



**UVA**

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

# Toolkit for Equity-Minded Decisions & Policies



**UVA**

Division for Diversity, Equity, &  
Inclusion

# Equity-Minded Leadership

## Why Does Equity-minded Leadership Matter?

The ultimate purpose of UVA, as a public university, is to serve the public. In fulfilling our mission, we know that the very best faculty, students, and staff want to live, work, and study at an institution in which they can believe wholeheartedly; an institution that is both outstanding and ethical; an institution that is not only excellent, but excellent for a purpose. If the animating purpose of UVA is to serve- we must ask ourselves if in the present we are laying the groundwork for a better future? Our actions today must be rooted in our values, chief among them equity, which creates a path towards not only a more just future, for all members of our community, but a healthier, more sustainable institution. If the future is to be bright for any of us, it must be prepared for all of us.

## Core Principles of Equity-minded Leadership

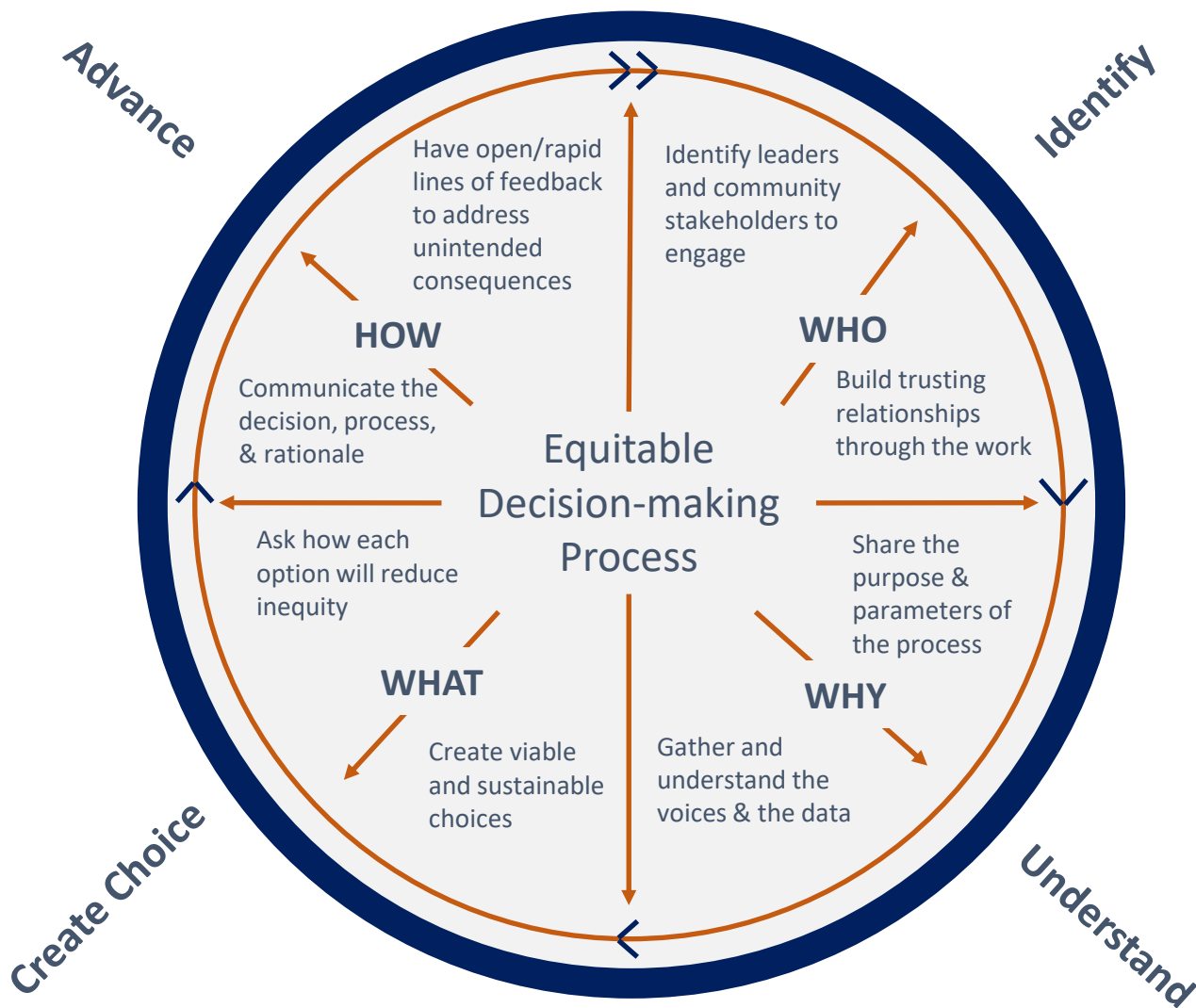
- Equity-minded leaders recognize that the differences in backgrounds, perspectives and experiences of our community are not a challenge to be overcome, or needing assimilation, but are assets to be affirmed and leveraged as part of that which defines excellence.
- Equity-minded leaders are aware of the systemic nature of inequities and work to address the ways that previous policies and practices have created inequities throughout institutions.
- Equity-minded leaders do not base their decisions and policies on assumptions or stereotypes, they rely on research, evidence, and multiple sources of input to guide practices.

## Actions Supporting Equity-Minded Leadership Practices

- Asking strategic equity and inclusion questions at every decision point;
- Engaging and empowering a diverse team to gather evidence, hear from the community, and help identify viable and sustainable alternatives and recommendations on which leaders can act;
- Highlighting the core values that will inform the decision and policy making process, even if all details are uncertain;
- Engaging reciprocity, or leveling the power dynamic, such that those in the community most impacted by the decision or policy have an authentic voice in the process and greater stake in the outcome;
- Enabling and honoring the rapid surfacing of impactful but unanticipated consequences;
- Communicating early and transparently; and
- Conducting an “Equity Impact Assessment” for each policy and decision-making process.

# Equitable Decision-Making Process

Each School/Unit/Leader Starts Here



## Guiding Questions

**Who:** Who is impacted and whose relationships most shape the opportunities and challenges in the decision-making process?

**Why:** Why is the current context creating the situation that we are experiencing and why do we need to take action/make a change? What does the decision-making process seek to accomplish?

**What:** What alternatives and possibilities can we identify or create together? What will reduce inequities and/or mitigate risk/harm for those with the least power?

**How:** How will we honor our values and hold ourselves accountable for achieving the purpose we started with, promoting equity, and mitigating risk/harm? How will we communicate why we chose a specific path/action/option?

# Equity Impact Assessment Guide

## Purpose of Tool

This guide can aid you in examining proposed actions or decisions through an equity lens to help minimize unintended adverse consequences in a variety of contexts. This assessment can be completed and converted into an Equity Impact Statement which could be a supporting document to the decision analysis and making process for proposed policies, institutional practices, programs, plans, and budgetary decisions. Where possible, list concrete action steps taken and/or roles/names of people involved in the process.

<b>STEP 1. IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>What groups, organizations or individuals may be most involved with, affected by, and/or concerned with the issues related to the proposal, policy, practice, plan, or decision?</i></li></ul>
<b>STEP 2. ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Have those stakeholders most involved or impacted been informed, meaningfully involved, and authentically represented in the development of the proposal, policy, practice, program, plan, or decision?</i></li></ul>
<b>STEP 3. IDENTIFYING AND DOCUMENTING INEQUITIES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Which groups, organizations, or individuals are currently most advantaged and most disadvantaged by the issues this proposal, policy, practice, program, plan, or decision seeks to address?</i></li><li><i>How are they affected differently?</i></li><li><i>What quantitative and qualitative evidence of inequality exists? What evidence is missing or needed?</i></li></ul>

# Equity Impact Assessment Guide

## STEP 4. EXAMINING THE CAUSES

- *What factors may be producing and perpetuating inequities associated with this issue? How did the inequities arise?*
- *Are the inequities expanding or narrowing? Does the proposal, policy, practice, program plan, or decision address root causes? If not, how could it/they?*

## STEP 5. CLARIFYING THE PURPOSE

- *What does the proposal, policy, practice, program, plan, or decision seek to accomplish?*
- *How does it/they align with our mission and values?*
- *Will it reduce disparity?*

## STEP 6. CONSIDERING UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

- *What adverse or unintended consequences could (or has previously) result(ed) from this type of proposal, policy, practice, plan, or decision here or somewhere else?*
- *Is there research on this topic and prior case examples that could be reviewed?*
- *Is it possible some groups would be more negatively affected than others? Is that necessary or could it be minimized?*

## STEP 7. ADVANCING EQUITABLE IMPACTS

- *What positive impacts on equity and inclusion, if any, could result from this proposal, policy, practice, program, plan, or decision?*
- *Are there further ways to maximize equitable opportunities and impacts?*

# Equity Impact Assessment Guide

## STEP 8. EXAMINING ALTERNATIVES OR IMPROVEMENTS

- *Are there better ways to achieve the purpose and align with our goals?*
- *What provisions could be changed or added to ensure positive impacts on equity and inclusion?*

## STEP 9. ENSURING VIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

- *Is the proposal, policy, practice, program, plan, or decision realistic, adequately funded, with mechanisms to ensure successful implementation and/or enforcement?*
- *Are there provisions to ensure ongoing data collection, public reporting, stakeholder participation, and public accountability?*

## STEP 10. IDENTIFYING SUCCESS INDICATORS

- *What are the success indicators and progress benchmarks?*
- *How will impacts be documented and evaluated?*
- *How will the level, diversity, and quality of ongoing stakeholder engagement be assessed?*

*Adapted from the Center for Racial Justice Innovation "Racial Equity Impact Assessment" tool.*

# Policy Equity Guide

## Purpose of Tool

This guide is intended to aid you in examining your area's written and unwritten policies with an equity lens. The reflection questions can be used to guide a team discussion or individual written reflection.

### STEP 1. IDENTIFY WRITTEN AND UNWRITTEN POLICIES/PRACTICES

#### What policies/practices are in place in our school/unit?

- *What formal written policies govern how our area/unit is organized, operated and distributes resources and opportunities? (e.g. employee tuition support)*
- *What unwritten/informal decision-making processes and practices determine how we organize, operate, and distribute resources and opportunities?*

### STEP 2. INDIVIDUALLY EXAMINE FORMAL AND INFORMAL POLICIES/PRACTICES

#### 1. Foundations of the policy/practice:

- *What is the intent behind the policy/practice? What are the desired outcomes?*
- *Who is responsible for policy/practice implementation and oversight?*
- *How is the policy/practice communicated to policy decision makers and individuals impacted by it?*

#### 2. Equity in language:

- *Does the policy/practice make normative/stereotypical assumptions?*
- *What types of words are used to describe individuals/groups identified in the policy/practice?*
- *Is there language that includes or excludes communities that have been historically minoritized? (Ex. "She/He" > "They")*

# Policy Equity Guide

## 3. Data Collection and Reporting

- Who does the policy/practice impact? Who benefits and who does not?
- How is accountability measured? What data are collected to monitor policy/practice implementation and impact?
- Are data disaggregated in collection and reporting? What groups are disaggregated?
- Are there individuals and/or communities that are disproportionately affected by this policy?

## 4. Accountability for Equity

- At what points in the policy/practice are there points of individual discretion? Are those points structured (e.g., there is an evaluation rubric or guide posts for the decision)?
- Does this policy/practice have the potential perpetuate or help dismantle historical, or other barriers? How?

## STEP 3. ADDRESSING INEQUITIES

**If the policy perpetuates unnecessary barriers or inequities, how can they be mitigated or eliminated?**

What actions will we take to redress the inequities in our formal and informal policies/practices?







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