

Policy History
<b>Policy No.</b> HR16
<b>Approving Jurisdiction:</b> President
<b>Administrative Responsibility:</b> Vice President Human Resources
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# Employment Equity Policy

**DEFINITION**

The term "employment equity" was first introduced in the 1984 Royal Commission report on Equality in Employment. It covers a wide range of measures to improve the employment status of designated groups: women, people with disabilities, aboriginal persons and people of visible minorities. The intent is to achieve equality in the work place so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability.

Kwantlen Polytechnic University believes in, and will apply, a broader definition of equity and fairness that includes the prevention of discrimination as defined by the *British Columbia Human Rights Act*.

**RATIONALE**

Discrimination and stereotyping are increasingly discouraged by greater social awareness. Nonetheless, racism and prejudice still exist. For a variety of historical and social reasons, certain groups have faced and continue to face barriers to full participation in the workforce. Additionally, some workplace practices have the effect of denying certain people equal opportunities to compete for and obtain jobs and advancement.

The impact is dramatic. This systemic discrimination has resulted in certain groups of people being historically under-represented in the labour force or concentrated in jobs at the lower end of the pay scale. Employment equity aims to remove barriers and to remove conditions of disadvantage for these groups.

A policy of equitable employment facilitates overall improved human resource management which benefits the entire Kwantlen community. Commitment to Employment Equity principles assists us in making full use of all available resources to fill our staffing needs. Ultimately, Employment Equity contributes to both the socioeconomic welfare of the communities in which we do business, and to Kwantlen Polytechnic University as a public institution.

Discrimination is against the law. The *British Columbia Human Rights Act* prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), sexual orientation, age (19 - 65) or criminal record unrelated to employment. The *Canadian Charter of*

*Rights and Freedoms* and the *Canadian Human Rights Act* also prohibit discrimination on similar grounds.

Further, these statutes specifically provide for the implementation of special measures to correct historical inequities and to improve the situation of designated groups. Employment equity programs are consistent with the principle of equality and implicitly recognized as necessary for certain groups to attain equality.

## **GENERAL MEASURES**

Employment equity focuses on changing employment systems which perpetuate discrimination. At Kwantlen Polytechnic University that change is approached in two distinct ways, both of which are essential to an effective employment equity program:

### 1. Quantitative:

Quantitative measures include:

- surveying the workforce to determine how many designated group members are present, in what jobs, and at what pay levels;
- identifying areas where participation of designated group members is lower than that in the general labour force;
- setting goals and timetables for increasing representation; and
- monitoring change on a regular basis.

### 2. Qualitative:

Statistical data can reveal the extent of under-representation of designated groups in the workforce, but merely having the data will not solve the problems. Qualitative measures are also required to effect change. These include such things as:

- establishing a commitment to employment equity;
- involving those affected by the program;
- informing and educating people;
- reviewing employment systems to identify and eliminate discriminatory barriers; and designing and implementing special measures, such as outreach recruitment, mentorship programs, flexible work arrangements, workplace child care, etc.

The employment equity measures described are not stand alone initiatives. They are directly related to Kwantlen's policies regarding Non-Discrimination and Harassment, and also support our values and operating principles.

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

The people of Kwantlen Polytechnic University are committed to the principles of Employment Equity. These principles are an integral part of our operating philosophy. Our commitment to Employment Equity provides a basis of equitable, consistent employment, development and advancement decisions for all Kwantlen Polytechnic University employees based strictly on ability and merit.

To ensure that Employment Equity is an ongoing part of our daily practices, every manager, search committee and supervisor within the organization is responsible for ensuring equity in recruiting, hiring, training, development, and promotion decisions.