

# Inclusive Learning Environments

## Self-Assessment for College Instructors

Name:

Today's diverse college community requires much more from instructors. It requires that they acknowledge and support students with different learning needs and learning styles, reflect diversity in the curriculum and course materials, be more aware of classroom and campus dynamics, and pay more attention to the learning experiences of students from diverse communities, backgrounds, and identities. The goal is to create an inclusive classroom and campus community that supports the academic achievement and well-being of students from diverse communities, backgrounds, and identities.

This self-assessment allows instructors to reflect on their behaviours within the classroom and college community to help them identify what more they could do to create inclusive classrooms. It uses the work of [www.edchange.org](http://www.edchange.org) and the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning at Harvard University, which uses principles from various approaches for thinking about diversity in educational institutions including resiliency theory, diversity pedagogy theory, funds of knowledge theory, and cultural proficiency.

The actions and behaviours included on the self-assessment are meant to be suggestions, are not a complete list of all possible actions, and do not guarantee the creation of an inclusive learning environment. Instructors should engage in formal and informal professional development to develop a range of pedagogical skills that best serve the needs of all their students.

The Inclusive Learning Environment Self-Assessment is designed to give instructors an opportunity to reflect on their day-to-day practices against important actions and competencies needed to support equitable and inclusive learning environments for students from diverse communities, backgrounds, and identities.

### **Completing the self-assessment:**

Consider each of the statements and reflect on your day-to-day actions and behaviours in the classroom and on campus. Indicate how frequently you engage in or consider each. Circle the number that most accurately reflects your day-to-day classroom behaviours. Total your score for each section and calculate your total score on the final page.

Before you respond, take the time to think about examples of situations where you have (or could have) demonstrated the behaviour. Taking the time to reflect on each statement and responding honestly is key to this self-assessment—otherwise the tool will have little value in your development as an inclusive instructor.

## **Inclusion Competency 1: Self-Reflection to Increase Self-Awareness**

Inclusive instructors know that their teaching philosophies and practices are driven at least in part by their belief systems. As such, they are willing to engage in self-reflection in order to increase their self-awareness and to challenge their belief systems.

Harvard's Implicit Association Test offers an online tool to help you explore your biases. Access it at:

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/education.html>

## **Inclusion Competency 2: Create an Inclusive Curriculum**

Inclusive college instructors supplement what is found in textbooks and other curricular documents so that they provide course materials and activities that reflect the diversity, backgrounds, and experiences of students. They also design all course elements for universal design and accessibility.

## **Inclusion Competency 3: Create an Inclusive Learning Environment**

An inclusive college instructor establishes and supports a class climate that fosters inclusion for all students. They model inclusive behaviours by using respectful language, learning the correct pronunciation of students' names, and using students' pronouns.

## **Inclusion Competency 4: Improve Accessibility for all Students**

Inclusive college instructors recognize the diversity of students' abilities and complexity of their lives and create accessible learning experiences.

## **Inclusion Competency 5: Actively Promote Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the College Community**

Inclusive instructors also support the creating of an inclusive college environment by demonstrating a commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion efforts. This motivates others to do the same and inspires positive change within the college community.

# Inclusion Competency 1: Self-Reflection to Increase Self-Awareness

How well have I...	Not at all	Not very well	Some-what	Very well	Extremely well
<b>1</b> Reflected on my own background, experiences, values, and beliefs to understand how they influence my thoughts and actions and how I view and interact with my students and others in the diverse college community	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2</b> Reflected on the biases and stereotypes I hold and how they influence my assumptions about students' abilities	1	2	3	4	5
<b>3</b> Reflected on whether I rationalize or tolerate lack of participation from certain groups of students more than I would for other students and what assumptions I make about their silence	1	2	3	4	5
<b>4</b> Ensured that I do not respond to the contributions of certain groups of students as if they have more intellectual weight than the contributions of other students	1	2	3	4	5
<b>5</b> Recognized that I am more comfortable with students and others who are most similar to me and gone out of my way to ensure that I also interact comfortably with students who are different from myself	1	2	3	4	5
<b>6</b> Changed, as necessary, my teaching style, communication style, or behaviour from ways that are comfortable to me to ways that may be more helpful and better serve students and others from diverse communities, backgrounds, and identities	1	2	3	4	5
<b>7</b> Reflected on my own cultural identity in order to understand how that identity affects my communication style, and how that may affect communication with students from different cultural communities, backgrounds, and identities	1	2	3	4	5
<b>8</b> Reflected on my understanding of racism, homophobia, sexism, and other forms of oppression and how they may show up in the classroom or curriculum to create poor learning conditions and barriers to learning for many students	1	2	3	4	5
<b>9</b> Examined my beliefs about student deficits and taken more responsibility for contributing to the success of students from diverse communities, backgrounds, and identities	1	2	3	4	5
<b>10</b> Increased my understanding of the diverse communities from which my students are from, to ensure that I engage respectfully with all students and communities	1	2	3	4	5

## Scoring...

Add the numbers you circled in each column and record the sum in the box for each column:

Add the scores in the 5 boxes:

Divide by 10 to get your overall rating:

# Inclusion Competency 2: Create an Inclusive Curriculum

How well have I...	Not at all	Not very well	Some-what	Very well	Extremely well
<b>1</b> Reviewed textbooks and other course materials to ensure that they are free of implicit or explicit bias	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2</b> Included scholars and others who hold diverse social identities through videos, articles, and guest lectures	1	2	3	4	5
<b>3</b> Incorporated curriculum content, materials, visual aids, and examples that are relevant to the lives of all students and reflect the diversity of Canadian society	1	2	3	4	5
<b>4</b> Allowed all students to see themselves, their histories, and their experiences reflected in the curriculum	1	2	3	4	5
<b>5</b> Addressed and correct for biases that may be present in textbooks and other course materials	1	2	3	4	5
<b>6</b> Cultivated in students the ability to analyze bias in course materials and classroom interactions	1	2	3	4	5
<b>7</b> Provided relevant opportunities for authentic learning experiences and experiential learning for students from diverse communities, backgrounds, and identities	1	2	3	4	5
<b>8</b> Regularly developed my knowledge and skills to support my ability to effectively teach students from diverse communities, backgrounds, and identities	1	2	3	4	5
<b>9</b> Created assignments that encourage students to explore the perspectives of those from different gender, racial, and cultural groups	1	2	3	4	5
<b>10</b> Considered the hidden curriculum (i.e., the unspoken or implicit academic, social, and cultural messages that are communicated to students) and ensure that it is teaching inclusion rather than further marginalizing some groups of students	1	2	3	4	5

## Scoring...

Add the numbers you circled in each column and record the sum in the box for each column:

Add the scores in the 5 boxes:

Divide by 10 to get your overall rating:

# Inclusion Competency 3: Create an Inclusive Classroom Environment

How often do I...	Never	Rarely	Some-times	Usually	Always
<b>1</b> Develop ground rules or norms that will guide how students interact with each other in the classroom and set expectations for an inclusive and respectful classroom	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2</b> Let students know from the very beginning that their thoughts have a place in the classroom, that we all have unique perspectives, and that these perspectives are an important component of the learning process	1	2	3	4	5
<b>3</b> Create a learning environment in which students feel that they can bring their 'whole selves,' that they feel valued, and that their differences enrich our discussions and college community	1	2	3	4	5
<b>4</b> Learn how to pronounce my student's names and ask them to correct me when I get it wrong	1	2	3	4	5
<b>5</b> Introduce myself with my pronouns and ask my students for their pronouns	1	2	3	4	5
<b>6</b> Recognize biases and inequities reflected in interactions between students and appropriately and immediately address offensive, discriminatory, and insensitive comments and behaviours because I understand that my silence may be seen as endorsement of these behaviours	1	2	3	4	5
<b>7</b> Structure classroom conversations to encourage respectful and equitable participation	1	2	3	4	5
<b>8</b> Structure project group membership to support non-competitive ways of learning and encourage collaboration among students from diverse communities, backgrounds, and identities	1	2	3	4	5
<b>9</b> Anticipate sensitive areas in the subject matter being taught and plan in advance how I will handle sensitive topics or explosive moments (this could also include incorporating a trigger warning so that students may exercise self-care)	1	2	3	4	5
<b>10</b> Ensure I do not create situations where students are placed in the position of being representatives of their gender, race, culture, or other social groups	1	2	3	4	5

## Scoring...

Add the numbers you circled in each column and record the sum in the box for each column:

Add the scores in the 5 boxes:

Divide by 10 to get your overall rating:

# Inclusion Competency 4: Improve Accessibility for all Students

How often do I...	Never	Rarely	Some- times	Usually	Always
<b>1</b> Adopt universal design guidelines for accessible course materials and presentations	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2</b> Ensure that students from diverse communities, backgrounds, and identities know about the academic and well-being supports available to them at the college	1	2	3	4	5
<b>3</b> Invite students to inform me or the applicable accessibility and accommodations department as appropriate (as per the college's policies and procedures) of any learning needs or accommodation they require for human rights related needs (i.e. disability, family care responsibilities, religious observance, gender identity/expression, sex, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
<b>4</b> Ensure learning experiences are accessible to all students, in particular those who are low-income, those with children, and international students who may have limited free time or disposable income	1	2	3	4	5
<b>5</b> Where possible, provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate learning in more than one way	1	2	3	4	5
<b>6</b> Keep reaching out to all students, even if I experience them as unresponsive, with the understanding that I may need to establish trust among students from communities that historically have experienced an educational system that maintains societal inequality or who have experienced hostility from educational institutions	1	2	3	4	5
<b>7</b> Ensure that ongoing communication about their learning is in place to allow students to monitor their progress	1	2	3	4	5
<b>8</b> Provide flexibility with deadlines for students with competing demands on their time or those who require additional time and support to complete course work	1	2	3	4	5
<b>9</b> Use multiple modes of instruction to account for the range of learning styles that may be present among a diverse group of students	1	2	3	4	5
<b>10</b> Remove barriers for learners by providing supporting materials in alternative formats (e.g. glossaries, illustrations), background information, and multiple types of examples to facilitate learning	1	2	3	4	5

## Scoring...

Add the numbers you circled in each column and record the sum in the box for each column:

Add the scores in the 5 boxes:

Divide by 10 to get your overall rating:

# Inclusion Competency 5: Actively Promote Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the College Community

How well have I...	Not at all	Not very well	Some-what	Very well	Extremely well
<b>1</b> Talked positively about and delivered a consistent message of the value of a diverse and inclusive college environment	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2</b> Helped students and colleagues understand their role in creating an inclusive college environment	1	2	3	4	5
<b>3</b> Recognized and respectfully addressed the concerns of students or colleagues who don't see the value of efforts to create an inclusive college environment	1	2	3	4	5
<b>4</b> Assumed responsibility for learning about the college's equity, diversity and inclusion efforts, and my roles and responsibilities to support these efforts	1	2	3	4	5
<b>5</b> Championed the college's equity, diversity and inclusion efforts and view it as an opportunity to improve the workplace and student success	1	2	3	4	5
<b>6</b> Actively supported efforts to increase diversity among faculty, staff, and students	1	2	3	4	5
<b>7</b> Fostered conversations with colleagues about equity, diversity, and inclusion concerns and issues	1	2	3	4	5
<b>8</b> Worked with my college community to ensure that we don't confuse celebrating diversity with creating equity and respond appropriately to racial conflict	1	2	3	4	5
<b>9</b> Understood systemic inequality, based on gender, race, and other characteristics, how it plays out in the college system, and how it affects the educational outcomes for various groups of students	1	2	3	4	5
<b>10</b> Worked to ensure that students from marginalized communities are not further marginalized on campus or in my classroom	1	2	3	4	5

## Scoring...

Add the numbers you circled in each column and record the sum in the box for each column:

Add the scores in the 5 boxes:

Divide by 10 to get your overall rating:

## Scoring...

Transfer your scores for each Inclusion Competency below

COMPETENCY

SCORE

**Inclusion Competency 1: Self-Reflection to Increase Self-Awareness**

**Inclusion Competency 2: Create an Inclusive Curriculum**

**Inclusion Competency 3: Create an Inclusive Learning Environment**

**Inclusion Competency 4: Improve Accessibility for all Students**

**Inclusion Competency 5: Actively Promote Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the College Community**

TOTAL SCORE...

INTERPRETING YOUR SCORE:

### Change Agent

Change agents are inclusive instructors who are aware of biases in themselves and recognize the negative impact that comes from acting on these biases.

If your score falls in this range, you can make great contributions to the college community by finding ways to educate others and help them realize the value of equity, diversity, and inclusion. You could benefit from watching for blind spots to ensure that you are fully aware of your biases and your impact on others. You may also benefit from feedback from others because you "don't know what you don't know."

Examine the Inclusion Competencies for questions on which you scored lowest to identify areas in which you can improve.

**16  
to  
25**

### Neutral

Instructors in this category are somewhat aware of biases in themselves and others. They can increase and apply their knowledge to support the learning of all students according to their needs.

If your score falls in this range, you can examine the Inclusion Competencies for questions on which you scored lowest to identify areas in which you need to improve.

**11  
to  
15**

### Unaware

While they may have good intentions, unaware instructors don't realize that they may exhibit biased behaviours that marginalize students or create barriers to their success. While the scores of some unaware instructors may put them in this category, their scores could also place them in the other two categories because they might frequently answer "Usually / Always" and "Very well / Extremely well" because they don't reflect on and are not aware of their own behaviours.

If your score falls in this range, you could benefit from feedback from others and ongoing learning through professional development and ongoing reading. You may also benefit from being more observant of the interactions in your classroom and learning more about the experiences of students who come from marginalized groups.

**0  
to  
10**