
Building an Inclusive Community: Resources at the University of Victoria.

web.uvic.ca/eqhr
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WELCOME TO THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA!

The first objective of UVic’s strategic plan is for the university to become a diverse, welcoming learning community with a strong commitment to equity. The university is committed to equal rights and dignity for all persons. This includes equity in opportunities and employment for all. We champion environments for work and study that are safe, supportive and healthy, and foster mutual respect and civility. The mandate of the Equity and Human Rights office (EQHR) is to champion UVic’s commitment to practices of equity, fairness and inclusion. In partnership, we foster communities where strength is found in diversity and respect for difference provides dynamism and vibrancy to university life. We hope you will find this booklet a good introduction to these principles.

We look forward to meeting you in the Equity and Human Rights Office, in Sedgewick C115.

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This booklet brings together information about equity and human rights at UVic that we hope will provide guidance and principles for you as an employee and in the classroom – from the policies that govern us to practical resources that can be useful in day-to-day activity. You will find information on accessibility and accommodation for disability and religious observance, as well as information and resources to assist in achieving a more welcoming and inclusive classroom and community.

EQHR supports inclusion, recognizes and embraces difference and values the contributions of all members of the campus community.

WHAT DOES EQHR DO?

- Consult/educate on equitable recruiting and selection procedures
- Assist with integrating equity measures into employment practices
- Track equity progress for Federal Contractors Program
- Administer equity surveys
- Advise and assist on developing and implementing university and departmental equity plans
- Consult on situations that may involve harassment or discrimination
- Assist with complaint resolution as per UVic’s discrimination and harassment policy
- Educate students, staff and faculty on human rights issues and creating inclusive and fair environments in which to learn, work and live
A SAMPLING OF EQUITY & HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

web.uvic.ca/eqhr/education.htm

EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

Upon request EQHR will plan and facilitate workshops on specific issues for a group or department. In addition, we offer more general workshops on particular issues that are open to the university community. A few examples include:

- Human Rights 101: Putting the Human back into Human Rights. This workshop uses a plain language approach to provide you with an in-depth understanding of the UVic discrimination and harassment policy and procedures, the different forms of discrimination and harassment, the prohibited grounds covered by the policy and the issues of accommodating differences.

- Anti-Oppression: Rethinking Intersections and Learning Practical Skills. This workshop is a skill building session where participants will learn specific strategies for responding non-violently and respectfully to violations of human rights.

- An administrative department participated in the workshop Don’t Laugh if It Hurts: Conversations and Comfort Levels where they explored the role of humour in the workplace and began creating a workplace culture that was comfortable for everyone.

- Graduate Student TA’s participated in Creating Supportive Environments where they practiced facilitating discussion on ‘hot’ topics and ensuring that all voices have the opportunity to be heard.

CREATING SPACES

Do you ever wonder if your actions and language are as inclusive as they could be?

Do you feel frustrated about so much talk about “diversity” without enough actions to support it?

Do you want to build better connections with other people and groups working and studying on campus?

The Creating Spaces workshop is part of a campus-wide training campaign that promotes anti-oppression knowledge, skill building, respect for human rights and increased awareness of inequality. You will be encouraged to deconstruct what we mean by “normal”, and to focus on building connections and relationships.

HUMAN RIGHTS VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The Human Rights Volunteer Program (HRVP) is open to students, staff and faculty. The HRVP focuses on promoting inclusive, respectful and welcoming study and work environments on campus. Our goal is to provide educational workshops and resource materials about social justice and human rights issues to members of the community, through volunteering and volunteer involvement in human rights education. For this, HRVP has a fluid and flexible design that intends to promote and encourage the strengths and interests of volunteers. Training begins in October. For more information visit web.uvic.ca/eqhr/hrvp.htm.

POSITIVE SPACE NETWORK

The Positive Space Network was initiated in January 2009 by staff, students and faculty as a visible network at the University of Victoria. Its purpose is to make the campus, in its entirety, a positive, inclusive and safe space for people of all sexes, gender identities, gender expressions and sexualities with emphasis on supporting people who experience systemic and situational oppression because of marginalization, bias, discrimination, phobias, violence and assumptions. This network is formed in solidarity with similar campus networks at other universities around the world. web.uvic.ca/~psn
UNIVERSITY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

The University Human Rights Committee is an advisory committee to the President on equity and human rights issues. A diverse membership attempts to create representation for various groups on campus. The intent is to develop as consistent an approach to human rights and equity as possible across all employee and student groups, to enhance communication and co-ordination between groups and committees serving common ends, and to foster the acceptance of individual and institutional responsibility to respect the human rights of all members of the campus community.

POLICIES RELATED TO EQHR

web.uvic.ca/eqhr/policies.htm

GV0200: POLICY ON HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUITY AND FAIRNESS

The purpose of this policy is to provide an overarching statement of policy that applies to all activities, initiatives and policies of the University. Diversity, equity, fairness, and respect are paramount values at the University and central to this policy. This policy promotes the increasing diversity of the university community and strives to foster an environment that enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential.

The policy calls for education and training for the university community about its obligations regarding human rights, equity and fairness.

GV0205: DISCRIMINATION & HARASSMENT POLICY & PROCEDURES

The purpose of this policy is to prevent discrimination and harassment from taking place, and to act upon complaints of such behaviour promptly, fairly, judiciously and with due regard to confidentiality for all parties concerned.

The policy provides for confidential consultations, informal resolution, a formal complaint and environmental assessments.

HR6100: EQUITY POLICY FOR EMPLOYEES

In accordance with the BC Human Rights Code and the Federal Contractors Program, the University has established an employment equity program in order to identify and remove artificial barriers to equity in employment for members of designated groups. In addition, the University will endeavour to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone including members of any group protected by the Human Rights Code.

HR6110: GUIDELINES ON PREFERENTIAL OR LIMITED HIRING

Preferential Hire:

In accordance with the University’s Equity Plan and pursuant to Section 42 of the BC Human Rights Code, preference will be given to [members of any or all of the following designated groups: Aboriginal Peoples, persons with disabilities, members of visible minorities, women]. Candidates from [these groups/this group], who wish to qualify for preferential consideration, are encouraged to self-identify.

Limited Hire:

In accordance with the University’s Equity Plan and pursuant to Section 42 of the BC Human Rights Code, the selection will be limited to [members of the following designated groups: Aboriginal Peoples, persons with disabilities, members of visible minorities, women.] Candidates from [these groups/this group] are encouraged to self-identify.

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY PLAN

The Federal Contractors Program requires Uvic to have an equity plan. Our current plan is out of date and a review process will likely be initiated in the coming year.
Accommodation: If UVic was fully inclusive, accommodation would not be necessary. The work/learning environment would be sufficiently accessible, flexible and supportive to include everyone. We’re not there yet so we have a variety of policies/procedures concerning accommodation.

**HR6115: EMPLOYMENT ACCOMMODATION**

The University has a legal duty to provide accommodation for both employees and job applicants with regard to matters that are governed by the BC Human Rights Code, unless it would cause undue hardship for the University to do so.

**AC1205: ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION & ACCESS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The University endeavours to provide the best educational experience for all its students. The academic excellence for which the University strives is unattainable without a commitment to human rights, equity, fairness and diversity. The provision of reasonable academic accommodation allows students with disabilities to meet and demonstrate the University’s high standards in a fair and equitable manner.

**AC1210: ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS ON DAYS FOR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE**

The University recognizes its obligation to make reasonable accommodation for students whose observance of holy days of their religious or spiritual faiths would otherwise prevent them from satisfying academic requirements of a course or program.

Students are permitted to absent themselves from classes, seminars or workshops for the purposes of religious or spiritual observance.

For the days of religious observance go to web.uvic.ca/eqhr/observances.htm to print a bookmark or download the days to your Outlook calendar.

**PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES FOR ACCOMMODATION FOR FACULTY ASSOCIATION MEMBERS**

From Framework Agreement 2008

web.uvic.ca/vpac/hrissues/framework_agreement.htm

**52.1 Principles**

The University has a legal duty to provide accommodation to Members with regard to matters that are governed by the British Columbia Human Rights Code unless it would cause undue hardship to the University to do so. This Article will be interpreted in accordance with the principles set out in Policy #1110 (Policy Statement on Employment Accommodation) and in Article 51.0; with the understanding that accommodations requires the cooperation of the Member and the University in working together to achieve a reasonable outcome. The accommodation process shall take into account both (a) the experience that Members with a disability, including chronic illness and conditions that fluctuate in severity, have regarding the specific forms of support that will allow them to best perform their duties and (b) relevant expertise, including medical expertise and expertise regarding workplace accommodation, in jointly determining appropriate accommodation. Members shall be consulted in all decisions regarding their need for accommodation.

**HR6105: EQUITY POLICY FOR FEMALE FACULTY MEMBERS**

This policy details the measures taken by the University to achieve equity for female faculty.

**SS9120: PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE**

The University is committed to establishing and maintaining a University Violence Prevention Program that is in accordance with the Workers Compensation Act and Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, and will include but is not limited to:
• providing education and information on issues of violence on campus to faculty and staff;
• investigating reported incidents of violence in a prompt, objective, sensitive and, when appropriate, confidential manner;
• taking necessary preventive and corrective action; and
• providing appropriate support for victims.

All faculty and staff are responsible for maintaining a violence free environment. This responsibility will be exercised by not engaging in violent behaviour and by taking safe and effective steps to prevent or stop violence when it happens.

**SS9105: VIOLENCE AND THREATENING BEHAVIOUR**

Members of the university community and visitors to university property should be able to pursue their activities in a safe environment which is free from violence or threatening behaviour.

**EMPLOYMENT ACCOMMODATION PROCESS**

**WHAT IS EMPLOYMENT ACCOMMODATION?**

Based on a commitment to the principles and spirit of employment equity and the BC Human Rights Code, employment accommodation aims to find individual solutions for employees in their workplace.

The University has a “duty to accommodate” the needs of employees with respect to disability, religious observance, family responsibility and other matters that are governed by the BC Human Rights Code, unless it would cause undue hardship for the University to do so.

Generally, employment accommodation means the adjustment of a rule, practice, condition or requirement to take into account the special needs of an individual or a group of employees.

Provisions for employment accommodation have been written into some collective agreements. Even without written agreements, all employees are entitled to employment accommodation if needed.

Examples:

• **For Family Responsibility:** Varying scheduled hours or days of work, job sharing, scheduling meetings and course assignments around the demands of the family.
• **For Religious Observance:** Time off for religious observance, flexible lunch hours, and rescheduled commitments.
• **For Disability:** Modified work duties or adaptive equipment such as specialized computer software, telephone or furniture.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

• Your chair/director
• Your Faculty Association representative
• Work Life Consultants, Human Resources
• Equity and Human Rights Office

**BEST PRACTICES**

Many units, both academic and administrative, have created equity plans pertaining to all four designated groups in all occupational categories as well as considering educational equity. All plans were reviewed by the Employment Equity Advisory Group (University Human Rights Committee) and recommendations were made to the appropriate Vice-President for approval. Each unit is asked to provide an annual progress report.

Following are examples from unit reports of strategies implemented to remove barriers and to enhance equity:

**RECRUITMENT & HIRING**

• Visit [web.uvic.ca/vpac/recruiting/index.htm](http://web.uvic.ca/vpac/recruiting/index.htm) for information on faculty recruitment
• Targeted hiring through outreach
• Recognition of unconventional career paths
• Competency based interviewing techniques
• Use of guest speakers to provide role models
• Recognition of broad-based credentials with a broader range of work experience
• Selection process, development of criteria and focus on diversity
- Diversity representation on recruitment subcommittees
- Practice of ensuring at least 50% of short listed candidates are members of designated groups

**TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT**
- Annual review of curriculum and pedagogy workshops for greater awareness
- Advisory meetings and workshops to incorporate Aboriginal issues into the curriculum
- Annual sessions on harassment and cultural sensitivity for teaching assistants
- Opportunities for staff to increase skills through special projects on training programs
- Seminar for graduate students on “Balancing Parenthood and Careers”

**PROMOTION**
- Recognition of non-traditional scholarship and variable career paths for tenure and promotion
- Recognizing and giving credit for special demands being made on designated group members
- Support and release time for staff professional development opportunities and the tracking done by the ProD committee
- Departmental policy re: equal treatment of feminist scholarship

**RETENTION (Employment & Curriculum)**
- Dean’s Advisory Committees on women and on ethnicity and culture, as well as on-going anti-discrimination committee
- Departmental policy re: gender neutral language and non-stereotyped gender examples
- Inclusive curriculum re: Women, First Nations, and International History
- Specific question on diversity on the course evaluation survey
- Equity & Climate Committee which acts as advisors, negotiators for various problems
- Sponsors of new course proposals must identify diversity content

**ACCOMMODATION**
- Policy on disability issues circulated to representatives of all constituents within the school for input
- Ending of departmental meetings at 4:00 p.m.
- Modified work week for staff to accommodate for illness, disability, career path needs

**PRACTICES OF INCLUSION AND RESPECT**
*(This list is just a beginning! EQHR welcomes your suggestions for additional ways to contribute to respectful and inclusive environments. Please contact us with your ideas)*

**INDIVIDUAL**
- Be open to and accept different experiences, perspectives and points of view.
- Refrain from blaming, threatening or name calling even when you are hurt.
- Take training on conflict resolution.
- Support colleagues or friends, who are being harassed, discriminated against or treated disrespectfully.
- Find ways to welcome newcomers or people who seem to be on the margins.
- Make an effort to establish genuine connections with people who are different from you (age, gender, sexuality, race, culture, faith, disability, etc.)
- Educate yourself about diversity without expecting people different from you to assume that task.
- Seek to understand the ways privilege and discrimination have played out in your own life and in your family history. Often it is more work to understand our own privilege than it is to understand oppression.
- Consider attending a Creating Spaces workshop.
· Treat everyone as you wish to be treated.
· Do not laugh at sexist, racist, heterosexist or otherwise demeaning humour.
· Know that offensive comments often come from lack of knowledge or learned biases. Identify your own biases and stereotypes. Resist acting on them and take steps to inform yourself and unlearn them.

USE OF LANGUAGE
· Accept that this is fluid and evolving and that you will make mistakes. At the same time listen to the words used by diverse groups and make efforts to keep up with changing terminology.
· Correct mistakes and move on. Apologize if appropriate.
· What is experienced as offensive varies from individual to individual. If someone challenges you listen to what they have to say and try to understand their perspective. Thank people for guidance.

ORGANIZATION PRACTICES
· Remember that ‘majority rule’ is not an excuse for exclusion. Ensure that policies and procedures are in place to accommodate difference.
· Make sure all members are aware of the duty to accommodate.
· Strive to make inclusive language the norm.
· Create opportunities for people to tell their stories.
· Aspire to a level of inclusion that makes accommodation unnecessary. Learn about universal access and related concepts.
· Promote the fact that inclusion and diversity benefit everyone.
· Hold events in fully accessible locations. Consider providing sign language interpretation.
· Wherever possible make materials and information available in a range of formats and languages.
· Be mindful of the dominance of Christian holidays in western culture and learn about and acknowledge other traditions and celebrations.
· Identify and remove barriers to participation for any groups or individuals.
· Seek to incorporate flexibility and alternatives in ways of operating.
· Acknowledge difference without making people uncomfortable. Invisibility can be excluding.
· Look for and question assumptions.
· Distinguish between impact and intent. Address the impact.
· Resist tokenism. Know that true inclusion and diversity require genuine openness to change.
· Create an environment where differing perspectives are welcomed and people speak up and out.
· Encourage discussion and genuine dialogue on human rights and diversity.
· Conduct meetings with people seated in circles. Create space for silence in meetings and ensure all participants have an opportunity to speak.
· Consider the impact of change on people with little or less power in the organization.
· Use an ‘equity lens’ to review policy and practices.
· Provide confidential and anonymous avenues for people to give feedback and information on their experience in the organization. If possible consider the data that comes from groups that may be marginalized.
· Conduct accessibility assessments throughout the organization.

FOR INSTRUCTORS / TEACHERS
· Invite your students to let you know if (for any reason) they do not understand what is going on in the classroom (either at that moment or during your office hours).
· Include a statement on accommodation (for visible/invisible disabilities, religion, etc.) in your course outline. Refer to university policies.
STRATEGIES FOR THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

PRIOR TO OR AT THE BEGINNING OF THE COURSE

- Set some goals with respect to diversity and state them in your course outline.
- Provide examples of how you hope to ensure diversity in your course (for instance, voices used in course materials, guest lecturers and activities that elicit different experiences, perspectives and strategies.)
- Acknowledge the visible and invisible diversity present in the classroom (racial/cultural, gender/sexual, disability, religious, class, age, etc.)
- Refer to policies on Providing Accommodation to Students with Disabilities and Accommodation for Students on Days for Religious Observance and let students know they can approach you with accommodation requests. You may want to make specific mention of learning disabilities and mental illness.
- Consider students’ prior knowledge (possibly collect information about students’ interest in or prior experience with course material) when designing your course.
- Provide course materials in alternative formats, wherever possible.
- Ensure on-line materials are readable by text-browsers and screen reading software.
- Reflect on your own experiences of privilege and oppression and how they affect your approach to the course material.
- Orient students to your way of teaching.

TIPS FOR EQUAL ACCESS PRESENTATIONS

- Ask students to identify possibly discriminatory content in textbooks, readings, etc.
- Do your best to be sensitive to language/terminology issues.
- Provide guidelines for group discussions to assist everyone in participating.
- Never ask a student to act as a spokesperson for his/her group/country/religion/disability/sexuality.
- Be prepared to address inappropriate/offensive comments.
- Use small group activities or work in pairs to foster participation for students who may have more difficulty in the large group.
- Present material in a variety of ways, e.g., visual, aural, role plays, etc.
- Offer alternative assignments and methods of evaluation to increase options for students.
- Check with students on whether they feel they are being treated fairly and respectfully and how comfortable they are participating in class.
- Solicit feedback from students on how well you are meeting your diversity goals throughout the course. (Use course committee, seek verbal or written feedback, etc.)

THROUGHOUT THE COURSE

- Allow students sufficient time to formulate questions or responses.
- Remind the class that questions are welcome and that there is no such thing as a stupid question.
- Remind students of other forums for questions, i.e., email, office hours, TA’s, etc.
- Attempt to use case studies, examples and anecdotes from a range of cultural and social contexts.
· Use this feedback when planning future courses.
· Control background noise to the greatest possible extent.
· Speak in well-paced, well-modulated tones. Monitor rate and volume.
· Avoid turning your back to the audience while speaking. People may be depending on lip-reading.
· Repeat questions aloud before answering them.
· Accompany overhead transparencies, posters, Power Point presentations, etc. with verbal description. Be sure to read what is on the screen.
· Avoid relying solely on oral presentations and gestures to illustrate a point, or using visual points of reference (e.g., “this” and “that” or “here” and “there”). Read or describe what you are pointing to.
· Having your handouts available on disk and/or having a large-print version of your handouts available will be helpful to persons with low vision (enlarging font to 18 point bold or enlarging each page 130-150% on 14” x 17” sheets of paper would be ideal).
· Have transparencies available in hard copy for close examination.
· Use clear, vivid, legible, sharp high-contrast handouts. Avoid using dark ink on dark paper, fancy fonts, or extremely small print.

UVic has been working towards making the campus completely accessible for people with disabilities. To find out more about campus accessibility, visit www.rcsd.uvic.ca/general/campus-accessibility.html.

The Equity and Human Rights Office works together with a wide range of campus partners including student societies, advocacy groups, the Adviser to the Provost on Equity and Diversity, Human Resources, the Ombuds office, unions, other employee groups, administrative offices and academic departments to ensure UVic provides a welcoming, inclusive and fair environment in which to learn, work and live.

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