University of Windsor | Office of the Vice-President People, Equity, & Inclusion

People, Equity & Inclusion Strategy 2025 - 2028

Draft Elements of the Strategy for Feedback Purposes

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This document is available in alternate format upon request

Introduction

We are pleased to share with you the **draft elements** that will be part of the People, Equity & Inclusion Strategy.

We hope that you can take a few minutes of your time to review these draft elements and share your feedback through the online form. The information gathered through this process will assist us to refine these elements.

Our goal is to complete the Strategy development process by December 2024.

In reviewing the document, please keep in mind the following:

> **Land Acknowledgement**
>
> The University of Windsor sits on the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations, which includes the Ojibwa, the Odawa, and the Potawatomi. We respect the longstanding relationships with First Nations people in this place in the 100-mile Windsor-Essex peninsula and the straits – les détroits – of Detroit.

- The strategy is aligned with the Aspire strategic plan. Appendix B outlines the alignment between Aspire and the strategic actions.
- This strategy provides a framework for the development of more specific cascading plans for areas that will share in the responsibility for implementation. It provides guidance to academic and non-academic units to embed people, equity and inclusion priorities within their own strategic and operational plans.
- The strategy recognizes the importance of Indigenization and truth and reconciliation at the University of Windsor. The development of a separate Indigenous Plan is being led by the Senior Advisor to the President on Indigenous Relations and Outreach.
- The strategic goals and actions are grounded on the information gathered by the University over the last several years through various processes including:
    - Charles C. Smith Report
    - ABR Taskforce Report and Implementation Plan
    - EDI Reports (HESA)
    - Employee Engagement Survey (2022) including key actions and outcomes emerging from the work of the Engagement Action Group
    - Employee Mental Health Strategy
- Words create worlds, please refer to Appendix A for definitions of key terms used throughout the document.
- A Consultative Working Group comprised of colleagues with diverse perspectives and lived experienced was established in the spring 2024 to provide feedback throughout the strategy development process.
- The information found in this document includes the input and feedback from the Consultative Working Group and members of the People, Equity & Inclusion Division.
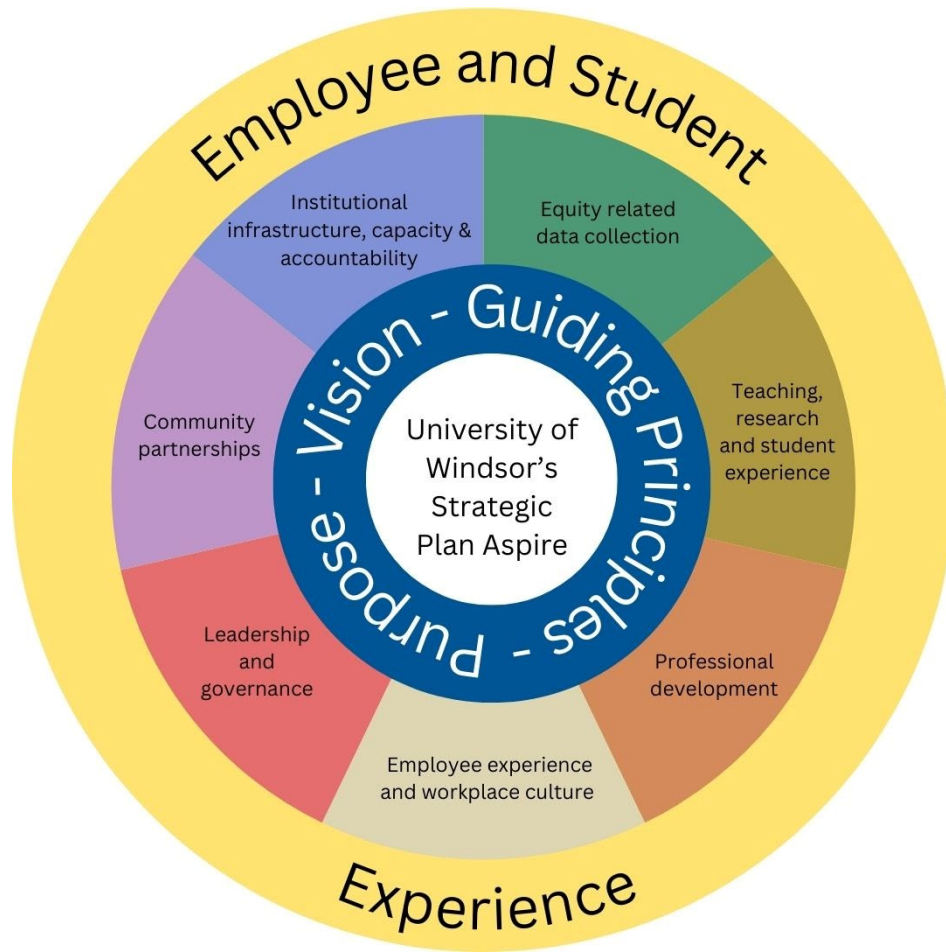
People, Equity & Inclusion Strategy At-A-Glance

The Mission, Vision, Values and Strategic Priorities outlined in the University's strategic plan, Aspire are the foundation of the People, Equity & Inclusion Strategy.

Acronyms Used Throughout the Document

EDI – Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

PE&I – People, Equity and Inclusion

The Purpose, Vision & Guiding Principles of the PE&I Strategy are in alignment with Aspire. The strategy identifies 7 strategic priorities and 38 corresponding actions to be implemented over the period of January 2025 to December 2028.

The Aspire strategic plan reaffirms the University's commitment to its people. The successful implementation of the strategic actions outlined in this document will foster a stronger sense of belonging among all campus community members, enhancing the experience for both employees and students.

Purpose, Vision and Guiding Principles

The People, Equity & Inclusion Strategy is centered on the University's Mission, Vision and Values

Purpose

Establish a strategic framework to foster a more equitable, inclusive and healthy environment to work, innovate and learn.

Vision

We aim to be a place where every member of the campus community feels welcomed, included, valued and thrive in tangible, meaningful, and authentic ways.

Guiding Principles

The principles outlined below will guide the strategy implementation. They are the key enablers of our success.

Note: "We" stands for the campus community including leaders, faculty, staff and students.

Diverse Voices:
We listen to and value diverse perspectives and marginalized voices to achieve impactful change.

Shared Responsibility:
We share in the responsibility to achieve lasting systemic change.

Collaboration:
We foster collaborations grounded on empathy, compassion, integrity and respect.

University's Strategic Plan - Aspire

Mission
To empower positive change through regionally and globally engaged inquiry, learning, scholarship, creative activity, and research.

Vision
As a locally engaged, globally connected institution, the University of Windsor will enable people to transform their circumstances. As partners, leaders, and learners, we will engage in impactful research, relevant teaching, creative endeavours, and inclusive relationship building to foster positive change.

Values
- Academic Excellence
- Action on Indigenization, Truth and Reconciliation
- Community Impact
- Engagement with Students
- Environmental Sustainability
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- Openness to Change
- Prioritizing People
- Trustworthiness

Intentional Approach:
We intentionally embed EDI principles into all aspects of the University to shift systems and culture beyond performative actions.

Transparency and Accountability:
We commit to flexibility, responsiveness, transparency and integrity to strengthen trust, build credibility and create sustainable change.

Strategic Priorities and Actions

Priority: Equity-Related Data Collection, Use and Disclosure

Enhance the collection and sharing of qualitative and quantitative equity-related data to support planning and decision-making.

Strategic Actions:
- Align with and implement the University's Data Strategy, focusing on EDI-related data initiatives.
- Make equity-related disaggregated data readily available to internal stakeholders to inform short-and long-term plans, and monitor progress.
- Develop standardized EDI-related questions, including self-identification questions, to enable consistent collection of data.
- Continue promoting the student self-identification survey.

Priority: Teaching, Research and the Student Experience

Advance inclusive excellence in teaching, creative activity, research and the student experience.

Strategic Actions:
- Provide resources and supports to faculty and academic units to enhance their capacity to practice inclusive/anti-oppressive pedagogy.
- Embed the EDI principles into the research ecosystem to foster a more diverse, equitable, inclusive and supportive research culture.
- Implement strategies to ensure experiential, work-integrated and research focused learning opportunities are equitable, inclusive and safe.
- Review biannually the student non-academic misconduct policies, procedures and structures to ensure due process, procedural fairness and restorative justice.
- Embed EDI principles into student/customer services and processes to enhance service delivery and satisfaction.

Priority: Professional Development

Develop comprehensive knowledge/skill development initiatives to foster a welcoming, inclusive, and healthy campus community.

Strategic Actions:
- Develop and implement a comprehensive equity and anti-oppression education and training framework.
- Continue the implementation of educational and awareness raising related actions outlined in the Anti-Black Racism Taskforce Report (2021) and Employee Mental Health Strategy (2023).
- Establish coaching, mentoring and other programs to support career/professional growth, including tailored opportunities for equity deserving groups.
- Create resources/tools to address, mitigate, and redress identity-based oppression.

Priority: Employee Experience and Workplace Culture

Attract, engage and retain outstanding faculty and staff and create a more welcoming and healthy work environment in which all employees can thrive.

Strategic Actions:
- Establish a comprehensive conflict resolution program and structure to resolve interpersonal conflicts inclusive of informal facilitated conversations, mediation, conflict coaching and skill building opportunities.
- Continue the implementation of the Employee Mental Health Strategy (2023) and the Employee Engagement Survey Action Group recommendations (2022).
- Implement a campus mental health and wellbeing structure and approach.
- Conduct the Employee Engagement Survey every 2-3 years to measure progress.
- Continue the transformation of human resources related structures and policies emerging from the EDI review (2023).
- Establish a human resources plan that embeds equity, diversity and inclusion practices into the employee life cycle (attraction, recruitment, onboarding, retention, development, separation/retirement) and positions the University strategically to meet current and future talent needs.
- Create and implement a comprehensive communication strategy to promote our shared responsibility to create a respectful workplace, highlight relevant institutional policies and connect employees to resources and supports.
- Expand opportunities to recognize and celebrate the work of equity-deserving groups.
- Meet requirements to acquire the designation of an Age-Friendly University and create an action plan to meet the University's commitments under the Okanagan Charter.

Priority: Leadership & Governance

Enhance the capacity of leaders to embed EDI principles and a people-centric approach into the fabric of the University and drive transformative change.

Strategic Actions:
- Establish a leadership competency framework and embed these competencies into talent management practices (recruitment, hiring, development and goal setting/performance).
- Design and implement leadership development initiatives and resources to enhance the capacity of leaders to model inclusive practices, foster employee engagement, facilitate change management and create a psychologically healthy and safe workplace culture.
- Implement a robust succession planning program for leadership and other risk sensitive positions.
- Develop and implement a plan to enhance the capacity of the Board of Governors and Senate to support lasting systems and culture change.
- Identify concrete actions to increase the representation of equity-deserving groups in senior leadership and governance structures (Senate, Board of Governors and committees) as per the 50-30 Challenge goals.
- Embed EDI accountabilities and competencies into leadership and supervisory roles.

Priority: Community Partnerships

Build and nurture intentional, reciprocal, and collaborative community partnerships.

Strategic Actions:
- Embed EDI principles into all institutional partnerships and establish a framework/structure to nurture, coordinate, and sustain partnerships with the external community.
- Develop and implement a strategy and guidelines to intentionally engage, consult, partner, and collaborate with the community to advance and sustain common EDI goals.
- Work with community partners including non-profit organizations, public sector and educational institutions to establish an EDI network to advance equity, inclusion, and anti-oppression in our region.

Priority: Institutional Infrastructure and Accountability

Transform institutional structures, policies, systems, and accountability mechanisms to support sustainable change.

Strategic Actions:
- Develop guidelines for creating and reviewing administrative and academic policies from an equity, anti-oppression and people-centric lens.
- Develop and implement an ongoing, and proactive policy review process to enhance the workplace culture and the employee experience and manage risks.
- Develop and implement a sustainable long-term resource development plan to adequately fund EDI and anti-oppression work across the University.
- Develop a long-term plan to ensure inclusive physical spaces across the University that are accessible, welcoming, and safe for all.
- Align the structure of the broader People, Equity & Inclusion portfolio to the strategy.
- Develop an institutional framework to measure progress towards EDI goals and to help inform future EDI planning.
- Establish a plan to continue meeting the University's commitments and accountabilities under the Scarborough Charter.
- Publicly report progress towards the PE&I priorities annually.

Delivering on Our Priorities

Overall accountability for the implementation of the People, Equity & Inclusion Strategy will reside with the Vice-President, People, Equity & Inclusion. Institutional commitment, individual effort and shared responsibility are essential to achieve transformative change.

As a next step we will be establishing an implementation plan to deliver on the goals and priorities in a coordinated and collaborative way. Metrics will also be identified and tracked to measure progress.

The table below outlines our next steps for operationalizing our priorities:

Action	Timeline
Development of an implementation framework	February 2025
Development of an evaluation framework	March 2025
Semi-annual implementation updates	September 2025 first update

Appendix A - Key Terms

The words we use matter. The following terms and definitions adopted from reputable sources, underpin the strategy.

Accessibility:
A general term for the degree of ease that something (e.g., device, service, physical environment and information) can be accessed, used and enjoyed by persons with disabilities. The term implies conscious planning, design and/or effort to make sure something is barrier-free to persons with disabilities. *(Source: ohrc.on.ca)*

Anti-racism/Anti-oppression:
An active and consistent process of change to eliminate individual, institutional and systemic racism as well as the oppression and injustice racism causes. *(Source: ohrc.on.ca)*

Barrier:
Obvious or subtle obstacle that prevents or restricts members of society from accessing, using, or doing something that others can readily access, use, or do. Can be physical, economic, financial, informational, and/or organizational policies/practices. *(Source: ccdi.ca)*

Belonging:
The feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity for a member of a certain group. *(Source: cornell.edu)*

Bias:
A predisposition, prejudice, or generalization about a group of persons based on personal characteristics or stereotypes. *(Source: ohrc.on.ca)*

Discrimination:
Intentional or unintentional denial of equal treatment, civil liberties and opportunity to individuals or groups with respect to education, housing, health care, employment and access to services, goods, and facilities. Can occur based on ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, record of offences, race, colour, nationality, sex, age, religion, gender identity, gender expression, political affiliation, marital or family status, sexual orientation, and disability

- Individual discrimination: The unequal and prejudiced treatment of individuals based on their identity or membership to a particular group.
- Systemic/institutional discrimination: Systemic discrimination is institutionalized. Systemic discrimination is embedded and practiced in social institutions, such as: government, policies, religion, education, and organizations. Results in the exclusion and stereotyping of the targeted groups. *(Source: ccdi.ca)*

Diversity:
Is about representation. The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within an individual, group or organization. Diversity includes such factors as age, sex, race, ethnicity, physical and intellectual ability, religion, sexual orientation, educational background, and expertise. *(Source: ohrc.on.ca)*

Equity:
Is fundamentally about fairness. A distinct process of recognizing differences within groups of individuals and using this understanding to achieve substantive equality in all aspects of a person's life *(Source: ohrc.on.ca)*. Equity underscores that equal doesn't always means fair.

Equity Deserving Groups:
This term is used to refer to communities and groups that experience significant collective barriers in participating in society. This could include attitudinal, historic, social and environmental barriers based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, Indigeneity, gender identity and gender expression, nationality, race, sexual orientation, etc. *(Source: ubc.ca)*

Equitable:
Just or characterized by fairness or equity. Equitable treatment can at times differ from same treatment**.** *(Source: ohrc.on.ca)*

Fairness:
Fairness in the workplace refers to an aspect of organizational justice with regards to both process and outcome impartiality. Some of the factors that support fair treatment in the workplace include mutual respect, strong interpersonal relationships and honest communication. *(Source: cornell.edu)*

Healthy Work Environment:
Is an environment where employees feel safe, valued and supported both physically and mentally. It is a respectful and considerate environment where employees feel heard and acknowledged for their contributions *(Source: www.achievers.com)*

Inclusion:
Is about belonging. Inclusion is creating a culture that embraces, respects, accepts, and values diversity. It is a mindful and equitable effort to meet individual needs, so everyone feels valued, respected, and able to contribute to their fullest potential. *(Source: ccdi.ca)* It includes intersectional identifies and varying lived experiences. Inclusion answers questions about who is at the table, but more than that, who matters as reflected by whose voice is heard, respected, and valued.

Inclusive Excellence:
A systems-wide approach to equity, diversity and inclusion. IE states that true excellence in an institution is unattainable without inclusion – and in fact, diversity and inclusion are fundamental to excellence. It moves away from historical approaches to diversity that focused on numbers and representation. Instead, IE helps us think about the institution as a vibrant community that can create excellence by embedding diversity throughout the institution. (*Source: ubc.ca)*

Intersectionality:
The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity as they apply to a given individual or group. Intersectional identities create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. *(Source: ubc.ca)*

Leaders:

Includes faculty, staff and students who hold formal leadership positions as well as those who have been elected to leadership roles.

Marginalized Groups:
Members of society that face exclusion due to societal and systemic barriers**.** *(Source: ccdi.ca)*

Oppression:
The unfair treatment or control of marginalized groups to maintain status, privilege, or power**.** *(Source: ccdi.ca)*

People:
For the purpose of this strategy, people refer to employees (faculty, staff and student employees) and students.

People-centric:
Refers to an approach or mindset that places individuals at the centre of organizational strategies, policies, and practices. It emphasizes valuing and prioritising the well-being, development, and engagement of employees." *(Source: https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/diagnosing-organisations)*

Psychological Safety:
The feeling of being safe to express ideas, feelings, and questions or to make mistakes without repercussions. *(Source: ccdi.ca)*

Racism:
A belief that one group is superior or inferior to others. Racism can be openly displayed in racial jokes, slurs or hate crimes. It can also be more deeply rooted in attitudes, values and stereotypical beliefs. In some cases, people don't even realize they have these beliefs. Instead, they are assumptions that have evolved over time and have become part of systems and institutions. *(Source: ohrc.on.ca)*

Thriving:
Moving beyond wellbeing and a sense of belonging. It is a strengths-based concept that describes both one's current state and the journey towards optimal development. It is linked to internal characteristics such as social, emotional, and cognitive competencies, skills, and dispositions and influenced by our social and physical environment. Contextual factors either promote or constraint thriving. *(Source: Osher, D., Pittman, K., Young, J., Smith, H., Moroney, D., & Irby, M., 2020)*

Appendix B - Alignment of Priorities and Key Actions with Aspire

Aspire Strategic Plan Priorities and Commitments that the People, Equity & Inclusion Strategy aims to advance.

Priority	Commitments	Legend
Becoming an Increasingly Equitable, Diverse, Inclusive, and Just University	Deepen efforts to dismantle systemic barriers to equity, inclusion, and justice.	A1
	Commit to efforts of decolonization, anti-racism, and anti-oppression, and to deeply ingrain changes in campus culture and practice.	A2
	Develop and implement inclusive recruitment, hiring and capacity building plans.	A3
	Foster inclusive and welcoming learning and knowledge creation environments.	A4
Fostering an Engaged, Healthy, Safe, and Environmentally Sustainable Campus	Continue to build a culture of respect, trustworthiness and transparency through accountability and a clear policy context.	B1
	Establish clear pathways for career growth and learning.	B2
	Revive and energize belonging, connectedness and engagement on campus.	B3
Ensure that Faculty and Staff Have the Skills and Support to Maximize Impact, Growth, and Engagement (foundational commitment)	Foster equitable, inclusive, and just campus environments and processes	C1
	Establish and implement campus mental health and employee engagement strategies.	C2
	Enhance positive work environments.	C3
	Build inclusive and broad-based talent recruitment, career, and leadership development programs.	C4
	Implement strategies to foster diversity in leadership teams and governance bodies.	C5
Establish and Implement an Institutional Data Strategy	Develop, implement, and monitor a data strategy that focuses on data for tracking, analyses, accountability, and recognition with emphasis on enhancing clarity, consistency, and availability of campus data related to our strategic priorities and institutional vision.	D
Generating Local and Global Impact through Partnership and Community Engagement	Build strong coalitions, partnerships, and networks focusing on shared priorities, information exchange, resource sharing, and cross-leveraging funding opportunities.	E1
	Expand community-based and community-informed student experiences and opportunities.	E2
	Establish a community engagement hub to develop and coordinate collaborations	E3
	Work with partners to remove barriers to community engagement and build trust with historically marginalized communities	E4

The table below lists the priorities and actions outlined in the PE&I Strategy and highlights the respective Priorities in Aspire that each action aims to advance.

Priority Area	Key Action	Alignment with Aspire
Equity-Related Data Collection, Use and Disclosure	Establish robust data collection, storage, use and disclosure guidelines.	**D**
	Make equity-related disaggregated data readily available to internal stakeholders to inform short and long-term plans, and monitor progress.	**D**
	Develop standardized EDI-related questions, including self-identification questions, to enable consistent collection of data.	**D**
	Continue promoting the student self-identification survey.	**D**
Teaching, Research and the Student Experience	Provide resources and supports to faculty and academic units to enhance their capacity to practice inclusive/anti-oppressive pedagogy.	**A4**
	Embed the EDI principles into the research ecosystem to foster a more diverse, equitable, inclusive and supportive research culture.	**A4**
	Implement strategies to ensure experiential, work-integrated and research focused learning opportunities are equitable, inclusive and safe.	**A4**
	Review biannually the student non-academic misconduct policy, procedures and structure to ensure due process, procedural fairness and restorative justice.	**A1**
Professional Development	Develop and implement a comprehensive equity and anti-oppression education and training framework.	**B2**
	Continue the implementation of educational and awareness raising related actions outlined in the Anti-Black Racism Taskforce Report (2021) and Employee Mental Health Strategy (2023).	**B2**
	Establish coaching, mentoring and other programs to support career/professional growth, including tailored opportunities for equity deserving groups.	**B2**
	Create resources/tools to address, mitigate and redress identity-based oppression.	**B2**
Employee Experience and Workplace Culture	Continue the implementation of the Employee Mental Health Strategy (2023) and the Employee Engagement Survey Action Group recommendations (2022).	**C2**
	Implement a campus mental health and wellbeing structure and approach.	**C2**
	Conduct the Employee Engagement Survey every 2-3 years to measure progress.	**C2**

Priority Area	Key Action	Alignment with Aspire
	Continue the transformation of human resources related structures and policies emerging from the EDI review (2023).	C1
	Establish a human resources plan that embeds equity, diversity and inclusion practices into the employee life cycle (attraction, recruitment, onboarding, retention, development, separation/retirement) and positions the University strategically to meet current and future talent needs.	C4, A3
	Create and implement a comprehensive communication strategy to promote our shared responsibility to create a respectful workplace, highlight relevant institutional policies and connect employees to resources and supports.	C3
	Establish a comprehensive conflict resolution program and structure to resolve interpersonal conflicts inclusive of informal facilitated conversations, mediation, conflict coaching and skill building opportunities.	C3
	Expand opportunities to recognize and celebrate the work of equity-deserving groups.	B3
	Meet requirements to acquire the designation of an Age-Friendly University and create an action plan to meet the University's commitments under the Okanagan Charter.	C1. B3
Leadership & Governance	Establish a leadership competency framework and embed these competencies into talent management practices (recruitment, hiring, development and goal setting/performance).	C1
	Design and implement leadership development initiatives and resources to enhance the capacity of leaders to model inclusive practices, foster employee engagement, facilitate change management and create a psychologically healthy and safe workplace culture.	C3
	Include EDI expectations and competencies into all academic and administrative leadership roles.	A2
	Implement a robust succession planning program for leadership and other risk sensitive positions.	B2
	Develop and implement a plan to enhance the capacity of the Board of Governors and Senate to support lasting systems and culture change.	A1
	Identify concrete actions to increase the representation of equity-deserving groups in senior leadership and governance structures (Senate, Board of Governors and committees) as per the 50-30 Challenge goals.	C5
Community Partnerships	Embed EDI principles into all institutional partnerships and establish a framework/structure to nurture, coordinate, and sustain partnerships with the external community.	E3

Priority Area	Key Action	Alignment with Aspire
	Develop and implement a strategy and guidelines to intentionally engage, consult, partner and collaborate with the community to advance and sustain common EDI goals.	E1, E2, E4
	Work with community partners including non-profit organizations, public sector and educational institutions to establish an EDI network to advance equity, inclusion, and anti-oppression in the region.	E1, E2, E4
Institutional Infrastructure, Capacity and Accountability	Develop guidelines for creating and reviewing policies from an equity, anti-oppression and people-centric lens.	B1
	Develop and implement an ongoing, and proactive policy review process to enhance the workplace culture and the employee experience and manage risks.	B1
	Develop and implement a sustainable long-term resource development plan to adequately fund EDI and anti-oppression work across the University.	A1, A2
	Develop a long-term plan to ensure inclusive physical spaces across the University that are accessible, welcoming, and safe for all.	C3
	Align the structure of the broader People, Equity & Inclusion portfolio to the strategy.	A1, A2
	Embed EDI accountabilities and competencies into leadership and supervisory roles.	B1
	Develop an institutional framework to measure progress towards EDI goals and to help inform future EDI planning.	B1
	Publicly report progress towards the PE&I priorities annually.	B1
	Establish a plan to continue meeting the University's commitments and accountabilities under the Scarborough Charter.	A1, A2