



Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

January 2023

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Policy	Section	Policy #	Approved By	Approval Date
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy			Executive Director	January 20, 2023
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Preamble

As an organization, Saitsa is dedicated to providing a safe and inclusive space where all individuals can show up as their authentic self. We are committed to fostering an environment that is free of harassment, bullying, discrimination, and violence.

Saitsa acknowledges that equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), and anti-racism are ongoing processes, and we will continue to work hard to make progress in our EDI and anti-racism journeys.

Scope

This policy applies to all Saitsa employees and volunteers in all contexts where individuals are engaging in Saitsa business, activities on behalf of or representing Saitsa, and any other times where individuals’ conduct could reasonably reflect on Saitsa or impact its operations or reputation.

This policy is intended to be read in conjunction with other Saitsa policies and procedures and is expected to inform continuous improvement in Saitsa policies and operations.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish:

- Saitsa’s commitment to advancing equity, inclusion and diversity and addressing racism;
- A framework that builds on existing legislative requirements to ensure anti-racism, Indigenous reconciliation, accessibility, equity, diversity, and inclusion are considered in Saitsa operations; and
- Accountability mechanisms for the organization to measure progress toward these critical objectives.

Definitions

Accessibility – The extent to which a facility, product, service, or environment is readily approachable and usable for those with disabilities. Examples can include elevators, entry ramps, self-opening doors, etc.

Belonging – An individual’s sense of acceptance and inclusion by those they are surrounded with. Belonging can apply with many different groups such as family, friends, co-workers, etc. Belonging further means to have a sense of connection and identification with others.

Discrimination – The unequal treatment of individuals or groups based on any of the Protected Grounds under the *Alberta Human Rights Act*.

Diversity – The variety of shared and different characteristics amongst a group of people. It is the practice of including individuals from different social and ethnic backgrounds, abilities, gender, sexual orientations, neurodiversity, and any other differences.

Equality – Treating all individuals the same while providing everyone access to the same opportunities.

Equity – Providing an individual or group required or needed resources to equip them with an equal advantage.

Exclusion – Intentionally or unintentionally leaving someone out. These differences can be related to prohibited grounds or generally leaving someone out.

Inclusion – The process of involving traditionally excluded individuals and groups into conversations, processes, activities, etc. Inclusion allows individuals to feel psychologically safe, valued, motivated, and respected.

Microaggression – Comments, snubs, or actions that insult marginalized groups. These are often very subtle comments and/or actions that are internalized from a place of unconscious bias or stereotypes.

Neurodivergent (also worded in the context of neurodivergence) – The term used when an individual's brain processes, receives, learns, and/or behaves different than what is considered "normal."

Protected Grounds - means the grounds of discrimination defined in the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, including race, colour, age, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender (including pregnancy and gender identity), physical disability, mental disability, marital status, family status, source of income, and sexual orientation.

Psychological Safety – the belief that individuals won't be reprimanded or humiliated for speaking up and voicing their opinions, questions, mistakes, or concerns.

Racism – The oppression of people of color based on a socially constructed racial hierarchy that gives privilege to white people.

Saitsa Commitments

- We are dedicated to improving the student experience at every opportunity
- We commit to working hard to create an environment where students are inspired to learn, lead and be exceptional
- We commit to fostering a campus-wide culture that students are proud to be a part of
- We commit to advocating on behalf of students to all levels of government, and internally to Sait as an institution
- We will identify and work to meet the needs of underrepresented groups within the SAIT community
- We commit to supporting students in their education and/or personal life
- We commit to investigating any acts of discrimination, violence, bullying, harassment, and racism, based on all grounds and legislation

- We commit to removing systemic and programmatic barriers to ensure all individuals have the opportunity to fully contribute and pursue their potential.
- In accordance with Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action 92, Saitsa adopts the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and will apply its principles, norms, and standards to Saitsa policy and operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This includes a commitment to:
 - Adopt structures, systems, policies, procedures and processes to demonstrate Truth and Reconciliation, improve inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility for Saitsa members and the public including but not limited to incorporating Treaty Land Acknowledgement into formal events and meetings
 - Meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.
 - Provide education for management and staff on the history of Indigenous peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Indigenous rights, Indigenous law, and Indigenous–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

Accountability

Saitsa shall regularly monitor its progress towards improving Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion within its programs, services, and resources. To ensure its success, Saitsa shall:

1. Publish its EDI and Anti-Racism goals and objectives as part of its regular strategic and organizational planning processes;
2. Publish an annual report that evaluates the organization's compliance with this policy and tracks progress against key metrics.
3. Conduct regular reviews of programs, services, policies, procedures, resources, physical and virtual spaces, and information sources to:
 - a. Identify and address discriminatory practices;
 - b. Identify opportunities to eliminate barriers and improve equity, accessibility, diversity, and inclusion in program and service delivery and participation.
4. Set up systems and supports to collect, analyze, and use equity data to report findings, and inform future decisions;
5. Implement Indigenous Reconciliation, anti-racism, and EDI training and education for all staff and volunteers;
6. Adopt structures, systems, policies, procedures and processes to demonstrate Truth and Reconciliation, improve inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility for Saitsa members and the public including but not limited to:
 - a. Incorporating Treaty Land Acknowledgement into formal events and meetings,
 - b. Consulting with Indigenous peoples or organizations when designing programs or services that seek to support the needs of Indigenous students;

- c. Consulting with Indigenous organizations and researchers when conducting research that involves Indigenous people;

References and Resources

- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- Alberta Human Rights Act
- Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act
- Employment Standards Code
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report and Calls to Action
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Saitsa Board of Directors Policy Manual

Have further questions?

For more information, please visit: <https://saitsa.com/studentssupport/>

If you require the assistance of a Saitsa representative, we would be happy to assist. Please email saitsa.info@edu.sait.ca and request a meeting for support.

Appendix A: Treaty 7 land acknowledgement

Saitsa acknowledges that this land is situated on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy, which encompasses the Niitsitapi (nit-SIT-ah-pee) and the people of the Treaty 7 Region in Southern Alberta. This includes the Siksika (SICK-sick-ah), Piikani (pih-GAH-nee), the Kainai (GUY-nai), the Tsuu T'ina (TSOO-tunah) and the Stoney Nakoda First Nations including Chiniki (CHIN-ee-kee), Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations. The City of Calgary is also home to the Metis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.

The City of Calgary encompasses a region that the Blackfoot tribes of Southern Alberta described as Moh'kinsstis, meaning "Elbow," in reference to its location where the Bow and Elbow rivers meet. Since time immemorial, this region was a traditional gathering place for the tribes of the Blackfoot Confederacy.

Saitsa hopes to move towards reconciliation with the First Nations whose land we are learning, working, and organizing on today. We hope to move forward together to advance the reconciliation process by working with and learning from the Indigenous peoples of Treaty 7.