

**Approving University Official(s):** Academic Cabinet, Board of Governors  
**Responsible Office:** Office of the President, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Office  
**Effective date:** January 12, 2022 (new policy)  
**Last review date:** January 12, 2022  
**Next review date:** 1 year

## **[AD- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy]**

### **Purpose**

This Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy (the “Policy”) is intended to provide Yorkville University and Toronto Film School and their affiliates (collectively, “Yorkville”) with the necessary framework and guidance to facilitate the following:

- that the organization is, and is viewed as, an educational institution and employer of choice with respect to the promotion of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion;
- that the organization reflects and appreciates the Diversity of the communities it operates in and conducts business with by working to remove Barriers to opportunity;
- an understanding within the organization of the role and function of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Office (DEIO);
- that each Member of the Yorkville Community understands their role and responsibility in complying with this Policy and working to remove Barriers to opportunity by promoting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and creating more inclusive learning and work environments as per Yorkville’s Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan;
- embedding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (which includes values, expectations and practices) into all aspects of our business and organizational culture;
- the promotion of a respectful, discrimination- and harassment-free workplace and learning environment, and providing workplace and academic

Accommodations pursuant to the applicable provincial human rights legislation and Yorkville's policies (such as the Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Program, and Workplace Accommodation Policy, and Accommodations and Accessibility Policy and Procedures);

- the development and provision of training, education, resources and tools to raise awareness and ensure that employees develop the requisite skills and capacity to understand their responsibilities under this Policy and the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan;
- the provision of guidance to leadership to support strategic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion commitments; and
- the fostering of relationships with community partners in promoting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the creative industries and higher education.

## **Audience**

This Policy applies to all academic and academic support activities and departments of Yorkville.

For any concerns regarding discrimination or harassment, employees and students should refer to the respective Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures that applies to them.

## **Definitions**

Accessibility	refers to the design of products, devices, services, or environments, and Barrier-removal for people with disabilities.
Ally/Allyship	is a person who works to end a form of oppression that gives them Privilege(s). Allies listen to, and are guided by, communities and individuals affected by oppression. Forms of oppression include: Ableism, ageism, Classism, Biphobia, Homophobia, Transphobia, Sexism, Racism, Anti-Black Racism, Anti-Indigenous Sentiment, Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, Anti-Immigrant Sentiment and others.
Ableism	refers to a belief system that sees persons with disabilities as being less worthy of respect and consideration, less able to contribute and participate, or of less inherent value than others.

Anti-Black Racism	refers to Prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping and discrimination that are directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and its legacy.
Anti-Indigenous Sentiment	refers to the ongoing discrimination, negative stereotyping, and injustice experienced by Indigenous peoples.
Anti-Immigrant Sentiment (also known as xenophobia)	refers to dislike of or Prejudice against people from other countries.
Anti-Semitism	refers to a perception of Jewish people which may be expressed as hatred toward them.
Barrier	refers to the physical, attitudinal, procedural, technological, information and communicational impediments to full access and participation. Barriers may be systemic or individual in nature. Systemic Barriers can be described as patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that are part of the structure of an organization, and which create a perpetual disadvantage. Individual Barriers can be described as impediments that are not system-wide/related to the system.
Biphobia	refers to the negative attitudes, feelings, or irrational aversion to, fear or hatred of bisexual people and their communities, or of behaviours stereotyped as bisexual, leading to discrimination, harassment or violence against bisexual people.
Classism	is the Prejudice against or in favor of people belonging to a particular social class, resulting in differential treatment.
Diversity	refers to the wide range of human characteristics including but not limited to disability, marital status, family status, Indigenous identity, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, national origin, citizenship, language, creed/religion, sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, political belief or activity, social condition, socioeconomic status, educational background, literacy level and geographical region.
Diversity Advisory Council	Is an advisory body of up to ten members (faculty, staff and students) comprised of a combination of rotating appointed positions and elected positions. This council provides

strategic advice on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives and provides our diverse communities the opportunity for input into decision-making, policies and practices related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Both Yorkville University and Toronto Film School have two such councils each: one for faculty and staff, and one for students.

Equality

refers to providing each individual with the same or similar opportunities and ensuring fairness in processes and outcomes so that each individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their abilities.

Equity

refers to acknowledging that equal access to opportunities and services may require treating particular individuals and groups differently through the removal of Barriers that marginalized Equity-Seeking Groups experience in trying to obtain this access.

Equity-Seeking Groups

are communities that experience significant collective Barriers in participating in society. This could include attitudinal, historic, social and environmental Barriers based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, creed/religion, sexual orientation and gender identity, gender expression, etc. Equity-seeking groups are those that identify Barriers to equal access, opportunities and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination and actively seek social justice and reparation.

HeteroSexism

refers to a system of attitudes, bias (including Unconscious Bias) and discrimination in favour of female-male sexuality and relationships.

Homophobia

refers to negative attitudes, feelings, or irrational aversion to, fear or hatred of members of the LGBTQI2SA+ community. It is used to signify a hostile psychological state leading to discrimination, harassment or violence those who identify as LGBTQI2SA+.

Inclusion

refers to ensuring that individuals feel welcomed in the academic and workplace environments, and that they can bring their authentic selves to the educational and work spheres.

Islamophobia

can be described as stereotypes, bias (including Unconscious Bias) or acts of hostility towards individual

	Muslims or followers of Islam in general. In addition to individual acts of intolerance and racial profiling, Islamophobia leads to viewing Muslims as a greater security threat on an institutional, systemic and societal level.
Land Acknowledgement	involves making a statement recognizing the traditional territory of the Indigenous people(s) who called the land home before the arrival of settlers, and in many cases still do call it home. Indigenous peoples have been acknowledging the land at the start of gatherings, ceremonies and events from time immemorial. It involves thinking about what happened in the past and what changes can be made going forward in order to further the reconciliation process.
Lived Experience	refers to personal knowledge about the world gained through direct, firsthand involvement in everyday events rather than through representations constructed by other people.
LGBTQI2SA+	refers to the acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (or Questioning), Intersex, Two-Spirit (2S), Asexual (or sometimes Ally). Two-Spirit refers to Indigenous people that are gender-variant and identify as having both male and female spirits. The '+' is for all the new and growing ways that people identify their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.
Marginalization	refers to a social process by which individuals or groups are (intentionally or unintentionally) distanced from access to power and resources and constructed as insignificant, peripheral, or less valuable/Privileged to a community or "mainstream" society.
Member(s) of the Yorkville Community	includes students, faculty, post-doctoral fellows, contractors, the Board of Governors and all employees of Yorkville.
Prejudice	refers to a preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience.
Privilege	refers to economic, political and/or social power, benefits, advantages, access and/or opportunities that an individual or group has as a result of identity aspects such as race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, ability, religion, etc.

Racism	is an ideology that either directly or indirectly asserts that one group is inherently superior to others based on the social construct of race and characteristics such as skin colour, accent or manner of speech, name, clothing, diet, beliefs and practices, leisure preferences, places of origin and so forth.
Racialization	is the process by which societies construct races as real, different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life. People can be 'racialized' as a result.
Respectful Workplace/Classroom	is characterized by polite, collegial, and courteous behaviour towards one another. It also refers to being respectful of cultural differences and differences in opinion, with a view to resolving differences through constructive conflict management and dispute resolution techniques that respect the rights of all parties. It also acknowledges that everyone needs to be able to cooperate and work with one another in a productive and inclusive way even when there are differences.
Safe Space	refers to the organizational facilitation of space (on-campus and online) where members of Equity-Seeking Groups can feel comfortable and physically, emotionally, and socially safe enough to talk about sensitive topics/Lived Experiences that relate to their unique and intersectional identities. These are spaces where they feel no assault, challenge, or denial of their identity, of who they are, and what they need to thrive and reach their potential. Safe Spaces can also be explicitly demarcated by the use of inclusive signage, symbols, art, ceremonial spaces, language and inclusive cultural practices and protocols.
Sexism	refers to endorsement of Prejudice or discrimination based on sex.
Unconscious Bias	refers to mental processes that operate outside of our consciousness, intentional awareness, or control. Unconscious Biases include:

- Stereotypes: Widely held but fixed, overgeneralized and oversimplified image(s) or idea(s) of a particular type of person or group.
- Affinity bias: The tendency to show favour and/or feel more kinship towards people who are more like us. It may be based on some aspect of identity that we share with that person, or it could be similar interests and backgrounds.
- Attribution bias: How people explain the behaviour or outcomes for themselves or others. For example, attributing a person's success to their natural abilities, versus seeing that success as the result of luck or favouritism.
- Confirmation bias: The tendency to more easily accept, search for, interpret, or favour information that aligns or agrees with one's existing beliefs and opinions.
- Performance bias: An assessment of people's competence based on some aspect of their appearance or identity.

Transphobia

refers to the aversion to, fear or hatred of transgender people and communities.

Universal Design

is the design and composition of environments and educational/informative materials so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability. An environment (or any building, product, or service in that environment) should be designed to remove Barriers and meet the needs of all people who wish to use it. Universal Design constitutes the equitable access to information, spaces, objects, environments, and services.

This can also include *Universal Design for Learning*, which is an approach about *teaching* and *learning* that helps give all students an equal opportunity to succeed. This approach offers flexibility in the ways students access material, engage with it and show what they know.

\*The President may direct that definitions be amended from time to time to ensure consistency with public policy and community expectations and standards.

### Policy Statement

Yorkville sees the Diversity of its faculty, students and staff as a strength to be celebrated. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are a critical component of life at Yorkville,

and Yorkville is committed to making these values an integral part of our culture. Yorkville is committed to academic and professional excellence and is committed to providing educational services and employment that are focused on promoting the principles of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Yorkville recognizes that workplaces and post-secondary institutions historically have marginalized Equity-Seeking Groups. It is recognized that this Marginalization has the potential impact of hindering an individual's ability to fully, freely and equitably participate within the workplace, academic environments and in society. Systems of Marginalization include but are not limited to Ableism, ageism, Classism, Biphobia, Homophobia, Transphobia, Sexism, Racism, Anti-Black Racism, Anti-Indigenous Sentiment, Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, Anti-Immigrant Sentiment and other systems. Yorkville is committed to working to remove Barriers related to systems of Marginalization. Yorkville is also committed to the spirit of truth and reconciliation towards Indigenous peoples. In addition to acknowledging the Indigenous communities on whose traditional territories we work and learn (including through the use of Land Acknowledgements), Yorkville will also strive to build relationships of recognition and respect with Indigenous peoples. Yorkville strives to align itself with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals related to providing inclusive and equitable quality education.

Yorkville is committed to ensuring that all Members of the Yorkville Community feel welcome and included in the workplace and academic environments. Yorkville will promote and support Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to reflect and respond to the needs of our faculty, students and staff. Yorkville strives to create work and learning environments in which individuals can participate, maximize their contributions, and achieve their full potential. Yorkville promotes environments where a plurality of Lived Experiences and diverse narratives are embraced. Equipping students with the skills for storytelling is especially unique with respect to Yorkville's involvement in promoting equitable representation within the creative industries. Furthermore, Yorkville will work towards removing Barriers to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in its workplace and learning environments.

### Roles and Responsibilities

#### *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Office (DEIO)*

The DEIO's mandate includes:

- promoting awareness, understanding and compliance with this Policy;
- acting as a neutral and independent subject matter expert to faculty, students and staff when there is a need for consultation on matters of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and human rights;



- providing education and training on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and options to resolve issues relating to these areas where appropriate;
- developing strategic plans, policies and procedures related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion;
- leading and liaising with the Diversity Advisory Councils to obtain their input into decision-making, policies and practices related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion;
- monitoring metrics related to Diversity and representation within the organization and using this as evidence to make programming decisions;
- promoting the use of a Land Acknowledgement at the beginning of an event or meeting to give time for reflection and recognition of Indigenous lands, treaties and peoples;
- reporting to the Office of the President and other stakeholders (as required) on the results of strategic plans;
- collaborating with empowering all functional areas of the organization to lead their respective areas of responsibility while providing strategic support on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion aspects;
- making appropriate referrals to relevant support services and resources; and
- building relationships with community partners that work towards the promotion of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the creative industries and higher education.

When faculty, students and staff contact the DEIO for consultation, they can expect:

- confidentiality (with exceptions related to protecting the safety of others, and as required by law);
- a timely response to inquiries;
- a Safe Space for people of all backgrounds and walks of life;
- a respectful and non-judgmental approach to concerns brought forward; and
- consultation that aligns with the values of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

### *Office of the President*

It is the role of the Office of the President to support the objectives of this Policy and to promote compliance with the Policy.

### *Management*

It is the role of management to support the objectives of this Policy, ensure compliance with the Policy and:

- create and maintain a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace and learning environment;
- model behaviours which are consistent with this Policy;
- address behaviour contrary to this Policy;

- provide support to Members of the Yorkville Community regarding the implementation of this Policy;
- identify and address any Barriers to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to support and advance the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan;
- where appropriate, consult with the DEIO during the development of new policies, procedures, processes, programs and practices, and review existing policies, procedures, processes, programs and practices on an ongoing basis to ensure the principles of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are embedded within them; and
- consult with the DEIO as needed on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion matters.

### *Employees*

All employees are responsible for:

- reading and understanding their responsibilities under this Policy;
- upholding the principles set out in this Policy;
- contributing to the creation and maintenance of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace and learning environment;
- respecting and valuing the Diversity of all employees, students, contractors, visitors and community partners;
- respecting, valuing and supporting individual differences in backgrounds, experiences, values, perspectives, behaviours, communication styles and abilities among all employees, students, contractors, visitors and community partners;
- providing employment and education in an inclusive manner;
- working to remove Barriers to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, or where Barrier removal is outside of their control, reporting to their supervisor/manager and/or the DEIO any Barriers which they feel should be addressed;
- supporting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion commitments under this Policy and the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan; and
- providing any feedback and/or suggestions under this Policy to their supervisor/manager, or their Faculty and Staff Diversity Advisory Council and/or the DEIO to support Barrier removal.

### *Faculty and Production and Design*

All Faculty Deans, Program Directors/Heads, faculty members and the Production and Design department are responsible for:

- ensuring that the principles and meaningful examples of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and accessibility (including Universal Design for Learning) are incorporated into the curricula and learning methods of their respective programs; and
- ensuring that collaboration is occurring with the DEIO in order to embed Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and that the DEIO is being invited to provide consultation where required when reviewing curricula.

### *Students*

Students are responsible for:

- reading and understanding their responsibilities under this Policy;
- upholding the principles set out in this Policy;
- contributing to the creation and maintenance of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive learning environment;
- respecting and valuing the Diversity of all employees, students, contractors, visitors, and community partners;
- respecting, valuing, and supporting individual differences in backgrounds, experiences, values, perspectives, behaviours, communication styles and abilities among all employees, students, contractors, visitors, and community partners;
- reporting Barriers to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to Student Services/their Program Advisor and/or the DEIO; and
- providing any feedback and/or suggestions under this Policy to their Student Diversity Advisory Council, Student Services/their Program Advisor and/or the DEIO.

### *Visitors and Community Partners*

Visitors and Community Partners are encouraged to:

- read and understand this Policy;
- uphold the principles set out in this Policy;
- contribute to the creation and maintenance of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace and learning environment;
- respect and value the Diversity of all employees, students, contractors, visitors and community partners; and

- respect, value and support individual differences in backgrounds, experiences, values, perspectives, behaviours, communication styles and abilities among all employees, students, contractors, visitors and community partners

This Policy will be published in the Yorkville Employee Handbook, Yorkville University and Toronto Film School Faculty Handbooks, Yorkville University Academic Calendars, Toronto Film School Student Handbooks, and all orientation materials for new employees and students.

## **Related Information**

Workplace Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures  
Student Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures  
Policy and Procedures on the Prevention of Sexual Violence  
Student Code of Conduct  
Workplace Accommodation Policy and Procedures  
Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Policy and Procedures  
Gender Inclusion Policy and Procedures  
Accessibility Policies  
Accommodations for Religious Observance Policy and Procedures

## **Contacts**

The following [individual(s)/office(s)] can address questions regarding this policy:

Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion  
Email: [tjaferi@yorkvilleu.ca](mailto:tjaferi@yorkvilleu.ca)

## **Revision Log**

This is a new policy.

## **Policy URL**

<https://www.yorkvilleu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Diversity-Equity-and-Inclusion-Policy.pdf>