



Policy Title – Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Policy
Approving Body: Executive Director
Responsible Manager(s): Executive Director Senior Director, Outreach and Engagement Senior Director, Operations
Effective Date: May 14, 2025

1. Policy Overview

- 1.1. This policy reaffirms WUSA¹'s commitment to treat all stakeholders with fairness, dignity, and respect.

1.2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors, and other stakeholders interacting with WUSA. It covers all areas of the workplace, including hiring, promotion, professional development, employee conduct, and business practices.

1.3. Definitions of Terms

Equity - Unlike the notion of equality, equity is not about sameness of treatment. It denotes fairness and justice in processes and in results. Equitable outcomes often require differential treatment and resource redistribution to achieve a level playing field among all individuals and communities. This requires recognizing power dynamic and addressing barriers that prevent opportunities for all to thrive at WUSA.

Diversity - Diversity addresses differences in social group membership related, for example, to race, Indigenous identity, class, age, gender identity or expression, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, language, and religion, and any combination of these variables. Discussions about diversity linked to access and equity require knowledge and understanding of historical and contemporary experiences of oppression and exclusion. Diversity should be understood as uniting rather than dividing as the term calls upon us to appreciate both differences and interconnectedness, and to recognize and respond to systemic and institutionalized discrimination.

Inclusion - Inclusion refers to the notion of feeling welcome, valued and having a sense of belonging. It also speaks to engaging and succeeding in a given institution, program, or setting. Inclusion calls for recognizing, reducing, and removing barriers to participation created by social disadvantage.

¹ Federation of Students, University of Waterloo operating as the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA)

Antiracism - Antiracism encompasses the perceptions, attitudes, policies, discourses, procedures, and practices of opposing and ending anti-Indigenous, anti-Black, and other people of colour racisms as well as promoting racial equity, which requires incessantly recognizing power dynamic and addressing systemic and individual barriers that prevent opportunities for racialized members of our community to succeed at WUSA.

2. Policy Statement

2.1. Commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism - At WUSA, we are committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment that celebrates diversity and values the unique perspectives, cultures, and experiences of all individuals within our community. As part of this commitment, we actively incorporate practices that promote equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism, including but not limited to:

- i. Developing and supporting programs and initiatives that reflect the richness of cultural, ethnic, and personal identities within our community. These programs aim to educate, inspire, and promote understanding among all members.
- ii. Organizing staff and community events that honour and celebrate diverse cultures, traditions, and holidays, fostering a sense of belonging and shared appreciation.
- iii. Creating platforms and opportunities for underrepresented voices to be heard and recognized in decision-making, programming, and organizational priorities.
- iv. Addressing instances where suppliers, partners, and collaborators fail to align with our values of diversity and inclusion and taking corrective actions to promote equitable opportunities for all.

2.2. Gender-Inclusive Language in Communications - As part of our ongoing commitment to the principles of inclusion, equity, and diversity, all work-related communications must use gender-inclusive and gender-neutral language when required. Respect for individual identity and the recognition of diverse gender expressions are integral to fostering an inclusive and affirming organizational culture. Please observe the following guidelines:

- i. Do not assume an individual's pronouns or gender identity. If appropriate and respectful to the context, ask individuals how they identify and which pronouns they use.
- ii. When unsure of an individual's preferred pronouns, use their full name in written and verbal communications until clarification is provided.
- iii. Avoid gendered pronouns like "he" or "she" when referring to an unspecified individual. Use plural forms (e.g., "Employees should contact their supervisors") or repeat the noun (e.g., "The employee should speak to the

employee's supervisor"). Singular pronouns "they", "them" and "their" are widely accepted in both formal and informal writing (e.g., "The employee should speak to their supervisor").

- 2.3. **Commitment to Non-Discrimination and Equity in Opportunity** - There will be no discrimination on grounds of race, Indigenous ancestry, ethnic origin, religion, sex, sexual gender identity or expression, age, marital or family status, language, or visible and invisible disability:
- i. In the provision of facilities or services.
 - ii. In decisions concerning recruitment and selection, career development, promotion, staff development opportunities, pay and remuneration, or reward and recognition. Therefore:
 - Under-represented groups are encouraged to apply to work and volunteer at WUSA.
 - WUSA will carry out consistent, transparent, and timely monitoring, where practicable, to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and equitably.
- 2.4. **Unacceptable Discriminatory Conduct and Harassment** - Discrimination and harassment are prohibited, including conduct on the basis of race, creed, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, and citizenship that:
- i. Is abusive, demeaning or threatening, including behaviour such as name calling; derogatory remarks, gestures, and physical attacks; or display of derogatory or belittling pictures and graffiti; or
 - ii. Biases administrative and appointment decisions, employment and workplace practices, promotion, appointment, leave, and salary determinations; or
 - iii. Misuses power, authority, or influence; or
 - iv. Discriminates in the provision of goods and services or access to premises, accommodation, and other facilities.
- 2.5. **Commitment to Anti-Racism and Racial Equity** - At WUSA, we abhor racism or any manifestations of racial intolerance or discrimination and do not tolerate or condone racism or negative racial stereotyping between racialized and non-racialized groups. We are committed to preventing such behaviours and practices and promoting an anti-racist culture by ensuring that racial diversity, equity, inclusion is considered in decision making; addressing policies and practices that, while not intentionally discriminatory, have a discriminatory effect; and educating and informing all members of the WUSA community on issues associated with race and ethnocultural relations, racism, and racial harassment.
- 2.6. **Right to a Safe and Respectful Environment** - Every member of the WUSA community has the right to work, study and live in a safe environment free of discrimination and harassment. Individuals who experience discrimination or harassment are encouraged to refer to the Whistleblower Policy for guidance on how

to file a report². They are also encouraged to refer to the relevant University of Waterloo Policies for guidance on how to address such issues³.

Through these practices, we aim to cultivate an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute meaningfully to our shared goals.

3. Compliance and Enforcement

- 3.1. Compliance with this policy is mandatory and failure to comply with the provisions of this policy may expose WUSA to significant risks, including but not limited to: operational; legal/regulatory; financial; reputational; safety and security risks. Non-compliance may therefore lead to the enforcement of disciplinary measures such as warnings, suspension, or termination, depending on the severity of the violation.
- 3.2. Anyone who becomes aware of a violation or potential violation of this policy is required to promptly report the issue to their manager, or through the reporting mechanism detailed in the Whistleblower Policy.

² [Whistleblower Policy.pdf](#)

³ [Harassment and Discrimination - Guidelines for Supervisors | Secretariat | University of Waterloo](#)
[Policy 42 - Prevention of and Response to Sexual Violence | Secretariat | University of Waterloo](#)
[Policy 34 – Health, Safety and Environment | Secretariat | University of Waterloo](#)
[Policy 33 – Ethical Behaviour | Secretariat | University of Waterloo](#)