



**fauw**

Faculty Association of  
the University of Waterloo

# Equity Committee

## Terms of Reference

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## Purpose/Mandate

The Equity Committee is responsible for advising the FAUW Board of Directors on all matters of equity that impact faculty, naming inequity and calling on the FAUW Board of Directors to address and act on equity matters for its members, in particular those matters impacting members of equity-deserving groups.

The Equity Committee is concerned with equity issues including those covered by the protected grounds of Ontario's Human Rights Code. The committee engages in educational and advocacy activities as appropriate and liaises with other related committees of the University, OCUFA, and CAUT.

## Committee structure

The Equity Committee ("Committee") is a standing subcommittee of the Board of Directors of the Faculty Association of University of Waterloo (FAUW). The Equity Committee reports to the FAUW Board through its chair.

## Membership

The committee membership should consist of:

- 13–15 voting members of the committee, including the chair, chair-elect, past-chair, representative of Renison Association of Academic Staff (RAAS) and representative of the Librarians' and Archivists' Association of the University of Waterloo (LAAUW). The LAAUW and RAAS shall each select one of their members to serve as a voting member.
- At least 50% gendered and 50% racialized faculty with priority given to applicants with intersectional backgrounds (that is, disadvantaged by multiple sources of oppression: race, gender, sexuality, religion, disability). Whenever possible, Black and Indigenous applicants should be prioritized. If there are not sufficient numbers of gendered and racialized applicants to allow the committee to reach gender and racial parity, the committee should solicit applicants and accept applications on a rolling basis. The Black Faculty Collective and the Indigenous Advisory Circle/Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre are invited to select a faculty member to serve on the Equity Committee. As collectives form to represent racialized peoples on campus, those caucuses also will be invited to select a faculty member.

- Faculty whose self-identification, lived experience and/or area of expertise facilitates the committee's capacity to engage with equity issues from equity-deserving groups. Whenever possible, the committee should privilege self-identified minoritized members and members with lived experience. The committee acknowledges that applicants may be disadvantaged by multiple sources of oppression and may or may not choose to disclose those identifications.
- At least one faculty member from all six faculties (Arts, Engineering, Environment, Health, Mathematics, and Science).
- A chair, vice-chair, past chair and secretary elected from and by the committee membership
- A FAUW staff member who will serve as a resource to the chair and committee.

### **Terms of membership**

- Each committee member is invited to serve for a renewable two-year term, up to three consecutive terms. Committee members should declare their interest in renewal by the April meeting of the second year of their term.
- Once membership has been decided, per the FAUW Constitution, the Equity Committee recommends members to the Board for final approval.
- Recognizing that the vitality and effectiveness of the committee depends on the new ideas and enthusiasm that come with new members, the committee will encourage some turnover in membership each year.

The Committee may strike sub-committees that have specific directives. All sub-committees will report and be responsible to the chair of the Equity Committee.

### **Selection of the Chair**

- The Committee will recommend a chair to the FAUW Board who will be selected by and from the Equity Committee members on the committee at the April meeting and will serve a one-year term as chair-elect, a two-year term as chair, and a one-year term as past chair. The term of chair is four years and typically (per budget constraints) comes with two course releases for two years as chair.
- Committee members should prioritize leadership opportunities, including the post of chair, for Black, Indigenous, and Members of Colour and/or members whose lived experience and/or expertise particularly qualify them to chair the Equity Committee.

- Submissions for the position of Chair will normally close on March 31.
- Candidate statements will be distributed to the committee electronically. For guidance on constructing candidate statements, past Chair statements will be made available to members.
- Elections for chair shall normally be held by secret ballot, with voting will take place at least seven days after statements are distributed.
- In the event that there is only one candidate, this candidate shall be ratified by a vote.
- If no candidate comes forward, the committee may elect to re-open nominations, or to appoint a chair-elect at a future date.
- Once a chair has been decided, per the FAUW Constitution, the Equity Committee recommends the chair appointment to the Board for final approval.
- The chair may be re-elected for one consecutive two-year term. The transition to chair and past chair will occur July 1.
- Should a current chair be unable or unwilling to complete their term, either the past chair or chair-elect may take their place. Should neither be willing, a new chair may be nominated and elected by the committee.

### **Committee member recruitment and selection**

- A call for new members will normally be posted by FAUW staff following the Spring General Meeting, with a submission deadline of May 31, or at least seven calendar days prior to selecting new members.
- The committee will advertise vacancies widely and will strive to obtain candidates who are representative of the diversity of members on campus.
- Voting on new members shall occur at or before the June meeting and may involve proxy voting for those members unable to attend. Recruitment and selection of replacement members of the committee shall follow the advice of Member Recruitment and Selection regarding the prioritization of Black and Indigenous representation. Representation from all six faculties should be ensured.
- The process to advertise vacancies and facilitate votes, if necessary, will be conducted by the FAUW Nominations and Elections Committee.

## **Onboarding of committee members**

Each September, all committee members are required to review the following documents:

- The Committee's Terms of Reference
- FAUW's [Memorandum of Agreement](#) and [Constitution](#)
- [FAUW 101](#)
- [Policy 33 – Ethical behaviour](#)

All committee members are responsible for becoming familiar with these materials and their accountabilities to the Board.

The chair may also require additional training in financial policies and knowledge management practices, provided by FAUW staff. In particular, the chair may require training on drafting an annual budget, which shall be provided to and approved by the committee each spring.

## **Removing committee members**

Any committee member in violation of the committee's accountabilities may be removed by a 2/3 vote of the full committee membership. This vote can be held anonymously and asynchronously with support from the Nominating and Elections Committee or staff, if requested. The Board may vote to remove a committee member at any time, with cause. Removal of any members must be immediately reported to [fauw@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:fauw@uwaterloo.ca).

## **Removing the chair**

If there is a lack of confidence in the chair, committee members are free to communicate directly with the Board to share their concerns. A 2/3 vote of the full committee membership may recommend the removal of the chair to the Board, who will make the final decision. This process only removes the chair from their leadership position, not the committee. This vote can be held anonymously and asynchronously with support from the Nominating and Elections Committee or staff, if requested. The Board may vote to remove a chair at any time, with cause. Any concerns with committee leadership should be directed to [fauw@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:fauw@uwaterloo.ca).

## **Mid-term vacancies**

If a member leaves the committee prior to the end of their term, the committee will determine whether to appoint a mid-term replacement or leave the vacancy until the next call for members.

Recruitment and selection of replacement members of the committee shall follow the advice of Committee Member Recruitment and Selection

with regard to the prioritization of Black and Indigenous representation. Representation from all six faculties should be ensured.

Members appointed on an interim basis will be offered full-term membership at the next vacancy. The official first term of a member appointed mid-term begins the following July 1.

## Meetings

### Communication

Communication between membership outside of committee meetings will normally occur within the Equity Committee Teams channel or via official university email. The committee will determine the format of meetings (in-person, virtual, or hybrid) on a term-by-term basis, with decisions made at the final meeting of the preceding term.

### Facilitation

- A motion may pass by majority vote or consensus. Whenever possible, decisions will be made by consensus.
- Ahead of each meeting, the Chair shall submit the agenda, clearly separating in two sections the motions that will be approved by consensus and the ones to be approved by majority vote, as well as the rationale for the chosen method.
- Consensus vote is not to be interpreted as acquiescence, but as a complex, iterative discourse among committee members, respecting the right of any member to object to a motion, which in turn results in further discussion and rewording of the motion until no further objections are brought forward.
- While meetings are to be conducted in a collegial manner without strict adherence to Robert's rules of order, in the event of procedural dispute, the latest edition of the text shall serve as reference (for example, if a member requests that voting be done by secret ballot).
- In the event that consensus cannot be reached, decisions can be voted upon and a two-thirds majority will be needed.
- For votes taking place over email or online, at least 50% of members must respond for the vote to be valid.
- Members who are unable to attend a meeting and wish to express dissent on a consensus item, may do so by email at any point before the meeting, based on the agenda provided by the chair ahead of time. In such cases, the motion shall not be discussed until the following meeting, when the dissenting member has an

opportunity to be present and engage in collegial conversation with peers.

## Frequency

The committee will meet once per month, from September through June.

## Quorum

Quorum for conducting committee business shall be 50%+1 of committee membership, with the exception of removing members, which requires a 2/3 vote of the committee's entire membership.

## Accountabilities

All FAUW volunteers are representatives of the Faculty Association and should conduct themselves as such in the course of any FAUW business. Any members found in violation of the Memorandum of Agreement, FAUW Constitution or other governing documents, policies and procedures, may be subject to removal through the processes outlined above.

## Officers

**Chair:** The chair will chair the meetings and represent the Committee to the FAUW Board of Directors, the University, and in the broader community. If not an elected director, the chair will serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the FAUW Board. The chair will be charged with the general management and supervision of the affairs of the Committee and its sub-committees. In addition, the Chair is expected to submit monthly reports in writing to the FAUW Board on the activities of the Committee, and bi-annual reports for FAUW Spring and Fall General Meetings.

**Past chair:** The past chair supports the onboarding of the chair and serves to provide institutional knowledge as needed.

**Vice chair:** The vice chair will fulfill the duties of the chair in their absence and will automatically assume the role of chair for the remainder of the chair's term, if vacated. If the role of vice chair is vacant, the FAUW Board will appoint a delegate from the Board to serve as interim chair for the remainder of the term or until a new chair can be appointed.

**Secretary:** A member of the Equity Committee, excluding the Chair, will serve as secretary for each meeting. Members of the committee should acknowledge the degree of privilege that they possess by volunteering to act as secretary and taking notes for the meeting for the whole



committee. Members may volunteer for one meeting, a series of meetings, or for a particular length of time.

**Equity Advocate and Facilitator:** The committee recognizes that the manner in which disputes are resolved can reveal underlying power structures. As such, the committee strives to be a self-care community where members feel that their concerns will be attended to. The committee recognizes that members, however well-intended, may lack awareness of power dynamics or of manifestations of structural oppression. The Equity Advocate and Facilitator shall encourage and support committee members in upholding the ethics and standards of the Equity Committee. During committee meetings, the Equity Advocate and Facilitator shall act as a parliamentarian to ensure that equity processes agreed upon by the committee (e.g., formal votes) are followed. Should committee discussion or commentary veer from the values in the Code of Conduct, the Equity Advocate and Facilitator shall intervene and refocus the discussion. Outside of committee meetings, the Equity Advocate and Facilitator shall be available to members for conflict resolution as outlined in the "Committee Members" section and shall also be available to members wishing to learn more about equity issues with which they may not be familiar.

### **Committee members**

Committee members are responsible for actively participating in committee meetings and projects, as appropriate, including reviewing all meeting package materials, and arriving prepared for meetings. Members are required to review all onboarding materials at the beginning of each academic year. Members should be equity minded and willing to work collegially to represent the interests of all FAUW members.

Members of the committee recognize that serving on the committee is voluntary and that their contributions may vary based on demands on work and life. If an egregious or consistent violation against the ethics of committee occurs, a committee member may be removed. Examples of such behaviour include but are not limited to:

- Creating undue resistance to productive discussion during meetings
- Refusing to abide by concerns for equity and social justice
- Refusing to complete committee assignments or completing them in a substandard manner
- Found in violation of [Policy 33 - Ethical behaviour](#).

Concerns about an Equity Committee member may be brought to the Equity Advocate and Facilitator. The Equity Advocate and Facilitator will



confer with the involved parties and try to arrive at a solution that aligns with the principles of equity agreed upon by the committee members. If there continues to be an impasse or if the committee member in question does not show significant improvement, the Equity Advocate and Facilitator may bring the issue to the wider committee for discussion and/or a vote. The remaining committee members may vote for removal through a majority vote of no confidence.

Concerns about the Equity Advocate and Facilitator should be brought to the Chair/past chair/past mediator. The process followed will be the same as outlined above.

### **Documentation and knowledge management**

Committee meeting agendas, minutes, reports and other documents should be stored in the Equity Committee Teams channel.

### **Conflict of interest**

The committee is dedicated to making impartial decisions and recommendations that promote equity and inclusivity. A conflict of interest arises when a member's personal, professional, or financial interests could influence their judgement. Examples include personal relationships, financial stakes, or affiliations that could bias decision-making.

Committee members must disclose any potential conflicts to the Chair. If the Chair has a conflict of interest, the Vice-Chair or alternate designee will step in to manage the situation. In all cases, member may be asked to recuse themselves from relevant discussions or decisions, and full transparency will be maintained. Independent reviews may be conducted by the FAUW Board to ensure impartiality.

### **Confidentiality**

Given the sensitive nature of equity-related work, confidentiality is of vital importance to protect personal and institutional information and preserve trust in the committee's processes. Committee members must keep all discussions, documents, and personal information confidential. In particular:

- Members must not share confidential information outside the committee without authorization.
- Confidential materials must be stored securely and handled with care.
- Confidentiality obligations extend beyond membership on the committee.

While respecting boundaries of confidentiality, the committee shall consult and be transparent with equity-deserving groups who are impacted by the committee's work.

