IDEAS Lens in Policy and Procedure Guide

Purpose: This document provides guiding questions to support the integration of Indigenization, inclusivity, diversity, equity, accessibility, student wellbeing, and sustainability (collectively referred to as the IDEAS Lens) into policy development, review, and revision. It builds upon the *Applying the IDEAS Lens* guide and institutional strategies.

Scope: The following guiding questions are intended to be used in alignment with BCIT Policy 1000: Policy Development and Maintenance, and Education Council Policy Standing Committee's by-laws and procedures. They may be applied by anyone involved in creating, reviewing, or amending departmental policies and procedures.

It is not expected that every guiding question or example be addressed for each policy. Use the questions and example actions as prompts to support dialogue, reflection, and engagement throughout the process.

Land Acknowledgement:

This document was created on the unceded and traditional territories of the Coast Salish Nations of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səl̓ilwətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh). Guided by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's [TRC's] Calls to Action, we acknowledge our responsibility to embed decolonization, reconciliation, accountability, and cultural humility in policy and procedure development.

Before you start, reflect and increase shared understanding:

1. **Self and group reflection:**

   a. Is there **diversity** within the policy working or interest group?
   Example action: Review membership and invite representatives from Indigenous Initiatives, Accessibility Services, and BCIT Student Association to ensure diverse perspectives.

   b. What **privilege and power** do policy reviewers and developers bring to this process?
   Example action: Facilitate a reflection[1] on the Wheel of Power and Privilege to help policy reviewers consider how systemic advantages may shape their approach and explore how they can use their influence to support an inclusive and equitable policy process.

   c. How can **collaboration, humility, and accountability** be embedded in the policy development process to help recognize and address implicit biases or assumptions?

---

[1] To help reduce emotional labour for Indigenous and equity-deserving participants, this activity should emphasize individual self-reflection, voluntary participation, and a clear expectation that no one is required to share personal experiences.

Example action: Document all decisions with rationale and invite external review from Respect, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisors before finalizing drafts.

2. **IDEAS Lens:** What **training or preparation** might be needed to support policy reviewers and developers in being open to difference and the IDEAS Lens?
Example action: Schedule a 90-minute IDEAS Lens workshop for all committee members before drafting begins.

Gather information and engage communities of interest:

3. **Environmental scan:** How can we **build on similar policies and implementation lessons** from other post-secondary institutions to inform and strengthen this policy?
Example action: Assign a sub-group to review similar policies from three BC post-secondary institutions and summarize lessons learned.

4. **Purpose and impact:** How has the **goal or desired purpose** of the policy been determined? What **assumptions** are being made about the purpose and who is impacted? Consider if the purpose is inclusive of various perspectives and ways of knowing and being.
Example action: Host a brainstorming session with students and faculty to validate the policy's stated purpose and check for assumptions.

5. **Addressing historical exclusion:** Which **voices and experiences** have historically been left out, harmed, or underserved by similar policies in the past, and how can this policy and procedure **avoid repeating patterns of exclusion**?
Example action: Consult archives or past reports to identify groups previously excluded (e.g., international students) and include their voices in consultations.

6. **Diverse and inclusive engagement**[2]:
   a. How will the **voices and perspective of those who will be directly impacted** by the policy be **meaningfully included** in development or revision? Consider students, faculty, staff, and community leaders with diverse identities and areas of expertise.
   Example action: Organize focus groups with students from equity-deserving groups and community partners to collaborate on key policy principles.

---

[2] Consider developing plans for meaningfully engaging and compensating Indigenous and equity-deserving students who are informing or reviewing the policy. Be respectful of the emotional labour that may be required during the consultation process by understanding your positionality and the IDEAS Lens.

b. Is **information** being shared, and **feedback** welcomed in **various formats**? Consider a universal design approach with community engagement to remove barriers in the development process.
Example action: Provide an online survey, virtual town hall, and paper feedback forms to ensure accessibility for all campus partners.

7. **Foundation in data and lived experience:** What **data and community engagement findings or feedback** inform this policy? Where possible, use existing institutional data and guiding documents that **reflect the collective voices of Indigenous people as a starting point** (e.g. Truth and Reconciliation Commission's [TRC's] Calls to Action, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples [UNDRIP], etc.).
Example action: Assign a sub-group to review and report back on the relevant TRC's Calls to Action and UNDRIP principles. Use BCIT's Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey results to check your assumptions about current student experiences.

Develop and/or review the policy and procedure:
8. **Fairness and social inclusion:**
   a. How does this the policy or procedure **reduce barriers to access** for Indigenous and equity-deserving groups and **actively promote equitable opportunities**?
   Example action: Cross reference the draft with BCIT's Employment and Educational Equity policies to ensure alignment and barrier reduction.
   b. Who will be **most impacted** by this policy or procedure, and how might people with different lived experiences and intersecting identities be **affected differently**?
   Example action: Conduct an impact analysis comparing effects on Indigenous students, domestic and international students, or on staff with caregiving responsibilities.

9. **Mental health and wellbeing impacts:** How will you **assess** the intended and unintended impacts on individual and community mental health and wellbeing? Identify opportunities to **strengthen positive impacts** and **mitigate negative impacts** for faculty, staff, and students.
Example action: Include a section in the draft outlining how the policy supports mental health (e.g., flexible deadlines for students in crisis).

10. **Sustainability impacts:** How can concepts of sustainability and **environmental stewardship** be furthered by the policy?
Example action: Add a clause encouraging digital submission of forms to reduce paper waste.

11. **Policy interdependence and alignment:** How is the **intersection** of policies or procedures considered? For example, if this policy changes, what **impact** might it have on other policies, and vice versa?
Example action: Map related policies (e.g., Admissions, Accessibility) and note any required updates if this policy changes.

12. **Technology enablers:** How do existing **technological supports and infrastructure** enable policy implementation, and where might they reinforce inequities or environmental impacts? Does the employee or student information system(s) allow for the application of policy?
Example action: Consult with Associate Registrars to verify that the student information system can apply new policy rules without creating inequities.

Use clear, inclusive, and supportive communication:

13. **Inclusive language:** How can the language in this policy **support Indigenization and decolonization** efforts, and be **inclusive of diverse intersecting identities**?
Example action: Replace "stakeholders" with "campus partners such as the BCIT Student Association" and "he/she" with "they."

14. **Accessibility:** What efforts are made to enhance **clarity** and ease of **understanding**?
Example action: Use plain language (rather than jargon), organize content with bullet point lists, and place time-sensitive requirements at the beginning.

15. **Voice and tone:** What considerations are taken to support a tone that conveys **trust, respect, and care** (as opposed to coming across as punitive)?
Example action: Frame compliance language as supportive by emphasizing resources and collaboration (e.g., "Behavior concerns will be addressed through restorative practices and access to Counselling", rather than punitive statements like, "Violations will result in immediate disciplinary action.")

16. **Wellbeing resources:** How can links to additional **psychosocial supports** be included (where relevant)?
    Example action: Add hyperlinks to Counselling and Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP) services in the policy footer.

Facilitate the fair application and interpretation of the policy and procedure:

17. **Flexibility:** How can this policy or procedure **allow for flexibility and exceptions where possible** for unique circumstances?
    Example action: Include an "exceptions" clause for unique circumstances approved by a designated authority.

18. **Training and additional resources:** What supporting guidelines, resources, and/or training can help faculty and staff **interpret and implement the policy consistently**? Use plain language and universal design in the preparation and sharing of the supporting information for faculty, staff, and students.
    Example action: Develop a quick-reference guide and short video explaining the policy for faculty and staff. Where helpful, include brief examples or scenarios in supporting documents/guidelines.

19. **Targeted communication:** How can policy communication be designed to effectively **reach and engage those most impacted** by a new or revised policy?
    Example action: Send tailored emails to student groups and post infographics on social media.

Establish mechanisms for reciprocity, documentation, and continuous improvement:

20. **Transparency and accountability:** How can the documentation of the consultation process, resulting decisions, and impact be made **accessible and meaningful** to the people they are intended to support?
    Example action: Publish a summary of consultation feedback and decisions when posting your policy for formal community review.

21. **Feedback loop:** How can the policy be **regularly reviewed and updated to remain responsive** to the evolving needs of students, employees, and broader Institutional change?
    Example action: Create a way for community members to provide feedback on the policy, even when not in the formal review process.

References:

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. (n.d.). Health Equity Impact Assessment (HEIA). https://www.camh.ca/en/professionals/professionals--projects/heia

Centre for Community Organizations. (2019). White supremacy culture in organizations (adapted from Tema Okun's work). https://coco-net.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Coco-WhiteSupCulture-ENG4.pdf

Cull, I., Hancock, R. L. A., McKeown, S., Pidgeon, M., & Vedan, A. (2018). Pulling together: A guide for front-line staff, student services, and advisors. BCcampus.

Department for Science, Innovation and Technology. (2023). In CASE: A behavioural approach to anticipating unintended consequences. GOV.UK. https://www.communications.gov.uk/publications/in-case-a-behavioural-approach-to-anticipating-unintended-consequences/

Emily Carr University of Art + Design. (2024). A toolkit for creating equitable and inclusive policies. https://ecuad.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/EDI-Toolkit-2024.pdf

Olding, M., & Yip, A. (2014). Policy approaches to post-secondary student mental health: A scan of current practice. OCAD University & Ryerson University Campus Mental Health Partnership Project.

Simon Fraser University. (n.d.). Policy Guide on Well-being and Health Equity. Healthy Campus Community. https://www.sfu.ca/healthycampuscommunity/projects/policy-settings.html

Women and Gender Equality Canada. (n.d.). *Policy development*. Introduction to GBA Plus. https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/gbaplus-course-cours-acsplus/eng/mod04/mod04_04_01.html