

HR and Volunteer Policy Glossary

Terms related to diversity, employee retention, employment equity, and hiring practices.

Accessibility: Accessibility refers to the design of products, devices, services, or environments for people who experience disabilities. Ontario has laws to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, including the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the Ontario Human Rights Code, and the Ontario Building Code.

Barrier: Barriers, for the purpose of employment equity, are defined as formal or informal policies or practices (written or unwritten) that disproportionately restrict or exclude designated group members based on factors unrelated to the nature of work, merit, or safety. Barriers can be obvious and direct, or they can be embedded in systems and may seem neutral on their face but have negative impacts on a particular group.

Bias: A prejudice in favour of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another usually in a way that's considered to be unfair. Biases may be held by an individual, group, or institution and can have negative or positive consequences.

There are types of biases

- Conscious bias (also known as explicit bias) and
- Unconscious bias (also known as implicit bias)

It is important to note that biases, conscious or unconscious, are not limited to ethnicity and race. Though racial bias and discrimination is well documented, biases may exist toward from any social group. One's age, gender, gender identity, abilities, religion, sexual orientation, weight, and many other characteristics are subject to bias.

Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals from outside their conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one's tendency to organize social worlds by categorizing.

Unconscious bias is far more prevalent than conscious prejudice and often incompatible with one's conscious values. Certain scenarios can activate unconscious attitudes and beliefs. For example, biases may be more prevalent when multi-tasking or working under time pressure.

Diversity: The collective mixture of differences and similarities that may include individual and organizational characteristics, values, beliefs, experiences, backgrounds, preferences and behaviours.

Diversity training: Diversity training is training to increase participants' cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills, which is based on the assumption that the training will benefit an organization by protecting against civil rights violations, increasing the inclusion of different identity groups, and promoting better teamwork.

Discrimination: The favouring of one group of people to the detriment of others.

Emotional intelligence: Describes the mental ability and individual processes enabling him/her to be sensitive and understanding to the emotions of others as well as being able to manage their own emotions and impulses.

Empowerment: The process of enabling or authorizing an individual to think, behave, take action, and control work and decision-making in autonomous ways.

Employment equity (see self-identification)

Gender pay gap: The average difference between men's and women's aggregate hourly earnings.

Geographical differential: The variance in pay established for same or comparable jobs based on variations in labour and costs of living among other geographic regions.

Glass ceiling: A term used to describe the barriers – often unseen – that keep minorities and women from career advancement regardless of their qualifications.

Human capital: The collective skills, knowledge and competencies of an organization's people that enables them to create economic value.

Human capital management: The challenge of recruiting and retaining qualified candidates, and helping new employees fit into an organization. The goal is to keep employees contributing to the organization's intellectual capital by offering a competitive salary, benefits and development opportunities. The major functions of human capital management include Recruitment, Compensation, Benefits and Training.

Nepotism: Preferential hiring of relatives and friends, even though others might be more qualified for those positions.

Organizational culture: The values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that characterize an organization. It is the unwritten workplace ethos that is picked up by new employees.

Organizational development: A planned organization-wide effort to improve and increase the organization's effectiveness, productivity, return on investment and overall employee job satisfaction through planned interventions in the organization's processes.

Positive policies and practices: Initiatives that help create a respectful and responsive working environment for all employees, including designated group members, and that help attract increased numbers of individuals from under-represented designated groups into the organization's workforce. Positive policies and practices go beyond the mere elimination of barriers; they replace barriers with a favourable work environment that actively promotes a representative workforce.

Representative workforce: An organization's workforce is representative when the representation of each designated group in each occupational group in the workforce reflects the availability of the designated groups in the labour market.

Self-identification: Under the terms of the Employment Equity Act, this is the way that individuals identify themselves to an organization, as a member of one or more designated groups. Self-identification is voluntary; the organization may only identify an employee as a member of a designated group with the express voluntary consent of the individual concerned. The organization must collect data on the representation and distribution of designated group members in its workforce to plan and implement its employment equity program.

Sensitivity training: A form of individual or group counselling geared toward increasing self-awareness of one's prejudices and sensitivity to others.

Social HR: The extent to which human resource departments leverage social media tools (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.) to conduct human resource activities (recruiting, employment branding, etc.) aimed at aligning HR goals to the company's business goals.

Social media background screening: Using publicly available social media profiles of job candidates in the hiring decision process. Typically done after a company has extended or is about to extend and offer to a candidate. Recruiters and employers need to be aware of governing bodies like the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) when conducting social media screening to avoid discrimination.

Social recruitment: The process of recruiting potential job candidates through the use of social networking platforms and websites such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Social recruitment software is used to search social networks for passive candidate information, manage active social recruiting efforts, as well as distribute job postings and information related to open positions to job posting websites.

Sourcing: The process of recruiting potential job candidates through the use of social networking platforms and websites such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Social recruitment software is used to

search social networks for passive candidate information, manage active social recruiting efforts, as well as distribute job postings and information related to open positions to job posting websites.

Special measures: Temporary measures, targeted at a specifically designated group in a particular occupation (such as targeted recruitment or special training initiatives aimed primarily at correcting employment imbalances stemming from past discrimination, over a specified period). These measures are intended to expedite the recruitment, selection and promotion of qualified designated group members to achieve full representation.

Stay interviews: Unlike exit interviews, stay interviews are conducted during employment to help employers understand why good employees stay and what might make them leave.

Succession planning: Involving identifying a potential candidate to replace core individual employees either known to be leaving the organization at some point in the future and whose sudden departure would pose a risk to the operation of the organization.

Systemic discrimination: A pattern of discrimination that permeates workplace practices, and is not apparent at first glance, but is systematic in its application of policies and practices.

Team building: A philosophy of job design which fosters teamwork to create a work culture that values collaboration. It is a training program designed to encourage employees to view themselves as members of interdependent teams instead of as individual workers, in which people understand and believe that thinking, planning, decisions and actions are better when done cooperatively.

Training needs analysis: A method of analyzing how employee skill deficits can be addressed through current or future training and professional development programs, as well as determining the types of training/development programs required, and how to prioritize training/development.

Visible minorities: As defined in the Employment Equity Act, persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.

Workforce survey: To obtain information on the composition of an organization's workforce, a workforce survey is conducted. The organization must provide a self-identification questionnaire to all employees to determine the number of designated group members in each of the occupations throughout its workforce.

Glossary Sources

University of California, San Francisco, Office of Diversity and Outreach, Unconscious Bias:
<https://diversity.ucsf.edu/resources/unconscious-bias>

HR Marketer, Glossary of Human Resources (HR) and Employee Benefit Terms:
<http://www.hrmarketer.com/glossary-of-hr-and-benefits-terms/>

Public Service Alliance Canada: <http://psacunion.ca/employment-equity-glossary-common-terms>