spirituality, mental health status, language or other affiliations). To have a truly diverse university community requires an inherent commitment, demonstrated through actions, that recognizes and values these differences.

Inclusion: The active and intentional operationalization of diversity and equity within every facet of university life and activities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect. Organizationally, inclusion requires the identification and removal of barriers (e.g. physical, procedural, visible, invisible, intentional, unintentional) that inhibit members' participation and contribution. Inclusion also requires every member of the community to demonstrate university values and principles of fairness, justice, equity, and respect in learning, teaching, research, service and employment, by being open to different voices and perspectives, developing an understanding of different cultures, experiences and communities, and making a conscious effort to be welcoming, helpful and respectful to everyone.

Institutional Diversity: Organizational change and systemic approaches by which higher education, governments, companies, and non-profits develop, execute, and assess best practices in order to embed and infuse equity, diversity and inclusion into the fabric and culture of the workplace.

Fairness and Equitable Treatment: Each person matters as an individual. Decisions and actions must consider the dignity and rights of the individual to be considered to be fair. Equitable treatment does not necessarily mean treating everyone the same. Treating people fairly may require different approaches that do not imply a lesser standard of performance.

**Several of the definitions were cited from the [Access Ryerson Accessibility Overview document](#), and several grew out of deliberations from EDI staff who developed these principles and definitions for Ryerson University's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) division.*

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Disruption: We welcome the Disruption that disability makes in contrast to ignoring it by trying to convince people that disabled people are "normal". Expecting that disabled people will disrupt the normal way of doing things (as well as operating with a disrupted notion of 'disability as problem') allows folks to ask for help when needed rather than trying to make do in normative, constrained systems. In addition, we disrupt the preconceived ideas and assumptions typically held about people with disabilities and what is understood as "normal".

Respect: Respect is the positive regard of one person for another, which is demonstrated through actions and words that show this esteem for the individual. Respect is both given and received, and is earned through this reciprocity. From an equity, diversity and inclusion perspective, respect involves understanding and valuing differences.

Civility: Civility involves acting with regard to other's feelings. Specific actions may be considered to be civil or uncivil depending on the place, time and context. Differences including, but not limited to, social role, gender, social class, religion and cultural identity may all affect the perception of a given behaviour. To create a civil environment requires that each community member develop an understanding of the diversity of perspectives and experiences within the university, and adjust their behaviour appropriately based on those differences. In addition, in situations where incivility occurs unintentionally, the behaviour is not excused. Rather, these situations must be used as a learning experience to guide future behaviour.

Multicultural: Consists of or is representative of different cultures. To build a multicultural community we must welcome, celebrate and recognize the differences of individuals and the diverse cultural communities that make up the university.

Social Innovation: Social innovation refers to new ideas and approaches to resolve social challenges, such as historic and current disadvantage for underrepresented populations, creating new opportunities that lead to equitable outcomes. To be considered to be a social innovation an initiative must make lasting changes to the perceptions, behaviours and structures that previously gave rise to these challenges, strengthening individuals and communities.

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