

# EDI Policy

## **Preamble**

The UTSU values and promotes the diversity of identities, cultures, and experiences of its staff, volunteers, and members. Each individual acting on behalf of the UTSU has a responsibility to uphold a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion in order to achieve the UTSU's mission of advocacy, representation, and support of the University of Toronto student community.

To that end, the purpose of this policy is to:

1. Provide clear definitions for equity, diversity, and inclusion contextualized for the UTSU environment
2. Articulate our actionable commitment to upholding the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion
3. Centre a community-based approach to equity by prioritizing and amplifying the ongoing and continuous work of equity-seeking groups on campus.

The UTSU understands the principles of equity to be dynamic; in order to commit ourselves to being an equitable organization, we must be open to continuously learning and evolving with our social, political, and cultural context. With the changing nature of equity at the forefront, this policy outlines a commitment to equity that is both holistic and responsive.

*Holistic* -we understand equity to be a guiding principle integrated into all areas of our work.

*Responsive* - no policy on the subject of equity can be all-encompassing, and therefore we must be open to addressing situations relating equity as they arise and evolve, even if not explicitly accounted for in a comprehensive policy document.

## **Principles**

In order to achieve the outlined purpose of our commitment to equity, the UTSU's equity work will be guided by the following principles:

1. **Do no harm.** Peoples' feelings of safety - and specifically, the feelings of people who identify as belonging to equity seeking groups - will not be compromised in order to achieve our goals relating to equity, diversity, and inclusion.



2. **Commit to ongoing and continuous learning.** Building an equitable organization requires an openness to different ideas, perspectives, and worldviews. We are committed to learning from equity-seeking communities, and centering their leadership in our work.
3. **Explore new approaches to equity informed by community expertise.** Lived experience, education, qualitative and quantitative research, and the stories of equity-seeking groups, are all forms of expertise.
4. **Address inequity in systems and structures, not in people.** The work of equity, diversity and inclusion cannot be done with an individual focus. Our work must aim to address the conditions that marginalize people, not perceived deficits in people themselves. Inequity is addressed in collaboration and in partnership with equity seeking groups.
5. **Practice accountability in relationship building.** . Each individual acting on behalf of the UTSU is responsible for following through on our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, and is accountable for the impact of their actions. We will not shy away from difficult or discomforting situations, and instead lean into those situations as an opportunity to learn and do better.

## **Scope**

This policy is applicable to all individuals who act on behalf of and represent the UTSU, including board members, the executive team, staff, and volunteers. It is intended to provide a guiding framework for UTSU actors to integrate the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion into all UTSU activities.

## **Definitions**

**Equity:** The UTSU is committed to the practice of ensuring that everyone has access to the same opportunities. We recognize that not all individuals are equally able to access resources, spaces, institutions at the University of Toronto. When people experience varying levels of access at the University of Toronto, the UTSU recognizes that support and services for people may also vary in order to meet peoples' needs.

**Diversity:** The UTSU values and embraces differences in race, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, faith, sexuality, ability, class and other dimensions of identity.

**Inclusion:** Integrating equity and diversity at the UTSU will result in a more inclusive environment. Diversity without inclusion is a form of tokenism. The UTSU is committed to ensuring that differences are not merely identified and celebrated, but that resources and efforts are made to ensure all people feel included and that they belong at the UTSU.



**Equity seeking groups:** Historical and contemporary discrimination against certain communities have resulted in entire groups of people being pushed to the margins and prevented from participating fully in Canadian society. The UTSU aims to centre the voices of people identifying with these communities. In particular, the UTSU recognizes the disproportionate and institutionalized harms made against Black, Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQ+, gender non-conforming, women, immigrant and refugee communities, as well as communities subjected to discrimination on the basis of faith, ethnicity, ability, and other dimensions of identity. The UTSU is committed to advancing the inclusion of faith-based groups while eliminating and addressing any forms of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, etc. within the UTSU and the campus community. The UTSU recognizes that these harms are exacerbated for individuals and communities who hold intersecting identities, resulting in unique forms of discrimination. Equity-seeking groups are therefore prioritized in the UTSU's mandate and advocacy work.

## **Policy**

This policy aims to provide broad pathways for integrating equity into various areas of the UTSU's work. As part of the UTSU's community-based approach to equity, we commit to being proactive in building relationships with equity seeking groups across all dimensions of the UTSU's work.

### **1. Initiatives & Campaigns**

Through the UTSU's advocacy work, initiatives and campaigns of equity-seeking groups will be prioritized. This can be accomplished by:

- Initiating conversations with, collaborating and consulting with equity seeking groups in campaign development
- Using a lens of equity to ensure that all initiatives and campaigns are fully accessible to the campus community;
- Directing our attention to the ways in which equity-seeking groups engage with our initiatives and campaigns and being responsive to their feedback.

### **2. Outreach & Engagement**

In line with our commitment to supporting equity-seeking groups and embracing their expertise, the UTSU will actively seek out campus-wide consultation and collaboration for the purposes of community building and development. This can be accomplished by:



- Ensuring both the purpose of our events as well as the communities in attendance to our events are reflective of the diversity of the campus community
- Creating and sharing space to engage with different communities across campus.
- Supporting equity-seeking groups in their own initiatives
- Recognizing that the diversity of experiences within communities calls on us to consult broadly within each equity-seeking group, as part of due diligence to equitable representation.

### **3. Funding & Resource allocation**

The UTSU is committed to prioritizing funds that advance equity and accessibility within the organization and beyond. Ensuring that these funds are accessible supports our ability to establish a barrier-free environment that embraces diversity and inclusion. With an ongoing commitment to learning about equity, we recognize the labour of community members, and must ensure equitable compensation. This can be accomplished by:

- Ensuring that we are prioritizing equity-related events, initiatives, and campaigns, and establishing the necessary funds to execute that commitment
- Prioritizing funding to the structures and processes that support equity at the UTSU (i.e. student aid, interpreters, outreach to equity-seeking communities, etc.)
- Providing fair compensation to members of equity-seeking communities when we benefit from their labour in support of our learning and education.

### **4. Governance & employee infrastructure**

Recognizing that inequities are ingrained within UTSU structures, we are committed to dismantling discriminatory practices that have been built into traditional systems of employment and governance. Our aim is to build inclusive spaces within the organization that reflect the diversity of its stakeholders. This can be accomplished by:

- Relying on and actively seeking expertise to inform, assess, and establish equitable practices within the UTSU



- Ensuring there are mechanisms in place to hold staff, executives, and volunteers accountable to the principles of equity.
- Ensuring that the political processes of the UTSU, including board and executive elections and campaigns, are executed with the principles of equity at the forefront.
- Collaborating across stakeholder groups to promote an equitable environment where staff, executives, and board members all contribute to a culture of belonging.
- Recognizing that policies are an expression of the will and values of an organization, the UTSU will work to ensure that all policies are developed with an equity lens.
- Considering and mitigating all forms of discrimination that might occur in an employee-employer relationship, including but not limited to: recruitment, hiring, onboarding, professional development, retention, and offboarding.

## **5. Learning & development**

Guided by our principle of committing to ongoing and continuous learning, the UTSU will actively seek opportunities to further the education of our stakeholders on the subject of equity. This can be accomplished by:

- Ensuring that UTSU staff, volunteers, and board members recognize their responsibility to be open to learning about issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion as a part of their work within the UTSU.
- Making opportunities for further education on the subject of equity available to the broader campus community.
- Recognizing that learning happens in a variety of ways - not just in a traditional education setting - and therefore embracing the different modalities through which the UTSU and its members can learn about equity, diversity, and inclusion.