

## Graduate Equity Progress (EP) Tool Key Terms

### Key Term Definitions

The terms used throughout this document provide context for the Graduate Equity Progress (EP) Tool. This was adapted from the [HR/POD DEI Rubric Key Terms](#). OEJ expanded on that document, and terms labeled with (+) are additions from our office. The Key Terms Definitions document is meant as a resource for teams before and after they engage with the EP Tool—not all terms included here are mentioned in the tool. Additionally, this is not an exhaustive list of terms important for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) work; if there are specific terms relevant to your program, unit, or field, we encourage you to spend some time building joint definitions of those terms as a team.

**+)Ableism:** Embedded attitudes that devalue and limit the participation of people with disabilities. Ableism, consciously or unconsciously embedded in institutions and the broader culture, assumes that people with disabilities are of less value than other people.

**Accessibility:** Defined at the University of Washington as, “an approach to communication and engagement that recognizes the intersectional identities, experiences, and needs of our entire campus community.” Accessible practices are responsive to difference and address barriers to meaningful participation. See the University of Washington’s [Accessibility webpage](#) for information across the university on disability inclusion, language usage, and access to university programs and services.

**+)Antiracism:** The conscious, actionable, ongoing practice of challenging oppression, white supremacy, and institutionalized racism.

**Assessment:** To assess or evaluate.

**Barriers:** An obstacle that prevents access or movement.

**+) Belonging:** An individual’s subjective perception of the depth of their connections to social groups, physical locations, and individual and collective experiences.

**Bias:** Prejudice for or against one person or group that may occur consciously or unconsciously.

**BIPoC:** Black Indigenous People of Color. BIPoC explicitly leads with Black and Indigenous identities to acknowledge ongoing anti-Black racism and the attempted erasure of Native communities.

**Cultural Competence:** Acknowledging and valuing different groups and their cultural characteristics (such as race, ethnicity, religion, and gender identity) through collaboration in cross-cultural settings. Improves organizational practices in service of more equitable learning and work environments.

**Developing:** Growing and building an idea or plan.

+) **Demographics:** The statistics that describe populations and their characteristics, often comparing different groups to each other based on these characteristics, such as race/ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status.

+) **Discrimination:** Actions and policies informed by prejudice, conscious or unconscious, that deny a person a privilege, benefit or opportunity enjoyed by others. Discrimination is based on differences of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ability, religion, language, age, national identity, and other categories, favoring and empowering one group over others.

+) **Disproportionality:** The [National Education Association](#) defines disproportionality as “the over- and under-representation of culturally and linguistically diverse children (CLD) in special education and gifted and/or talented programs.” This impacts the pipeline to higher education, and informs inequity in higher ed (see also: discrimination; institutionalized racism; underrepresentation).

**Diversity:** Valuing, supporting, and celebrating individual differences and understanding these as vital to institutional excellence.

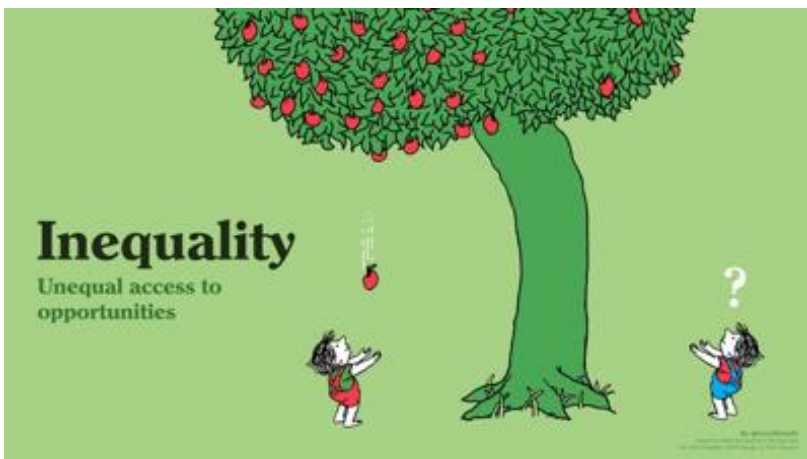
**Formally:** To formalize or make something official or standard.

+) **Heterosexism:** An ideological, institutionalized system which denies and stigmatizes non-heterosexual forms of behavior, identity, relationship, or community.

**Implementation:** The process of putting a plan into effect.

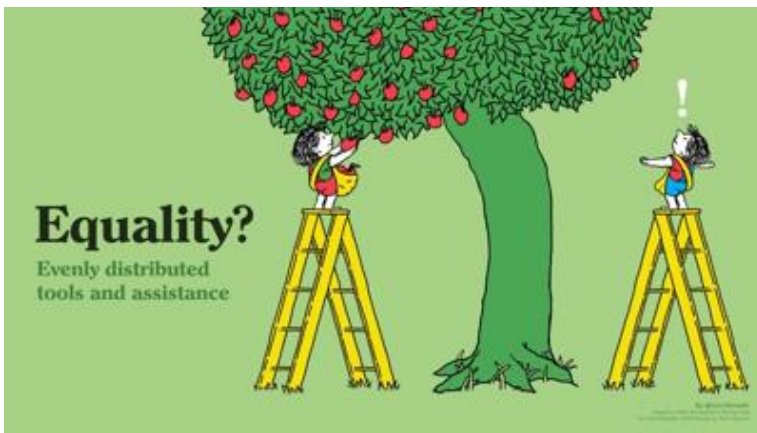
**Inclusion:** “Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/ policy making in a way that shares power.” ([UWT Diversity Resource Center Social Justice Glossary](#)). Welcoming and supporting underserved populations in higher education necessitates re-evaluating policies, practices, and curricula throughout the student lifecycle.

+) **Inequality:** Unequal access to opportunities, resources, rights and privileges. Often results in systematic disadvantages for communities and individuals based on social factors like race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics.



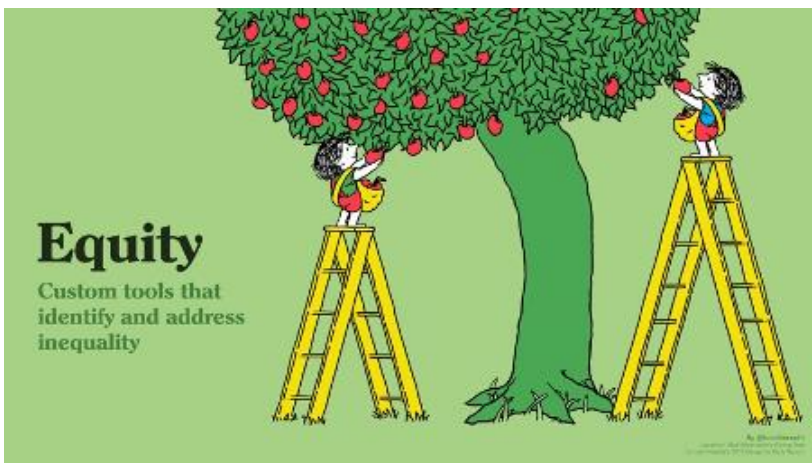
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+) **Equality:** Providing everyone with the same opportunities and treating them equally. It is important to note that focusing solely on equality overlooks historical and structural systems that have favored particular social groups while putting others at a disadvantage, resulting in unequal starting points.



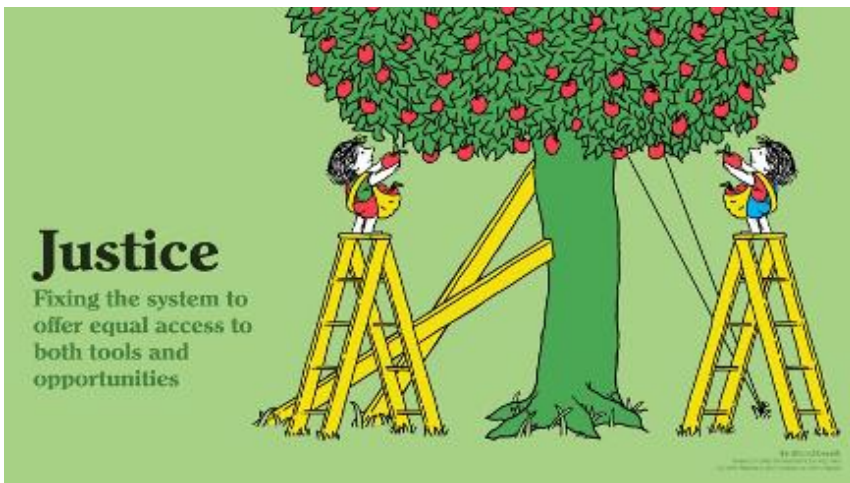
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**Equity:** The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations facing structural and systemic barriers. Work toward equity in higher education confronts existing power dynamics and disproportionate access to resources throughout the student lifecycle. Advancing a more equitable university confronts the way power and privilege function to exclude in higher education and often serve as barriers to the full participation of all, especially historically underserved groups.



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**Justice:** An active process that involves the whole community addressing both historical and ongoing injustices within society. Justice aims to enforce fair policies, practices, and attitudes that ensure equal access, opportunities, treatment, and outcomes for everyone, irrespective of their diverse identities.



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+) **Intersectionality:** Coined by law professor and critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw, this term highlights how identity categories such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and more, cannot be examined in isolation from one another. These classifications interact and intersect in individuals' lives, in society, and in social systems. "For example, a Black woman in America does not experience gender inequalities in the same way as a White woman, nor racial oppression identical to that experienced by a Black man." ([UWT Diversity Resource Center Social Justice Glossary](#))

**Institutionalize:** Establish something as a convention or norm in an organization. Institutionalization usually refers to codifying conventions and norms into formal policies and practices within an organization, thereby making these conventions/norms structural.

+) **Institutional Racism:** Racial inequity within institutions that can take the form of unfair policies and practices, discrimination, and inequitable opportunities and outcomes. Also known as systemic racism, this term refers to the disproportionate impact of institutional policies and practices on different racial groups. While these policies do not always mention a specific racial group, their effect is to disadvantage people from non-white groups.

**Marginalized:** An individual or community that is excluded from the rest of society and not granted the same rights, such as access to healthcare, employment, pay and education.

**Norms:** Creating standardized practices.

**Operationalize:** Turning a concept into something that can be measured.

+) **Oppression:** The use of power to disenfranchise and marginalize groups of people for the benefit of another to dominate the institution, culture, and society.

**Partner/Collaboration:** Working across departments and/or colleges to plan, produce or achieve something.

**Pilot:** Pilot studies are conducted to evaluate the feasibility of crucial component(s) of the full-scale study.

**Racialized:** This term refers to the ways non-white people are categorized, marginalized, or regarded according to race. Racialization is a social process that all individuals, including white and non-white, engage in, though not all individuals are explicitly racialized.

**SFEJ (Students Further from Educational Justice):** This term describes the graduate student population who experience disparities most acutely in higher education and includes graduates students impacted by racism and its intersections, including sexism, homophobia, ableism, Islamophobia, antisemitism and other forms of discrimination.

**Stakeholders:** Any person within the organization that shares an interest on a similar issue.

**Strategize/Strategy:** A detailed plan for achieving a specific goal.

**Systemically Underrepresented:** The institutional and system-based process where BIPOC are intentionally removed, denied and isolated from economic, sociopolitical and cultural participation based on race, immigrant status, and income.

**Transparency:** Sharing information freely in effort to benefit the organization and its people. Transparency is vital to equitable learning and work environments.

+) **Underserved:** Populations who have historically been discriminated against in higher education and as a result have not been adequately supported or represented.

+) **URM (Underrepresented Minority Students):** This term is derived from federal guidelines and refers to domestic African American, Latino, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and Native American students. In the tool, we use URM in accordance with university and federal data collection categories. However, we understand and acknowledge that the URM definition as it currently stands does not necessarily account for all minoritized groups (i.e., Southeast Asian populations) or account for other identity categories (i.e., gender, disability, first-generation status). While using the tool, we encourage you to consider who is minoritized in your field and department as you answer questions that are URM-specific.

**Workplace Culture/Environment:** The character and personality an organization creates for their staff which in turn influences and determines their performance, work satisfaction and relationships.

These terms have been developed with gratitude, thanks to the following resources:

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15. University of Washington Accessibility. [\*Accessibility at the UW\*](#).
16. University of Washington Human Resources. [\*DEI Rubric Tool\*](#).
17. University of Washington-Tacoma Diversity Resource Center Diversity & Social Justice. *Glossary*.
18. Washington University in St. Louis Center for Diversity & Inclusion. [\*Glossary of Bias Terms\*](#).
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