



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Guiding Principles for Communication and Marketing

Students, International & Alumni

Mohawk College's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Commitments

- 1. Attract and retain talent reflective of the community.**
- 2. Create an inclusive workplace.**
- 3. Strengthen inclusive competences.**
- 4. Develop and implement an Equity and Inclusion framework.**
- 5. Expand the use of universal design for learning and use of accessibility tools.**

Why do we need guiding principles?

This guiding principles document was developed by the Students, International and Alumni (SIA) division's EDI Committee to support and implement Mohawk College's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion commitments.

The goal of these guiding principles is to ensure that college marketing materials and communications represent all student and employee populations the college serves, including women, Indigenous, Black, Racialized and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, as well as People with Disabilities. Students and staff should see themselves represented in our marketing materials and communications, and this should positively impact their sense of belonging at Mohawk.

These guiding principles were developed in consultation with the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office, Marketing, and the college's EDI Steering Committee.

How Mohawk College defines Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Equity

Achieving parity in policy, process and outcomes for historically and/or currently underrepresented and/or marginalized people and groups while accounting for diversity. It considers power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes, in three main areas:

- **Representational equity:** the proportional participation at all levels of an institution;
- **Resource equity:** the distribution of resources in order to close equity gaps; and
- **Equity-mindedness:** the demonstration of an awareness of, and willingness to, address equity issues.

(Adapted from New England Resource Center for Higher Education, the Ontario Human Rights Code and University of BC glossary of terms)

Diversity

The presence of a wide range of human differences, qualities, and attributes within an individual, group, or organization. “Diversity includes such factors as age, gender, sex, race, ethnicity, physical and intellectual ability, religion, sexual orientation, educational background, and expertise.”

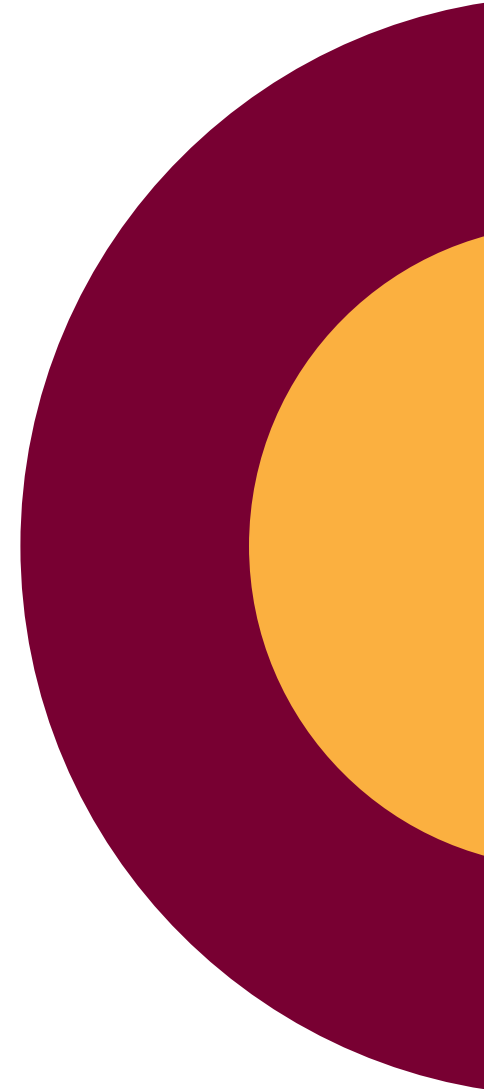
(adapted from the OHRC)

Inclusion

An approach that appreciates and reaches out to include all people and use their unique differences, e.g. strengths, talents, weaknesses, and/or capabilities, in a way that shows respect for the individual and ultimately creates a dynamic multi-dimensional organization.

(adapted from OHRC and The 519 Glossary of Terms)

Definitions are from [Mohawk College’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Terminology guide](#), as posted on MyMohawk.



Student Demographics



23%

of students identify as a Racialized person or a Person of Colour[^]



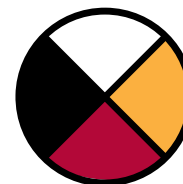
17%

of students identify themselves as not being straight / heterosexual[^]



15%

of students identify as a person with a physical, mental, emotional or learning disability[^]



5%

of students identify as an Indigenous / Aboriginal person[^]



1%

of students identify as another gender identity other than woman or man[^]

9% of students self-identify as Bisexual[^]

2% of students self-identify as Gay[^]

2% of students self-identify as Lesbian[^]

2% of students self-identify as Queer[^]

2% of students self-identify as Other (Trans, Two-Spirit, Alternative/Analogous)[^]

76%

Domestic

24%*

International



Top Countries of Origin for International Students:

51.9% India

7.4% Nigeria

7.0% China

4.0% Colombia

3.3% Vietnam

3.3% Philippines

2.5% Mexico

Age range**

12% 18 or under

35% 19-21

37% 22-29

16% 30+

*Post-secondary Enrolment Data 2021-22 Academic year (includes FT and PT students).

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[^]2021 Student Experience Survey Results (Issued February 2021 to Semester 2+ students)



Marketing and Communication Guiding Principles

This document provides resources and tools that can be used when developing student and employee communication and marketing materials. It encourages employees to ask questions, take responsibility and feel supported when developing content and selecting images. This guiding principles document covers the following key topics:

- [Shared Accountability](#)
- [Inclusive Language](#)
- [Audience and Tone](#)
- [Images and Representation](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Practical Tips on Getting Started](#)



Shared Accountability

Mohawk College is committed to ensuring that all communications, marketing and promotional materials developed by the college demonstrate equity, inclusivity and diversity in design, photography, language and content. Staff are committed to considering equity, diversity and inclusivity in any promotions or communications that they develop.

Departments are responsible for reaching out to Marketing to develop communications campaigns and materials for students, and Public Relations to develop communications for staff.

The [Integrated Communications - Employee Toolkit](#) outlines how departments can request support to develop promotional materials and/or communications for students and/or staff.

- Departments are responsible for sharing campaign concepts and goals with Marketing by submitting a project brief within the Marketing Welcome platform. This project brief will help guide the development of a promotion plan and marketing materials.

- Departments should be proactive in thinking about how equity, inclusivity and diversity can be included in their materials using images, language and delivery of content.
- Departments should work with Marketing to determine if consultation with the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office, Indigenous Student Services, and/or other departments is required to support the development of communication materials.

If departments are planning communications or events related to the college's [Days of Significance](#), they should contact the Equity and Inclusion Office to ensure consistency of messaging and communications.



Inclusive Language

Inclusive language respects and promotes all people as valued members of society. It uses “person-first” language, which emphasizes the person before a disability (for example, “a person who is blind”, not “a blind person”). Inclusive language uses vocabulary that avoids exclusion and stereotyping. It does not portray individuals or groups of people as dependent, powerless, or less valued than others. Inclusive language avoids all sexist, racist or other discriminatory words or phrases.

Things to consider when developing content:

- Try to use “person-first” language in all communications. This means describing a trait as something a person has, rather than who they are. For example, “a person with disabilities”, not “a disabled person”.
- Consider the length of your message. If it’s too long, it might not get read.
- Anticipate the diversity of the audience for your message, and reflect that diversity in the writing.
- Consider the reading-level of the content. Keep writing simple using familiar language in a logical presentation. Keep in mind our student populations where English may not be their first language.
- Consider gendered language: Should we be using “he/she” or “they/them”?
- Avoid using descriptors that refer to a person’s race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or age unless these descriptors are relevant to the story.
- Avoid the use of idioms or westernized sayings or phrases as those whose second language is English may take idioms literally which can cause confusion. Examples could include, “The ball is in your court”, “Piece of cake”, “Up in the air”, “I’m feeling under the weather”, “How’s it going?”, “What are you up to?”. These idioms should be replaced with plain English language that has a clear meaning.



Audience and Tone

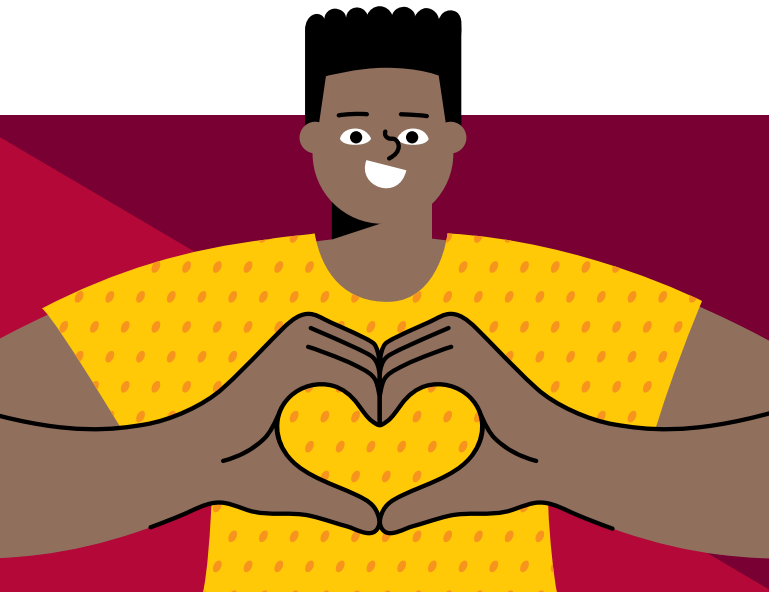
Important elements of your communication include determining the audience for your message, as well as the tone of your communication. The audience can be as broad as all students and staff, or as specific as a subset of students (i.e. Indigenous students, international students). Tone is defined as “the way a person is speaking to someone”. In communications, your tone conveys additional meaning within your message, and can affect how people receive your message.

Who is the audience for the message?

- Is your audience Students, Staff, Faculty, Employers or the Community? Your style of writing will likely change depending on who you are communicating with.
- If you are communicating to students, are you communicating to all students? Or is it specific to a student subset (i.e. international students, first year students, Indigenous students)? Your writing style may change depending on your audience.
- Does your message need to be re-worded to address each audience?
- Is the content included in your message potentially sensitive to the audience? Should additional supports be referenced if someone feels impacted or triggered by the content of the message? For example, there may be a need for a content warning at times for topics like Gender Based Violence prevention and education.

What is the tone of your message?

- Should the tone of the message be joyous or serious?
- Is this good news or a negative message?
- Should the tone be celebratory, in recognition of, or to acknowledge a specific day, time in history, or event?
- Will the tone of your message be offensive to anyone?
- Messages sent for awareness purposes can still impact the audience receiving the information. Is there a way to address this in a supportive and compassionate way?
- Be mindful of commanding tones. Instead of writing, “You Must”, consider instead, “You May” or “You Can”. “Shall” or “Must” should only be used if the communication is a directive as per a policy or if absolutely necessary.



Images and Representation

Images and representation must be deliberately and thoughtfully selected to avoid stereotypes. It is important to use inclusive images that represent our diverse student and employee audiences. Select images or graphics that demonstrate distinct characteristics, lived experiences and identities (both visible and invisible) that make a group different from another.

Questions to consider:

- Is this an image of a student or employee? If so, do you have permission to use it? Ensure a [Photo/Video/Story Release Form](#) has been completed.
- If your image includes several people, do you have a range of ethnicities and backgrounds represented?
- Have you considered various gender and sexual identities?
- Are various ages represented?
- Have you considered people with different physical and mental abilities or disabilities? This could include those who rely on support animals, or those who are visually or hearing impaired.
- Are you including individuals with various body types?
- Ensure images are labelled with alt tags to enable screen readers to describe the image.

Questions to ask yourself when selecting images:

- Would I want to be portrayed this way? If this was a photo of me or someone I care about, would I be okay with how they are portrayed or represented?
- Does the photo or graphic accurately represent the population you are trying to reach? Who is missing or excluded from the image?
- Are the graphics or icons used appropriate and representative or do they perpetuate stereotypes? Am I depicting someone in the role our culture typically puts them in? For example, using a teepee as an Indigenous icon isn't appropriate as this is a stereotypical icon and does not represent the dwellings of Indigenous peoples of this geographic region.
- Consider that sometimes an illustration can portray greater diversity than a photo may be able to (for example, there may be no photos available of a racialized person who is blind).



Resources

- Staff can reference the [Mohawk College Writing Style Guide](#) to support the development of messages. The guide features practical examples on how to write content for print and online purposes.
- The [Writing for the Web Guide](#) provides support for staff to help with writing strong and accessible content for student and staff messages.
- The [Social Media Guide](#) also provides guidance around writing a clear and concise call-to-action and how to ensure social media posts are accessible and support engagement.
- Imagery: Marketing is developing a library of appropriate and diverse imagery to use in communications. If you are looking for a particular image that depicts a diverse and representative audience, [submit an Asset Request using Welcome](#) and describe the imagery you are looking for. Marketing can provide a selection of pre-approved representative and diverse images for you to choose from.
- For more information or for questions, please contact the Equity and Inclusion Office via equityandinclusion@mohawkcollege.ca

Practical Tips on Getting Started

Now that you understand what elements should be considered when developing student and staff communications to ensure all materials are representative, equitable, inclusive and diverse, here are some practical tips on how to begin developing your marketing or communication materials.

Employee Communications

- For “one-off” communications, use the [Integrated Communications – Employee Toolkit](#) on MyMohawk.
- For employee communications that will be part of a larger campaign requiring multiple materials and a communication or marketing plan, submit a [Campaign or Project Request through Marketing’s Welcome platform](#).

Student Communications

- For “one-off” student communications, use the [Integrated Communications – Employee Toolkit](#) on MyMohawk. The toolkit is a guide that provides links and resources to help employees develop effective, targeted student communications.
- For student communications that will be part of a larger campaign requiring multiple materials and a communication or marketing plan, submit a [Campaign or Project Request through Marketing’s Welcome platform](#).

Assistance and Advice

- If you are unsure whether an image or language you’ve developed for a communication is appropriate, you can reach out to the Marketing team for input by submitting a [Document Review for Mohawk Brand Compliance](#) request through Marketing’s Welcome platform.
- If you have specific questions about accessibility and/or disability, and how to ensure your communications are representative of this audience, contact [Accessible Learning Services](#) and/or the [Equity and Inclusion Office](#)
- If you have specific questions about including appropriate imagery or language for Indigenous audiences, contact carlie.myke@mohawkcollege.ca or amanda.white5@mohawkcollege.ca.
- If you have specific questions about including appropriate imagery or language for international audiences, contact francesca.hernandez@mohawkcollege.ca.
- If you are planning an event or communication that is directly related to the college’s Days of Significance, please connect with the [Equity and Inclusion Office](#) to ensure appropriate and consistent messaging.
- You can send larger campaigns with multiple materials to the [Equity and Inclusion Office](#) for approval before finalizing. Please allow at least five days for the EDI team to review and provide feedback.