



Equitable Decision Making Tool

This checklist was developed as a practical tool to support equitable decision making across policies, practices, guidelines, and other institutional documents. Its purpose is to provide a consistent framework for evaluating materials through an equity focused lens, to help identify and address potential biases in institutional decision making, and to limit the unintended impacts of institutional practices on marginalized or underrepresented community members. By incorporating the checklist into standard workflows, individuals and teams can be more intentional in centering equity in their decision-making processes.

During your decision-making process, consider the following questions:

PURPOSE:

- What is the intended outcome of the decision?
- Do you have a clear, defined reason and need for making the decision?
- Does the current situation have negative impacts on systemically marginalized or other vulnerable populations?
- Is the decision data-informed?
- What data was used to make the decision? (qualitative and quantitative)
- Is the data disaggregated to discover disparate impacts?

POSITION AND ACCESS:

- Have you reflected on how your own position and access might affect this decision?
- Has everyone in the decision-making process voiced their concerns and have those concerns been addressed?

CONSULTED AND INFORMED:

- Who is engaged and represented in the decision-making process?
- Have they been consulted on how they would like to be involved in the process?
- What is being communicated, to whom, and how?
- Who is communicating the information? On whose behalf?
- How is the message being filtered? How is the information coming in and out?

This checklist was inspired by and in part adapted from the Broadening Understanding, Intercultural Leadership, and Development program (BUILD) developed by Dr. Rashida Willard. We're grateful for the opportunity to incorporate insights from their work.

IMPACT:

- What is the desired impact of the decision?
- Does this decision have a disparate impact on any groups?
- How will this decision reduce disparate impacts on systemically non-dominant groups?
- Who will benefit from this decision? Who will be burdened?
- Have you considered all impacts? Campus climate, morale, relationships?
- Who or what groups are most impacted by this decision and how are they represented throughout the decision making process?
- Has accessibility been considered? i.e., digital and physical accessibility and neurodivergence

CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES:

- Have you considered alternatives for the decision?
- Is there a different cultural perspective that you have not considered?

LONG-TERM EFFECTS:

- Did you consider and incorporate lessons learned from similar decisions?
- What impact will this decision have on our financial and human resources?
- What is your plan to revisit this decision to ensure equitable outcomes?

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:

- What strategies will be used to ensure this decision continues to have the intended impact(s)?
- What circumstances might change down the road that would render the decision ineffective or detrimental in the future?
- Are there parts of the plan that need to be adjusted to achieve planned long term goals?

NOTES:

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