

WE BELONG. TOGETHER.



Inclusion Lens Framework

Seven Steps for Impact-Aware Practice

OC's Commitment to Inclusive Community

Okanagan College is committed to fostering an inclusive community that respects and values the diverse identities, experiences, and journeys of all who learn, teach, and work here. Our culture of inclusion is grounded in the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice, as affirmed by our Board of Governors.

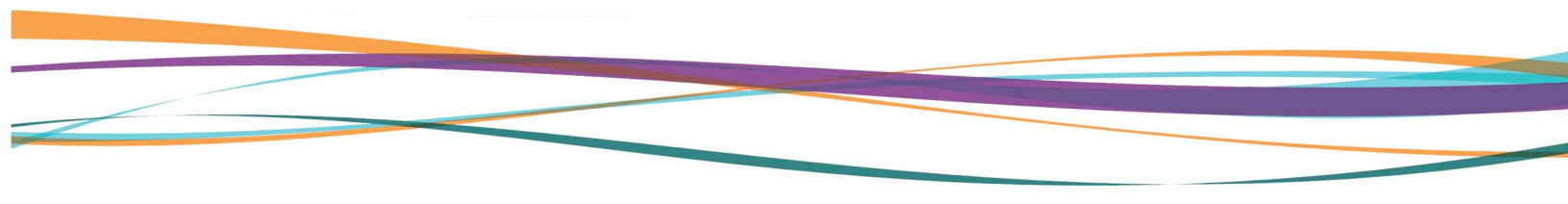
Achieving this means designing systems, policies, and practices that actively remove barriers and create equitable opportunities for all – especially for those whose perspectives and needs have historically been overlooked in planning and decision-making.

The Inclusion Lens Framework supports people-centered planning by helping us recognize where decisions may have different impacts on different groups. By identifying these *differential impacts*, we can make thoughtful adjustments to promote fair access and success for everyone.

This framework supports the vision articulated in OC's Inclusive Community Plan 2025-2030 and fulfills a commitment in the Inspire Roadmap. As members of the OC community, we all hold shared accountability for the inclusive future we wish to build. The framework offers concrete guidance on how to bring inclusion into our work, every day.

The Inclusion Lens draws on the widely used Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) tool and embodies OC's commitment to meaningful, measurable inclusion throughout the College.

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Why is an Inclusion Lens Important?

Our Inclusion Lens, rooted in GBA+, supports better decision-making. It brings attention to the fact that different people experience systems differently, and helps us design policies, procedures, and practices that are more responsive to that diversity. The purpose is to guide us to explore how the complexity of people's lives can lead to differential negative impact, to help ensure that our processes support equitable outcomes. This tool is a practical way to operationalize our institutional commitments to equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice, supporting meaningful change across both academic and administrative areas.

How Are We Using the Inclusion Lens?

At Okanagan College, inclusion is a shared responsibility. While EDI leadership will support its use and provide guidance, every department and portfolio has a role to play in identifying potential impacts, mitigating risks, and making thoughtful, inclusive decisions.

This Inclusion Lens is a practical framework. Its tools, guiding questions, and risk-assessment rubric help all of us use a people-centered approach to assess our everyday work across the institution. This includes evaluating the potential impacts of new or revised policies, procedures, curriculum, services, and operational decisions.

What is GBA Plus?

Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) is a structured, reflective process for identifying how policies, programs, decisions, and practices may affect different groups of people in different ways. At its core, GBA+ helps decision-makers consider who is included, who may be left out, and how overlapping identity factors (like gender, Indigeneity, race, disability, age, language, or socioeconomic status) can shape people's experiences with systems and structures.

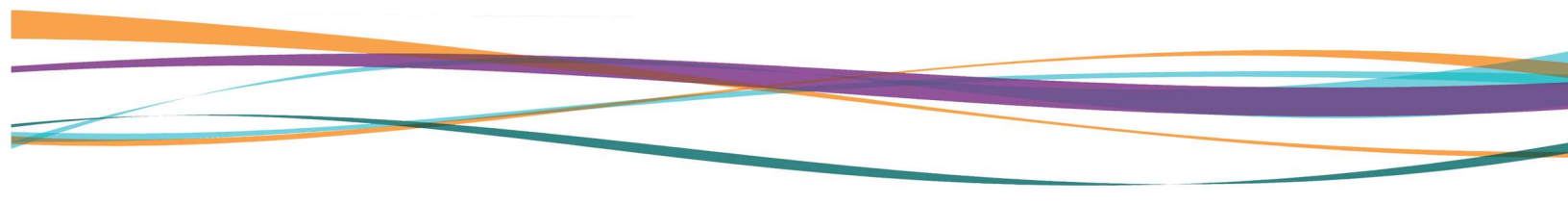
GBA+ is a tool used across Canada - in governments, post-secondary institutions, and corporations - to ensure that programs and policies are more inclusive, effective, and equitable. By adopting GBA+ as the foundation of our Inclusion Lens, Okanagan College aligns itself with national standards for inclusive analysis, while tailoring the approach to the specific needs of our post-secondary context.

What GBA Plus Is Not

Despite the name, GBA+ is not only about gender. The "plus" acknowledges the importance of intersectionality: the ways that multiple identity factors interact to shape people's experiences and outcomes. Using GBA+ as a tool helps ensure that programs and services are accessible to everyone and have the impact they are intended to have. For many people, this is essential for ensuring access and success.

GBA+ is not a checklist or a one-time step. It is not a barrier to efficiency or innovation. And it is not meant to create a separate process layered on top of "normal" decision-making. Instead, it offers a structured approach to how we explore, develop, implement, and evaluate decisions from a truly people-centered perspective.

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Planning Steps with Core and Supporting Questions

Step 1 - Identify the Issue or Decision

Clearly define the purpose, scope, and intended outcomes of the policy, process, or decision. Identify who is likely to be impacted, and whether any past issues or concerns have been raised.

1. **Core Question:** Who is most likely to be affected by this (e.g. learners, employees, community members)? Are there differences within that group that might shape how they experience it (e.g. disability, gender, age, caregiving responsibilities, sexual orientation, socioeconomics, or immigration status)?
2. **Supporting Questions:** What is being developed or revised, and why? Who has named or raised concerns related to this before?

Step 2 - Gather Relevant Data and Insights

Review demographic, experiential, and contextual information related to the issue. Identify gaps in your knowledge or evidence, especially around differential impacts based on identity, background, or experience.

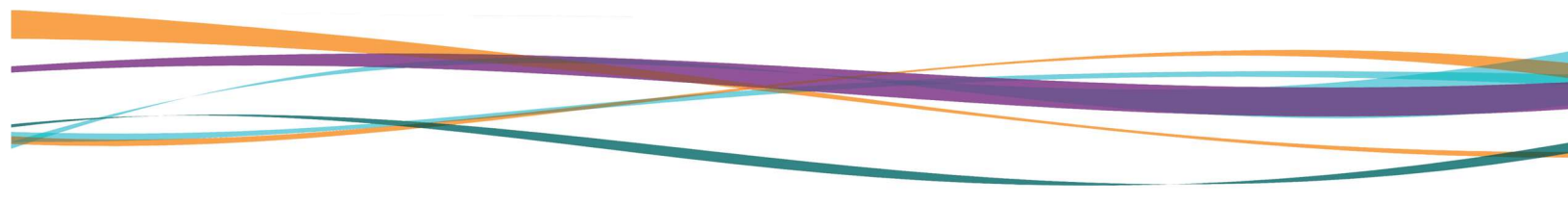
3. **Core Question:** What do we know about how different groups might experience this? Where do we lack knowledge?
4. **Supporting Questions:** What data or perspectives are missing? How might we gain insight without placing extra burden on already affected or marginalized groups? Could we use existing institutional/sector benchmarks, small pilots or rapid feedback, or qualitative stories as low-burden proxies while we improve data?

Step 3 - Consider Differential Impacts

Analyze how the issue or decision may impact people differently based on intersecting factors like gender, Indigeneity, race, disability, age, or socio-economic status. Consider both intended and unintended consequences.

5. **Core Question:** Could this decision or action affect some people differently than others? In what ways?
6. **Supporting Questions:** Might this reinforce or reduce any existing barriers or inequities? What specific identity or experience factors might interact in this context? Whose perspectives are needed to validate or challenge our assumptions?

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Step 4 - Assess Level of Risk

Use the provided rubric to assess the likelihood and severity of potential negative outcomes. Rate the risk to each facet of inclusion, consider scale and scope. The protocol outlines next steps.

7. **Core Question:** What are the possible negative effects or unintended consequences, and how likely and serious are they? Provide a 1–3 sentence rationale citing the evidence or perspectives used and note any key uncertainties.
8. **Supporting Questions:** Is there a history of harm or exclusion in this area? Could this worsen inequities or create legal, reputational, or trust-based risks? What evidence, data, or engagement informed the rating? If evidence is thin, how will we monitor early? Does this touch non-discretionary obligations (e.g., human rights, accessibility) that elevate severity?

Step 5 - Plan for Mitigation and Action

Identify strategies to mitigate any negative impacts. Consider how to reduce barriers, strengthen inclusion, or build in alternatives. Include affected voices in shaping solutions.

9. **Core Question:** What can we do to reduce harm and increase equity in this decision or action?
10. **Supporting Questions:** What alternatives or adjustments could be made? Who could help strengthen this plan? What specific mitigations will be implemented, by whom, and by when? How will we amplify benefits while reducing risks?

Step 6 - Decide on the Right Level of Engagement

Based on the level of risk, determine whether the action can move forward independently, with support from your Inclusion Lead and/or EDI leadership, or with broader consultation.

Engagement should be timely, respectful, and meaningful.

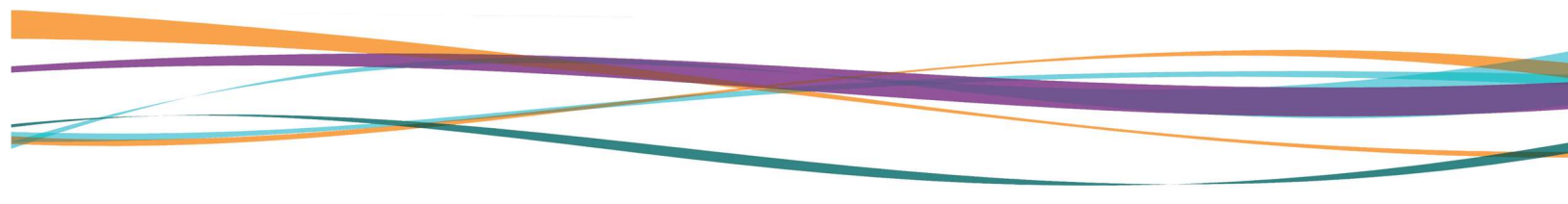
11. **Core Question:** Who needs to be informed, consulted, or involved, and when? The form, extent, and duration of engagement should match the severity and likelihood of differential negative impact.
12. **Supporting Questions:** Which individuals or groups should shape this decision? If direct engagement isn't possible, what other approaches might provide insight?

Step 7 - Document and Learn

Document the process, decisions made, and how inclusion or equity considerations shaped the outcome. Share what you learned, so others can benefit and so OC's practices continue to evolve.

13. **Core Question:** What did we learn, and how did equity considerations influence the outcome?
14. **Supporting Questions:** How will we share or record what we did? What could be improved next time? Where will this be stored centrally, who is responsible for submission, and what follow-up date/indicators will be used to review outcomes?

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Step 4 - Risk Assessment Rubric

Considerations for assessing risk and impact for inclusion, equity, and accessibility.

- 1. Equity of Access and Participation:** Impact on whether students and employees have fair opportunities to enter, remain, and thrive at the College.
- 2. Safety, Respect, and Well-being:** Impact on whether students and employees have equitable access to a physically and psychologically safe, respectful, and inclusive environment.
- 3. Representation and Voice:** Impact on whose knowledge, perspectives, and contributions are recognized, valued, and influential in College life.
- 4. Scope and Duration of Impact:** Impact related to how widespread and lasting the inequity or harm may be.
- 5. Compounding and Intersectional Impact:** Overall impact in relation to multiple decisions or initiatives that accumulate to create higher barriers or levels of harm.

Severity of Impact	
5 - SEVERE	- Entire group excluded from admission, service, or employment (e.g., policy change makes a program unaffordable for low-income students; new hiring rule effectively excludes people with international credentials). - Creates or permits serious physical harm or hostile environment that disproportionately affect marginalized or vulnerable community members (e.g., policy tolerates harassment, lab conditions are unsafe for vision impaired people). - Whole groups systematically excluded from decision-making or representation (e.g., no Indigenous or student input on a College-wide policy with direct impacts on them). - Impacts many people across multiple campuses/programs and persists long-term (e.g., decade-long funding model that disadvantages rural learners). - Multiple policies or changes converge to create insurmountable barriers (e.g., rising tuition + cuts to financial aid + increased housing costs = exclusion of low-income students).
4 - MAJOR	- Large barriers for significant subgroups (e.g., scheduling changes make programs inaccessible to single parents; digital tools incompatible with screen readers). - Noticeable increase in risk or stress across groups (e.g., workload changes in areas staffed by visible minorities lead to burnout; unsafe pedestrian pathways limit campus access). - Persistent underrepresentation in influential spaces (e.g., committee membership repeatedly lacking women in STEM). - Impacts multiple groups in several departments for several years. - Two or more decisions combine to significantly heighten inequity (e.g., workload increase + limited accommodations for disability).
3 - MODERATE	- Some barriers requiring extra time/effort/money (e.g., new fees of \$100–200 annually; lengthy manual accommodation requests). - Recurring disrespect or stress for some groups (e.g., repeated microaggressions in classrooms; emergency protocols disadvantage or exclude disabled members). - Input included but not acted on (e.g., survey feedback from equity-seeking groups gathered but ignored). - Impacts limited to one faculty/department or a 1–2 year period. - Adds to existing disadvantages but not decisively exclusionary (e.g., extra documentation requirements for students already facing systemic barriers).

Step 4 - Risk Assessment Rubric

2 - MINOR	• Small or isolated inconveniences (e.g., a single service area without gender-neutral washrooms). • Isolated incidents of discomfort/disrespect (e.g., occasional exclusionary language in communications; intermittent incidents of blocked hallways or doorways). • Tokenistic or one-off inclusion (e.g., a single representative but isolated from decision process). • Impacts a small group or a short-term event (e.g., single cohort affected by scheduling change). • Slightly worsens existing challenges (e.g., minor cost increase alongside broader affordability issues).
1 - INSIGNIFICANT	• No discernible difference in access or participation. • No discernible effect on safety, respect, or well-being. • Broad, balanced input and representation maintained. • Minimal or no impact in scope or duration. • No notable compounding or intersectional effect.

LIKELIHOOD RATINGS	
Probability of an event occurring	
5 - HIGHLY LIKELY	>90% Probability - Almost certain to occur
4 - LIKELY	60-90% Probability - Relatively high chance of occurring
3 - POSSIBLE	40-60% Probability - Possible to occur about half the time
2 - UNLIKELY	10-40% Probability - Relatively low chance of occurring
1 - HIGHLY UNLIKELY	<10% Probability - Near impossible to very low chance of occurring

Protocol

Multiply the severity rating (1-5) with the probability rating (1-5) to determine next steps. For any rating of 4 or 5, in severity or likelihood, discuss with your Inclusion Lead before proceeding.

Green (1-5): Continue with standard Inclusion Lens steps as outlined in the framework, following all reflection, data, and evaluation components.

Amber (6-14): Consult with the Inclusion Lead in your department or portfolio to determine appropriate steps.

Red (15-25): Discuss with Inclusion Lead and EDI leadership; include senior management/leadership as appropriate.

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