



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

41.21	Educational Equity	POLICY
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1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 NSCC takes pride in the unique position it holds within communities throughout Nova Scotia and recognizes its responsibility and accountability to the diverse communities it serves.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to address historical and ongoing injustices and the resulting inequities that create systemic barriers for students from equity-seeking groups in accessing college, experiencing a positive learning environment and obtaining equitable outcomes.
- 1.3 This policy is intended to comply with the requirements of the Community Colleges Act s.63(2) whereby the Board shall ensure that NSCC’s policies are consistent with the principles and goals of employment and educational equity, and to enable NSCC to identify, develop and support a holistic suite of practices, programs and services to reach its goals.

2.0 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all members of the NSCC Community whenever they are representing the College in any way, regardless of the physical or online location. This includes, but is not limited to, working, teaching, learning, attending events, or residing on campus.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Aboriginal / Indigenous Persons	Aboriginal/ Indigenous Persons are those who identify as First Nations, Inuit or Metis. First Nations includes status, treaty or federally registered Indians, as well as non-status and/ or non-registered Indians. Note: While the term Indian is federally recognized, its use is no longer socially acceptable.
Academic Accommodations	Individualized alterations in how a student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. accesses course or program content and information b. participates in learning and course work; and/or c. demonstrates skills or knowledge. <p>Where a barrier-free learning environment is not achieved through Universal Design for Learning, reasonable and appropriate accommodation can be made by providing alternative ways to meet the program outcomes. Academic Accommodation is not reasonable if it imposes undue hardship on the College.</p>
Cultural Proficiency	Enables organizations and individuals to interact effectively in culturally diverse environments. Culturally proficient organizations promote inclusiveness to support learning about inter-cultural difference in order to respond appropriately and effectively to these differences. (Nuri, K. 2015)
Culturally Responsive Practices	Culturally Responsive Practices means teaching, supporting and serving students in a way that reflects and honors students' lived experiences and ways of knowing. Culturally-Responsive Faculty and Staff critically reflect on their role and responsibility in removing systemic barriers and actively engage

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	in work to change the system. Culturally responsive Faculty and Staff seek to recognize their own biases and the potential impact of those biases on the learning environment. They seek to ensure that all students are physically, socially, and intellectually safe and maintain high expectations for all students.
Designated Groups	Groups as identified by the Employment Equity Act as facing barriers to inclusion and participation in the workforce. The groups are women in under-represented occupations, Aboriginal/Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, members of racially-visible groups and such other groups as may be included in the definition of "designated groups" in the Employment Equity Act, Statutes of Canada 1995, c. 46.
Discrimination	Adverse differential treatment of a person or group of persons based on one or more of the protected characteristics in the Nova Scotia <i>Human Rights Act</i> . It may be intentional or unintentional. It may involve direct actions that are discriminatory on their face, or it may involve rules, practices or procedures that appear neutral, but have the effect of disadvantaging certain groups of people based on the protected characteristics.
Educational Equity	Means that personal or social circumstances including but not limited to the protected characteristics in the Nova Scotia <i>Human Rights Act</i> are not obstacles to achieving equitable access to learning, experiencing a respectful and inclusive learning environment, and both individuals and society benefiting from the skills and knowledge acquired. Three forms of educational equity can be further defined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Equity mindedness is achieved when institutional leaders and employees consistently question their own assumptions and biases, recognize stereotypes that reinforce barriers to student success, and continually reassess their practices to create change. Equity mindedness demonstrates an awareness and accountability for addressing equity gaps and becomes fully embodied in the institutional culture. (Parts of this were taken from https://cue.usc.edu/about/equity/equity-mindedness/). b) Representational equity refers to the proportional participation of typically under-represented student populations throughout the institution and, wherever possible, across all program disciplines, learning locations and delivery modes. c) Resource equity refers to the allocation and use of resources, including human, time and financial, for the purpose of addressing resource inequities in order to foster equitable student outcomes, e.g. delivery of education, accommodations for disabilities, financial assistance, transportation and campus services such as child care, etc.
Equity	Equity is a process that calls for the acknowledgement of systemic power and privilege and the (re)distribution of resources to enhance access, experience and outcomes for members of equity-seeking groups. Equity compels the college to create spaces that value, celebrate, amplify and accommodate

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	individual differences through the removal of systemic barriers to employment and education.
Equity-Seeking Groups	The four Designated Groups in addition to groups whose members experience violence, harassment, discrimination, exclusion, stigmatization, and prejudice based on any other grounds identified in the <i>Nova Scotia Human Rights Act</i> .
Fairness	An accessible, consistent and transparent process that is impartial, based upon the principles of merit and equity.
Inclusion	The process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for individuals or groups of individuals who are disadvantaged or under-represented, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights. This creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, fights exclusion and marginalization and offers the opportunity of upward mobility and results in increased social cohesion in society ¹ .
Members of Racially Visible Groups	Persons, other than Aboriginal/Indigenous persons, who identify as non-white in colour and non-Caucasian in racial origin, regardless of birthplace or citizenship.
NSCC Community	NSCC Community member under this policy includes, but is not limited to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Employee: any person who is employed by NSCC or provides services to NSCC under an employment contract. b) Student: anyone applying to or registered in College programs or otherwise participating in College courses, programs, events and activities. c) Volunteer: any person performing work for NSCC in an unpaid capacity. d) Contractor: any individual or company (and its employees) who provides services to NSCC under a service contract (i.e. a non-employee-employer relationship) e) NSCC Community Member: any person working in collaboration with NSCC for a business or academic purpose or an external community member, including all graduates and alumni of NSCC. f) NSCC Board of Governors: the governing body of the College.
Persons with Disabilities	For the purpose of this policy, any persons who are currently experiencing a disability, including “physical disability or mental disability” as defined in s. 3(l) of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. A disability may be long-term, short-term, or recurring ² .

¹ Adapted from: *Leaving no-one behind: the imperative of inclusive development, Report on the World Social Situation, 2016*, United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs

² As defined in the Academic Accommodations policy.

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Undue Hardship	<p>Exists when the costs of providing the requested accommodation would be disproportionate and place an undue burden on the College, taking into account factors including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. significant alteration of the fundamental nature of the program or service; b. financial costs of Academic Accommodation; c. organizational convenience which has a substantial effect on the College due to disruption of operations; d. significant adverse impact on learning opportunities for other students; e. risks of safety or health hazards to other persons or property.
Universal Design for Learning	An educational framework that guides the design of learning goals, assessments, methods and materials, as well as the policies surrounding these curricular elements, with the diversity of learners in mind. ³
Under-Representation	Having a notably lower percentage of equity-seeking group members in a particular student population than would reasonably be expected to enrol at a campus or in a program.

4.0 POLICY

4.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- a. As both a community leader and post-secondary educational institution, NSCC is committed to fulfilling its mission within a learning environment that leads the way in embracing equity, diversity and inclusion.
- b. NSCC believes that the province is best supported when its graduates help diversify the workforce and communities to reflect the diversity of the province's population.
- c. NSCC is genuine in its commitment and intentional in its action to identify and remove barriers to educational equity to create and maintain an inclusive, respectful learning environment for all students.
- d. NSCC is committed to enabling shared accountability practices among all members of the NSCC community, with all striving for progress and continuous improvement in pursuit of Educational Equity.
- e. NSCC defines equitable practices to be those that embrace both Culturally-Responsive Practices and Universal Design for Learning.
- f. NSCC is committed to achieving and sustaining a climate of educational equity through its systems and planning processes, policies, programming, teaching practices,

³ Universal Design for Learners on Campus, CAST, 2016.

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curriculum and instructional materials, supports and services, employee recruitment, professional development, research and innovation, partnerships and leading practices.

4.2 EDUCATION EQUITY GOALS

- a. NSCC will continue to cultivate a culture of **Equity Mindedness** throughout the College. It will do so by promoting awareness and building commitment from institutional leaders and employees to work collaboratively to promote equity and address educational equity issues.
- b. NSCC will continue to identify and remove **Representational Equity** barriers experienced by equity-seeking groups by ensuring they have equitable opportunities to enrol in, strive through and achieve their learning goals.
- c. NSCC will continue to identify and provide resources to help reduce **Resource Equity** gaps experienced by students in equity-seeking groups. These resources will focus on:
 - i. developing and promoting equitable and inclusive practices throughout the College as a fundamental contributor to student retention and creating a sense of belonging for all students;
 - ii. continuing to build and enhance learning design and delivery by removing barriers through practices such as **Universal Design for Learning**, so that students of all abilities and backgrounds can access and succeed in learning at NSCC; and
 - iii. providing access to a range of supports and services to students to help reduce the impacts of educational costs and other barriers to admission, retention and graduation.

4.3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. **All members of the NSCC community** have a role in the success of educational equity. The College expects that everyone who works, studies, and visits its campuses are treated with fairness, dignity and respect. To this end, all members of the NSCC community are required to behave in a welcoming and respectful manner in all College working and learning environments, while attending events, or residing on campus.
- b. The **President** has overall management responsibility for the policy and is accountable to the Board. The President will:
 - i. ensure open communications of this policy;
 - ii. monitor results; and,
 - iii. ensure annual educational equity progress reports are presented to the Board of Governors.

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- c. The **Vice President, Academic** ensures the implementation of this policy including:
 - i. ongoing management, monitoring, analysis, evaluation; and,
 - ii. reporting progress and compliance with educational equity goals and objectives.
 - iii. The Vice President, Academic, may occasionally conduct audits of overall College practices and request relevant data maintained by respective departments with respect to this policy.

- d. **College Leaders**, including all members of the Senior Leadership Forum (SLF) and the College Leadership Forum (CLF) will:
 - i. foster a culture that advances educational equity within their respective work areas;
 - ii. be accountable for reporting on the progress achieved; and
 - iii. commit to ongoing improvements by their respective departments in advancing the Educational Equity Policy.

- e. **Academic** is responsible for managing and monitoring implementation of the College’s Educational Equity Policy and for ensuring compliance with all legal requirements. Its staff is also responsible for:
 - i. working in collaboration with College leaders to provide guidance, support and coaching to assist in advancing this policy;
 - ii. working with College leaders to recommend and develop strategies for achieving representational equity, resource equity, equity mindedness and inclusive practices; and
 - iii. collecting reports, circulating information, monitoring, measuring and reporting progress, promoting awareness and developing promotional tools relating to the advancement of educational equity in the College.

- f. **Human Rights and Equity Services** is responsible for:
 - i. partnering with Academic on managing and monitoring the Educational Equity Policy;
 - ii. championing the Educational Equity Policy and its objectives;
 - iii. working with Academic to support strategies for achieving representational equity, resource equity, and equity mindedness;
 - iv. supporting the advancement of educational equity through advice, education, promotion, and resources.

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- g. Staff of the **Policy, Planning & Research Office** works with the Centre for the Advancement of Educational Equity and Belonging by:
 - i. working with Policy Sponsors and Stewards to integrate the principles of educational equity throughout all learning, enrolment and student policies and procedures to ensure that all students receive equitable treatment in matters related to learning;
 - ii. working with College Leaders to ensure that all Strategic, Academic, Business and other institutional plans incorporate and address educational equity considerations in the implementation of these plans; and
 - iii. working with key stakeholders to develop progress metrics and assist in the collection and interpretation of student enrolment and other data.

4.4 ADDRESSING CONCERNS

- a. Our intention is to be restorative in approach and outcomes as appropriate. Concerns will be addressed using the Respectful Community procedures.

5.0 POLICY SUPPORTS

- 21.01 Admissions Policy
- 34.01 Academic Accommodations Policy
- 41.01 Respectful Workplace and Learning Environment Policy
- 41.02 Respectful Workplace and Learning Environment Procedures
- 41.11 Employment Equity Policy
- [Nova Scotia Human Rights Act](#)

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