The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) at the University of Calgary – Committees Terms of Reference

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and
Accessibility Committee
2022-2023 Terms of Reference

Governor Responsible: Vice-President (Student Life)
Committee Member Responsible: Chair
Effective Date: February 10, 2023
Last Reviewed: February 2, 2023
Board of Director Approval Date: (Pending)

**Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee, Graduate Students' Association,
University of Calgary Address:** 1030 ES, 844 Campus Place NW, Calgary, AB, T2N 1N4, CANADA
Webpage: https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/services/committees/edicommittee/
Phone: (403) 220-5997
Email: edi.gsa@ucalgary.ca
Instagram: @edicgsacalgary

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee 2022-2023 Terms of Reference

Establishment

The Board of Directors of the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) of the University of Calgary (U of C) established the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) Committee under the provisions of the GSA's General Committee Terms of Reference and the authorities set out within in 2020. In the event of a conflict between the provisions of the EDIA Committee Terms of Reference and the General Terms of Reference, the General Committee Terms of Reference will govern. The Board of Directors of the GSA has the ultimate authority.

Purpose

The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) Committee is committed to providing a diverse and inclusive environment and equitable opportunities for graduate students and committee members, including graduate students, the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Board of Directors, Executives, and staff. The EDIA Committee is the GSA's primary graduate student advisory on EDIA matters and initiatives. The EDIA Committee serves equity seeking and deserving groups, including individuals who identify as Indigenous, Black, members of a racialized group, women, disabled or diversely abled, or as 2SLGBTQIAP+ (Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, agender, asexual, aromantic, pansexual, and all gender and sexually diverse identities), and other socioeconomic and religious groups within the U of C community and broader community. The EDIA Committee will work to amplify the voices of equity seeking and deserving groups, bring awareness to issues that may contribute to discrimination in education and work environments, make recommendations to the GSA and broader U of C community, and improve EDIA efforts within the GSA itself.

Mandate

The mandate of the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee shall be:

The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) Committee of the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) of the University of Calgary strives to remove barriers for equity seeking and deserving groups and advocate for equity, diversity, and inclusion through representation, education, awareness, engagement, and review of policy and procedures. The committee does this work for University of Calgary (U of C) graduate students, GSA Board of Directors, Executives, staff members, and others within the local community and broader community because every individual is allowed fair and equitable treatment, representation, and inclusion in a manner that encourages personal growth and understanding. We do this work, so all members of the U of C community are empowered and provided with equitable opportunities to live, learn, work, and thrive. The committee operates continuously in any virtual or physical space where U of C graduate students exist and, in the communities, they have ties.

Limitations

The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) Committee shall not provide peer-to-peer advising or counsel around personal EDI matters. If a student approaches a committee member or the committee as a whole with personal EDIA concerns, the EDIA Committee member, and the committee itself will determine the steps required to advocate on behalf of the student to the appropriate leadership. The student will be directed toward resources to assist them with any advice our counsel required.

Authority

The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) Committee is a standing committee of the Graduate Students' Association (GSA). The authority of the EDIA Committee is derived from the Board of Directors of the GSA. These Terms of Reference are subject to the approval of the GSA Board of Directors.

Timeline

The timeline for the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) Committee shall be as follows:

a) Run continuously throughout the calendar year.
b) Hold monthly meetings and, or other meetings called on by the Chair.
c) Meet a minimum of once per month or more if deemed necessary by the Chair. For this policy, the Spring and Summer terms will be counted as a single academic term.

Membership

In addition to the membership specified in the General Terms of Reference, the membership of the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee shall be composed of those described in the General Terms of Reference and:

a) Members must be active members in the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) as subject to Bylaws 4.2 and 4.6.
b) Members must attend and actively participate in all committee meetings and any working group meetings as required.
c) Absence from two monthly meetings per term of service may result in committee member removal.
d) Equity seeking and deserving groups such as but not limited to individuals who identify as Indigenous, Black, members of a racialized group (people of diverse ethnic or cultural origin), newcomers and new Canadians, women, disabled or diversely abled, or as 2SLGBTQIAP+ (Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, agender, asexual, aromantic, pansexual, and all gender and sexually diverse identities), and other socioeconomic and religious groups.
e) Chair (voting).
f) Vice-Chair, Advocacy (voting).
g) Vice-Chair, Student Life (voting).
h) The GSA President (non-voting).
i) Executive Director of the GSA (non-voting).
j) The GSA Vice-President Student Life (non-voting).
k) One staff member of the GSA (non-voting).
l) Ten (10) to fifteen (15) active members of the GSA are selected by the Chair and Vice-Chairs in an interview process and recruited on a volunteer basis (voting).
m) Members would have to declare family relations, spousal, and adult interdependent relationships (as defined by Alberta law) as a potential conflict of interest as per Bylaw 7.1.
n) Current Chair or Vice-Chairs may not be elected or hold these positions if engaged in family relations, spousal, or otherwise interdependent relationships, with the GSA President, due to a conflict of interest.
o) Committee recruitment will occur once a year and commence in August. However, other considerations such as a drop of fifty per cent (50%) in members will be accounted for, thus, allowing for recruitment calls outside of the month of August.
p) Other invited guests (non-voting) may attend meetings at the discretion of the Chair or Vice-Chairs.

The following qualifications will be considered for appointing members to the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee:

a) Knowledge, living or lived experience with EDIA matters.
b) Experience working in teams, with community groups, boards, or organizations.
c) Commitment as a change agent in EDIA matters in the U of C graduate community and the broader community.

d) Ability and willingness to participate in meetings, support Advocacy and Student Life initiatives, communicate the needs of the committee, and share knowledge, among other things.

Appointment

Appointment of the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee Chair, Vice-Chairs, and Members shall be composed of those described in the General Terms of Reference, and:

a) The Chair, Vice-Chairs, and Members must be Active Members (i.e., current, registered graduate students) as per Bylaws 4.2 and 4.6.
b) Chair and Vice-Chairspositions will be appointed by the Board of Directors after an appropriate recruitment process open to all Active Members.
c) If the Chair or Vice-Chair(s) volunteer resigns, is removed, or is unable to fulfil their duties within the one-year term, the tasks may be shared by two other Chair or Vice-Chair volunteers until a replacement Chair or Vice-Chair has been appointed.
d) Chair and Vice-Chairs shall be appointed for a one (1) year term, and they may be re-appointed upon subsequent applications.
    • The GSA will offers an open recruitment process where individuals may apply for the Chair or Vice-Chair roles.
    • All eligible applicants from both the (re)appointment recommendation and the open recruitment process will participate in interviews lead by the GSA Vice-President (Student Life).
e) Non leadership member positions (i.e., non-Chair or Vice-Chair positions) will be appointed by the Chair and Vice-Chairs, or by the Board of Directors if required.

Chair and Vice-Chairs Responsibilities

In addition to the Chair and Vice-Chairs responsibilities outlined in the General Committee Terms of Reference, the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee Chair and Vice-Chairs shall:

a) Recruit, process, interview, and appoint new members.
b) Initiate, organize, and execute communications and projects about the needs of the committee and overall Advocacy and Student Life initiatives.
c) Update the Microsoft Teams committee channel as needed.
d) Manage the committee's Instagram page (@edicgsacalgary), including researching and creating content, and the posting schedule.
e) Collaborate with other GSA committees/subcommittees, as desired in various capacities, not limited to but including in a consultancy capacity.
f) Approve spending of the committee's budget.

The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee Chair shall:

a) Maintain a record of current members.
b) Schedule all committee meetings.
c) Create an agenda for each committee meeting.
d) Prepare monthly and yearly written reports on the committee.
e) Create initiatives that advance the committee's communications, events, resources, training, and team development.
f) Appoint Advocacy or Student Life Vice-Chairs to various tasks as needed.
g) Appoint sub-committees to various tasks as needed.
h) Take on collaborations that are feasible and align with the needs of the committee.
i) Provide leadership to manage potential conflict in the committee towards respectful resolution.
j) Direct decision-making processes using a consensus model, if possible, to ensure that equity seeking and deserving voices are included in actions and decisions.
k) Be the point of contact with GSA staff, Executives, the Board of Directors, the University of Calgary community, and the broader community concerning U of C graduate students committee matters.
l) Connect with other EDIA graduate student groups in the U of C and broader community.

The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee Vice-Chairs shall:

a) Record and file minutes for each committee meeting.
b) Take on collaborations that are feasible and align with the needs of the committee.
c) Assist the Chair in various tasks as needed.

Members Responsibilities

The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee members are expected to:

a) Contribute time, knowledge, skill, and expertise to the fulfilment of the committee's responsibilities.
b) Understand their role and expectations.
c) Understand and follow the mandate of the committee.
d) Undertake work necessary to implement the committee's Advocacy and Student life initiatives.
e) Maintain a high degree of professionalism.
f) Respect the individual worth and dignity of other members and, at all times, work together to achieve a common vision for the community, utilizing the diverse knowledge, expertise, and talents of all members to optimal advantage.
g) Challenge ideas and not people, creating a climate where it is okay to disagree.
h) Communicate directly, concisely, and honestly, listen without interruption, and be open-minded, allowing a variety of opinions to be heard.
i) Communicate using inclusive and non-discriminatory language, respecting the spirit of the Alberta Human Rights Code.
j) Refrain from criticizing individual members, the Chair, the Vice-Chairs, GSA staff, or GSA Executives in a way that casts aspersions on their professional

competency and credibility.

k) Respect all decisions made by the committee's leadership team.

GSA Board of Directors, Executives, and Staff Members Responsibilities

The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Board of Directors, Executive, and staff have three principal functions concerning the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee:

a) GSA presence and participation role.
b) GSA policy advice role.
c) GSA supporting staff role.

Operational Procedures

The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) Committee shall take on projects, from time to time, by approval of the Chair and Vice-Chairs, and, or approval by the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) President.

The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee shall:

a) Provide a safe space for individuals to come and talk (connecting outwards to have conversations) while complying with the limitations of advising and counselling indicated in the "Limitations" section of this document.
b) Advocate on behalf of graduate students' interests from a peer-to-peer level.
c) Organize and execute communications, events, workshops, and collaborations with other committees/sub-committees and DGAs. Considerations may include attending town halls, creating speaker/talk series, publishing EDIA related blogs/articles, and creating an EDIA awareness calendar.
d) Conduct policy, procedure, review, and revision at the GSA and graduate student level (committee can pass information to GSA Executives for policy and procedure review).
e) Vet campaign requests.
f) Research and recommend potential donation recipients in the EDIA space either nationally or internationally.
g) Pursue smaller projects as required, such as providing media statements.
h) Consider committee member initiatives.
i) Create a directory of the services available to students within the EDIA space within the University and the broader community.
j) Create EDI advocacy and other resources.

Quorum

As per the Graduate Students' Association (GSA's) Bylaw 8.11, the quorum of the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee shall consist of at least four (4) voting members:

a) One of whom must be the Chair or Vice-Chair of the EDI Committee.
b) Fifty (50) per cent or greater of whom must not be the GSA President, Executive Director of the GSA, or GSA staff members.

Voting and Decisions

The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee will vote and make decisions based on the following terms:

a) Each voting member is allowed one vote.
b) Decisions shall be made by discussion and shall occur by consensus where possible.
c) For recommendations to the Board of Directors, a formal vote must occur:
   i. Voting decisions made by the committee must have a quorum and shall be by majority vote.
   ii. A proxy vote may be accepted at the discretion of the Chair.
d) Voting may be conducted in person or by electronic means, such as through virtual meetings or via email.
e) Should there be a conflict of interest between a member of the committee and a voting item, the member must make this known to the Chair prior to the meeting.
   i. The Chair will assess the nature of the conflict of interest and determine if the member will recuse themselves from the vote.
      • The Chair may also decide if the member with a conflict of interest will leave the room during voting, or be permitted to attend the meeting where the vote is taking place.
   ii. Should the Chair have a conflict of interest with a voting item, the Vice-Chair will be informed, evaluate the nature of the conflict, and decide on recusal and/or attendance at the meeting.

Review and Evaluation

The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee Terms of Reference shall be reviewed every year at the discretion of the Board of Directors , and:

a) Changes to the document must be approved by the Board of Directors.
b) The relevance of the committee shall be reviewed by the committee every year at the discretion of the Board and the Chair.
c) The annual report, including the committee activities, recommendations, and potential actions to be carried out by the next Chair, will be an essential component of the review process. The Board of Directors will analyze the relevance of the committee's mission during the annual review of the Equity, Diversity,

Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee Terms of Reference.

References

1. The GSA's Bylaws 2021-2023.
2. The General Committee Terms of Reference.