

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING

GUIDELINES FOR RESPECTFUL AND INCLUSIVE BEHAVIOUR

1. Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Decolonization (EDID) Vision Statement

Western Engineering aims to be an equitable, safe, inclusive, and respectful space for everyone, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, beliefs, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, record of offences, marital status, family status, level of education, socioeconomic status, physical appearance, or ability (physical or mental).

Western Engineering values respect, openness, communication, and integrity. These values guide our day-to-day behaviour while we celebrate our unique differences. Western Engineering acknowledges that diversity and inclusivity are essential elements to achieving excellence, as described by our faculty's mission statement and vision statement.

This document serves as a guideline for respectful and inclusive behaviour and addresses interpersonal interactions that we may encounter in the workplace. It is not a legally binding document and does not supersede Western University's protocols or collective agreements. This document represents a collective commitment to the level of respect and inclusion Western Engineering expects and strives to achieve, for the benefit of all. By wholeheartedly accepting these guidelines, we can share an understanding of what it really means to foster a respectful and inclusive environment. Please consider this document a living document, to be reviewed by the EDID Committee and faculty members on an ongoing basis, or at least once every five years. We welcome and encourage open discussions about the content of this document, as the EDID Committee was established to bolster discussions of continual learning, increase awareness of EDID principles, and create safe and respectful environments.

2. Purpose

The goal of *Guidelines for Respectful and Inclusive Behaviour* is to support members of the Faculty of Engineering by outlining the following:

- The individual and collective responsibility to contribute to a respectful and inclusive culture
- The need to treat everyone humanely, with respect, and with empathy

- A means for building culture within teams and for building bridges with other teams
- Specific actions for a welcoming, respectful, and inclusive community of professionals
- How these guidelines integrate within established processes in the Faculty that include training, reporting and monitoring
- Forms of unacceptable behaviours and activities
- A clear pathway to address disrespectful or exclusionary interpersonal issues that may arise
- All of the above in a public, easily accessible, and highly visible way

3. Application and Scope

These guidelines apply to the Faculty of Engineering community (including staff, faculty, students, visitors, and volunteers) in the workplace and in the implied workplace. This includes any interaction (physical, virtual, verbal or written) during the course of one's assigned duties, volunteer work, committee membership, and during any event in which an individual is participating due to their association with Western Engineering and/or Western University. This further includes social events, conferences, training, meetings, or any other event that takes place inside or outside of the organization, on and off campus.

Information about applicable legislation and policies that underpin these guidelines are provided in Appendix B.

4. General Conditions

4.1 Expected Behaviour

Every member of Western Engineering is expected to be considerate of other members and contribute to a safe, collaborative, welcoming, positive, and healthy environment in which we can all succeed. The following are examples of expected behaviour with further details provided in Appendix C.

- Be supportive of your colleagues, both proactively and responsively.
- Be cooperative and respectful at all times including acknowledging the contribution of others.
- Be generous when giving and accepting respectful and constructive feedback.
- Treat everyone with dignity and respect in all forms of communication.

- Be a positive role model in matters concerning equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization.
- Educate yourself and recognize your unconscious and implicit biases.
- Educate yourself on what constitutes discriminatory or harassing interactions.
- Use inclusive language such as “hey, everyone” over “hey, guys”.
- Learn how people want to be addressed including the proper pronunciation of their name and pronouns.
- Support EDID values and speak up when these values are not being promoted.

4.2 Unacceptable Behaviours

Western Engineering is committed to providing a welcoming and safe environment for all. Discriminatory and harassing behaviours are unacceptable and are prohibited in the workplace by provincial legislation. Furthermore, any behaviour or language that is unwelcoming—whether or not it rises to the level of harassment—is unacceptable. The following list presents some relevant examples.

- **Learn to recognize and avoid perpetuating microaggressions.**
Exclusionary behaviour most often takes the form of microaggressions—subtle put-downs, or discriminatory statements and actions, that may be unconsciously delivered. Regardless of intent, microaggressions can have a significant negative impact on victims. See Appendix A for further information about microaggressions.
- **Learn to recognize and avoid making sexist, racist, ableist, and other exclusionary jokes.**
- **Avoid patronizing others.** Take care neither to patronize your colleagues nor assume they have complete knowledge of a topic. Do not explain something to someone in a manner considered condescending and overconfident. Remember that your colleagues may have expertise of which you are unaware.
- **Avoid ridiculing others for a lack of knowledge.** It is always acceptable for individuals to say, “I don’t know” or “I don’t understand.” Treat all sincere questions with dignity and respect. If someone displays a lack of knowledge, consider engaging your curiosity about the reason for the knowledge gap and collaborate to support their learning.
- **Avoid cultural misappropriation and promote cultural awareness.** When you take a cultural element from its original context and use it in a different

context it can lead to misinterpretation or disrespect of culture or beliefs. Specifically, elements of Indigenous culture should not be adopted or exploited by non-Indigenous groups.

- **Avoid making assumptions.** Assumptions about a person's gender (including their pronouns), level of knowledge, marital status, age, or language should not be made based on how they look. Treat everyone with respect and be conscious of your own biases.
- **Learn to recognize and avoid tone policing.** This involves responding negatively to the emotion behind a person's message while ignoring its content. For example, telling someone who is discussing an issue that makes them upset to "calm down" instead of responding to their concerns is an example of tone policing. You should not always expect politeness and acceptance when a person is faced with violence and discrimination.

4.3 Reporting a Problem

When an environment becomes disrespectful or exclusionary (on the spectrum from microaggression to harassment) there are things that you can do to make sure that the situation is addressed. Know that it is your overarching right to protect yourself, others, and to file a report in a manner that protects you further. Consider any, or all, of the following options according to your level of comfort.

- i. Address it directly with the individual(s) involved.** For incidents that might be settled with a brief conversation, you can choose to contact the person in question or send an email to express how the incident affected you. Most people may not realize that they are causing distress, and a gentle reminder may be sufficient. Please use this approach if you feel comfortable.
- ii. Report the incident to the Human Rights Office (HRO).** Report concerns of discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct confidentially to the HRO whether you've experienced the incident personally or were witness to the incident. Select to either send an email at humanrights@uwo.ca or use the online form to report the concern. The latter option allows you to remain anonymous, but regardless of how you submit, the information will be treated confidentially. You will be provided with a confidential consultation with a member of staff on how the matter can be addressed. <https://uwo.ca/hro/discrimination/help/index.html>

4.4 Non-Compliance to Guidelines for Respectful and Inclusive Behaviour

Behaviour that does not align with these guidelines can and will be addressed by the Human Rights Office, and it can lead to disciplinary actions. Visit

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp135.pdf for further information.

5. Continuous Improvement

None of us are perfect. All of us, from time to time, may fail to live up to these guidelines. What matters is not having a perfect track record but owning up to our mistakes and committing to a clear and persistent effort to improve.

If you are approached as having (consciously or otherwise) acted in a way that might make your colleagues feel unwelcome, listen with an open mind, and avoid becoming defensive. Remember that if someone offers you feedback, it likely took a great deal of courage for them to do so. Do not come up with excuses or reasons for your actions. Listen with an open mind and thank them for letting you know about the impact of their actions. The best way to respect that courage is to acknowledge the other person's perspective and move forward with a renewed commitment to do better.

6. Review and Contribution

All Western Engineering community members are invited to contribute to these guidelines. This document is intended to be reviewed, critiqued, and amended on a regular basis to reflect the evolving culture of the Faculty. Everyone is invited to contribute to discussions around revisions to this document. Note, of course, that contributions to the guidelines and discussions around them are governed by the legislation and policies outlined in Appendix B.

Please send an email to we-edi@uwo.ca if you have a question or suggestion on this document. Provide as much context as you can and justification for the change requested. All changes and suggestions will be vetted by the EDID Steering committee.

7. Resources

Western's Policy 1.35: Non-discrimination/Harassment Policy:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp135.pdf

Ontario Human Rights Code

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h19>

The Ontario Human Rights Commission

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-primer-guide-developing-human-rights-policies-and-procedures/5-anti-harassment-and-anti-discrimination-policies>

Faculty of Engineering Mission and Values Statement

<https://www.eng.uwo.ca/files/departments-units/human-resources/values-mission-statement.pdf>

Western University Strategic Plan: Towards Western at 150

<https://strategicplan.uwo.ca/>

Western's *Building Inclusivity Through Anti-Racism* Training Module

<https://www.edi.uwo.ca/events-and-trainings/trainings/building-inclusivity-through-anti-racism/>

Western University Indigenous Strategic Plan

<https://indigenous.uwo.ca/initiatives/plan-reports.html>

National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action

<https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>

Vowel, C., "Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Issues in Canada," Highwater Press, 2016. <https://www.portageandmainpress.com/Books/I/Indigenous-Writes>

Maracle, L., "My Conversations with Canadians," Book*hug Press, 2017.

<https://bookhugpress.ca/shop/ebooks/essays-ebooks/conversations-with-canadians-by-lee-maracle/>

8. **Review and Revision**

Date	Event	Conducted By	Notes
2021-11-08	Initial Draft	A.L. Trejos, K. Henry	
2021-11-11 – 2021-11-20	Consultation with EDI Inclusivity in the Faculty Subcommittee	EDI Inclusivity in the Faculty Subcommittee	Feedback sought from Subcommittee members and revisions made
2021-12-07	Presentation to the EDI Steering Committee	A.L. Trejos, K. Henry	Suggestion to consult with legal counsel.

2022-03-03	Feedback on the initial draft	M. Capretz and K. Siddiqui	Feedback and suggestions from the AVP-EDI were provided to the Subcommittee
2022-04-11	Revised draft was shared	A.L. Trejos, K. Henry	Revised draft was shared for review and consultation
2022-12-01	Revised draft per feedback	O. Oloya, K. Siddiqui, K. Henry, A.L. Trejos	Revised after meeting
2023-03-12	Revised draft per feedback	C. Robinson, S. Roach	Revised following feedback from Oloya, and EDID Steering Committee
2023-04-11	Revised draft per feedback	C. Robinson, S. Roach	Revised following feedback from EDID Faculty Inclusivity Subcommittee
2024-02-15	The Dean reviews the document	K. Coley	
2024-07-12	EDID Inclusivity in the Faculty Subcommittee reviewed the document		
2024-08-27	EDID Steering Committee co-chairs reviewed	A.L. Trejos, G. Trifon-Morgan	
2024-09-12	EDID Steering Committee co-chairs meet with the Dean to discuss	K. Coley, A.L. Trejos, G. Trifon-Morgan	Revised based on the discussion and agreed to share the document with department councils
2025-Winter	Dean consulted department councils by sharing the document at in-person meetings	K. Coley	
2025-06-12	Department council feedback consulted	G. Yantz	Revised based on this feedback

	into a single document		
2025-10-28	EDID Steering Committee co-chairs revise and reformat document into a new file	A.L. Trejos, G. Trifon-Morgan	
2025-10-31	Final document presented to EDID Steering Committee	A.L. Trejos, G. Trifon-Morgan	

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APPENDIX A

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition	Reference
Diversity	Diversity refers to a wide range of qualities and attributes within a person, group or community.	https://www.edi.uwo.ca/resources/glossary-of-terms/
Equity	To treat everyone fairly. An equity emphasis seeks to render justice by deeply considering structural factors that benefit some social institutions / groups/ communities/ individuals and hard others. Sometimes justice demands, for the purpose of equity, an unequal response.	https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary
Inclusion	Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.	https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary
Decolonization	Active resistance against colonial powers, and a shifting of power towards political, economic, educational, cultural, psychic independence and power that originate from a colonized nation's own indigenous culture.	https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary
Microaggressions	The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.	https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary https://www.vox.com/2015/2/16/8031073/what-are-microaggressions
Cultural misappropriation	Cultural misappropriation occurs when a cultural fixture of a marginalized culture/community is copied, mimicked, or recreated by the dominant culture against the will of the original community and, above all else, commodified.	https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary

Unconscious or implicit bias	Negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. Implicit biases affect individuals' attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware that those biases exist within themselves.	https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary
Tone Policing	When someone tries to diminish the validity and importance of a statement by attacking the tone in which it is said and presented, instead of the message itself.	https://feminisminindia.com/2020/07/17/infographic-tone-policing-why-its-wrong/ What is Tone Policing?

APPENDIX B

Applicable Legislation and Policies

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/rfc-dlc/ccrf-ccd/pdf/charter-poster.pdf>) prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability. Other criteria have been added over the years, to include sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, or medical/genetic condition.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission (<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-primer-guide-developing-human-rights-policies-and-procedures/5-anti-harassment-and-anti-discrimination-policies>) provides recommendations for anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies and how they should be worded in the workplace. This policy prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following grounds, and any combination of these grounds (copied verbatim):

- Age
- Creed (religion)
- Sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding)
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Gender expression
- Family status (such as being in a parent-child relationship)
- Marital status (including married, single, widowed, divorced, separated, or living in a conjugal relationship outside of marriage, whether in a same-sex or opposite-sex relationship)
- Ability (including mental, physical, developmental, or learning disabilities)
- Race
- Ancestry
- Place of origin
- Ethnic origin
- Citizenship
- Colour
- Record of offences (criminal conviction for a provincial offence, or for an offence for which a pardon has been received)
- Association or relationship with a person identified by one of the above grounds
- Perception that one of the above grounds applies

Western's Policy 1.35: Non-discrimination/Harassment Policy confirms the University's commitment to providing a learning and working environment free of harassment and discrimination

(https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp135.pdf). Any reference to a statute, regulation, or policy, unless expressly stated, shall be deemed to represent the most recently published regulation in the region, as provided by Western University, the Province of Ontario, the Government of Canada, or any other applicable regulatory authority.

APPENDIX C

Examples of Respectful and Inclusive Behaviour

- a) Be supportive of your colleagues, both proactively and responsively.
 - Offer to help if you see someone struggling or in need of assistance, without patronizing them.
 - Be generous with your time if someone asks you for help.
 - If someone is struggling and you are unable to help, direct them to other supports that may be better suited to provide assistance.
- b) Be cooperative and respectful at all times including acknowledging the contribution of others.
 - Understand the signs of *Imposter Syndrome* or *Blowhard Syndrome*.
 - Understand that everyone has an important role in the Faculty and be respectful of others' time.
 - Listen to your colleagues and avoid interrupting them when they are speaking.
- c) Be generous in both giving and accepting respectful and constructive feedback.
 - Give feedback to your colleagues that is kind, respectful, clear, helpful, and constructive, and focused on goals, values, and outcomes rather than personal preferences.
 - Give and receive feedback with gratitude and a growth mindset, recognizing that valuable feedback on one's work is sometimes difficult to hear.
- d) Treat everyone with dignity and respect in all forms of communication.
 - Be polite and friendly in all forms of communication, especially remote communication, where opportunities for misunderstanding are greater.

- Avoid sarcasm, as tone can be hard to decipher online.
 - Face-to-face discussions benefit from all kinds of social cues that may go missing in other forms of communication and are preferred. An online video meeting is a reasonable alternative (especially for one-on-one or small group discussions).
- e) Be a positive role model in matters concerning equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization.
- Speak up when you see unacceptable behaviour to show others how to reject violent or discriminatory behaviour.
 - Point out discriminatory jargon that has become part of our culture and set an example.
- f) Educate yourself and recognize your unconscious and implicit biases.
- Educate yourself on the topic of unconscious bias to better identify the tendency to make snap judgements about people's abilities or talents, which are often based on race and gender.
 - Learn about discrimination and stereotyping and try to recognize how your unconscious and implicit bias affect your actions.
 - In order to consciously change behaviour, challenge reflexive judgements and consciously replace them with more thought-out responses.
- g) Educate yourself on non-discriminatory interaction within our community.
- Educate yourself by searching for resources and attending training sessions when they are offered.
 - For example, learn about Canada's history and the effects of colonialism, critically examine the damaging effects it has had on Indigenous peoples, and learn how to become an ally to help combat racism.
 - Recognize that marginalized people are asked repeatedly to educate others in their culture or experience and should not be the first resource you seek out.
- h) Use inclusive language such as "hey, everyone" over "hey, guys", and "they" instead of "he/she".
- Be mindful in the words that you choose, even if it is as small as choosing "hey, everyone" over "hey, guys."

- Comments such as “It is so easy, even your mother could do it” are both sexist and ageist. Any sexist, racist, ableist, and other exclusionary jokes are not appropriate and will not be tolerated under any circumstance.
 - Any language that is unwelcoming—whether or not it rises to the level of harassment—is not acceptable.
- i) Learn how people want to be addressed, including proper pronunciation and pronouns.
- Make an effort to ask how a person wants to be addressed.
 - Do not shorten someone’s name for convenience, convert it to an English pronunciation, or make comments such as “it’s too long,” “I just can’t say it properly,” or “I’m not even going to try with that one.”
 - Use someone’s requested pronouns if known.
- j) Support EDID values and speak up when these values are not being promoted.
- If you witness something that seems like it is not aligned with our values or the guidelines outlined above, err on the side of caring for your colleagues.
 - Even if an incident seems minor, reach out to the person impacted by it to check in and consider submitting a report per section 4.3.
 - Depending on the circumstances, you may want to speak directly to the person who has violated our EDID guidelines.