Glossary of Terms
Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

EDI is an institutional priority across GCU (Glasgow Caledonian University) both within and outside of the curriculum to build a sense of community, to be inclusive across recruitment, retention and development our staff and learners to live and work in a global society as active citizens. Across the institution, teams including the Schools, Academic Developemnt and Student Learning, Student Wellbeing, People Services support and are [committed to providing a culture and environment which is inclusive to the needs of all individuals](#) through various charters, projects and networks. As the [University for the Common Good](#), and a civic institution that promotes social justice, GCU has strong [Values and Behaviours](#) and are committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) where Goal 4 on quality education aims 'to ensure an inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'.

There are several terms that fall under the remit of EDI that may not initially be familiar or easily understood. Consider this list as an introduction to EDI terms, it is not an exhaustive list, and it is considered as a live document because language changes and is fluid. Rather than embed the three terms of EDI into the glossary, it is important to put them up front to highlight their individual significance, so not to conflate any term and to provide everyone with a shared language across the institution.

- **Equality** is about **treating people fairly**, with **dignity, and respect**. It is about providing everyone with **opportunities** to fulfil their potential, whatever their background, culture, or identity.

- **Diversity** is about **respecting, celebrating,** and embracing the rich **mix of perspectives, ideas, and values** that people bring but also recognising the diverse **intersectionality** of **identities**, that includes **disability**, **ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, socio economic status, race, age, and marital status**.

- **Inclusion** is about accommodating, respecting, and welcoming the **needs and perspectives of people from different backgrounds, languages, and culture.** It is where everyone feels they **belong.**

The GCU community is encouraged to be an EDI ally and advocate. The responsibility is not down to any one individual or EDI leads alone but collectively, change can occur where everyone feels a sense of belonging and that they matter.

To be an ally can take many forms as not two people are the same or starting from the same place, it could mean reading around EDI issues, get involved in various groups or networks as an ally, be more attuned during class, meetings, and events as to who might be isolated, whose voice is not included or who is taking the burden of the work. Sometimes it is about unlearning what we know, as everyone's background and lived experiences are different, we may have some biases, prejudices and stereotypes against certain groups or communities.

There is an important individual journey of reflection that is required to become more aware of EDI issues and challenges people face. Why not seek out some personal development or professional training opportunities across GCU and in the wider context.

Terms

- **Ableism:** A word for unfairly favouring non-disabled people. In general, ableism can be used to describe the way society and people tend to favour non-disabled people.
- **Accessibility:** A term to indicate that people are not excluded from using something based on experiencing a disability. It means that people are empowered, can be independent, and will not be frustrated by something that is poorly designed or implemented.
- **Active Bystander Training:** A type of training to provide the skills to support peers in challenging antisocial behaviour at work, on campus and in school, to challenge microaggressions and challenging situations.
- **Attention Deficit Disorders (ADD):** a group of conditions involving differences in attention span, activity levels, concentration and/or impulsivity.
- **Attention Deficit Hyper Disorders (ADHD):** a group of conditions involving differences in attention span, activity levels, concentration and/or impulsivity.
- **Ally:** Someone who supports a group other than one's own (in terms of multiple identities such as race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, etc.). An ally acknowledges oppression and actively commits to reducing their own complicity, investing in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression.
- **Antisemitism**: A certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities
- **Autism:** a spectrum condition characterised by differences in communication, cognitive processing, sensory sensitivities, and with literal thinking and intense special interests.
- **BAME:** A UK acronym used to refer to Black, Asian Minority and Ethnic. It is based on the recognition of collective experiences of systemic racism. As with any other identity term, it is up to individuals to use this term as an identifier but is not recommended as it considers everyone as a homogenous group.
- **Belonging:** A term that has increasing relevance in the EDI space. Authors [Liz Fosslien and Mollie West Duffy](#) describe the more active role of belonging: "Diversity is having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice, and belonging is having that voice be heard." In this context, 'belonging' completes the EDI picture by giving individuals a genuine experience of being valued, heard and accepted.
- **Bias**: A form of prejudice that results from our need to quickly classify individuals into categories.
- **Bigot:** A person who is obstinately devoted to their own opinions and prejudices and is intolerant towards other diverse social groups.
- **BIPoC:** An USA acronym used to refer to Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. It is based on the recognition of collective experiences of systemic racism. As with any other identity term, it is up to individuals to use this term as an identifier.

- **Cisgender:** A term for people whose gender identity, expression or behaviour aligns with those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth.
- **Colour Blind:** The belief that everyone should be treated "equally" without respect to societal, economic, historical, racial, or other difference. No differences are seen or acknowledged; everyone is the same.
- **Cultural Appropriation:** The non-consensual/misappropriate use of cultural elements for commodification or profit purposes – including symbols, art, language, customs, etc. – often without understanding, acknowledgment or respect for its value in the context of its original culture.
- **Decolonise**: The active and intentional process of unlearning values, beliefs and conceptions that have caused physical, emotional, or mental harm to people through colonisation. It requires a recognition of systems of oppression.
- **Digital Accessibility:** The process of making digital products, such as websites, mobile apps, Virtual Learning Environments, and other online tools technologies, accessible to everyone. It is about ensuring all users can access the same information equally e.g. captions on videos, Alt text on images and visuals and clear colour contrast.
- **Disability:** Physical or mental impairment that affects a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- **Discrimination:** The unequal treatment of members of various groups, based on conscious or unconscious prejudice, which favours one group over others on differences of race, gender, economic class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, language, age, national identity, religion, and other categories.
- **Discriminatory language:**
- **Dyslexia:** a neurology which is not well-suited to certain forms of written language, leading to difficulties with reading, writing, and spelling, and which may also include differences in concentration and planning. It is also associated with certain strengths, particularly in spatial reasoning.
- **Dyspraxia:** (also known as Developmental Co-ordination Disorder) – a condition associated with difficulties in movement and co-ordination, but also with strong strategic thinking.
- **Dyscalculia:** a condition associated with difficulty in understanding number related concepts, symbols or functions needed for mathematics.
- **Dysgraphia:** a condition in which a person has difficulties with fine motor skills such as handwriting, spelling and finger sequencing, which may affect typing.
- **Equity** is grounded in the principle of fairness around access, opportunity and advancement, by ensuring each person is supported to be successful and that personal and social circumstances are not seen as obstacles of achieving their potential. Moving beyond equality, equity is what the aim should be.
- **Gender fluidity:** Over time a person gender expression or identify or changes or both expression and identity might change together.
- **Gender based violence:** A function of gender inequality, and an abuse of male power and privilege. It takes the form of actions that result in physical, sexual and psychological harm or suffering to women and children, or affront to their human dignity, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. It is men who predominantly carry out such violence, and women who are predominantly the victims of such violence. By

referring to violence as 'gender based' this definition highlights the need to understand violence within the context of women's and girl's subordinate status in society. Such violence cannot be understood, therefore, in isolation from the norms, social structure and gender roles within the community, which greatly influence women's vulnerability to violence.'

- **Gender Identity:** Distinct from the term "sexual orientation," refers to a person's internal sense of being male, female or something else. Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.
- **Gender Non-conforming:** An individual whose gender expression is different from societal expectations related to gender.
- **Global Majority:** A collective term that first and foremost speaks to and encourages those so-called to think of themselves as belonging to the global majority. It refers to people who are Black, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the global south, and or have been racialised as 'ethnic minorities'.
- **Global North:** It is not exclusively a geographical term but identified as countries that includes areas such as Australia, Canada, the entirety of Europe and Russia, Hong Kong, Macau, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea the United States.
- **Global South:** Identified as countries in the regions of Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. Most of humanity resides in the Global South.
- **Harassment:** Repeated and unwanted comments or actions that can be perceived as offensive, embarrassing, humiliating, demeaning, and unwelcome. The course of conduct may cause fear, anxiety and distress.
- **Homophobia**: The irrational hatred, intolerance and fear of lesbian, gay and bisexual people.
- **Identity:** An individual's sense of self defined by (a) a set of physical, psychological, and interpersonal characteristics, (b) a range of affiliations (e.g., ethnicity) and social roles.
- **Implicit Bias:** Negative associations expressed automatically that people unknowingly hold and that that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions; also known as unconscious or hidden bias.
- **Inclusion:** The act of creating an environment in which any individual or group will be welcomed, respected, supported, and valued as a fully participating member. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces and respects differences.
- **Institutional Racism:** Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes and opportunities for diverse groups based on racial discrimination.
- **Intersectionality:** A social construct that recognises the fluid diversity of identities that a person can hold such as gender, race, class, religion, professional status, marital status, socioeconomic status, etc.
- **Islamophobia:** is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness
- **"Isms":** A way of describing any attitude, action or institutional structure that oppresses a person or group because of their target group. For example, race (racism), gender (sexism), economic status (classism), older age (ageism), religion (e.g., anti-Semitism), sexual orientation (heterosexism), language/immigrant status (xenophobism), etc.

- **LGBTQIA:** An inclusive term for those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual.
- **Mental Health:** A state of mental well-being enabling people to cope with the stresses of life, realise abilities, learn and work well, and contribute to the community, as well as build relationships and shape the world we live in.
- **Microaggression:** The verbal, nonverbal and environmental slights, snubs, insults, or actions, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory or negative messages to target persons based solely upon discriminatory belief systems.
- **Minority:** According to the United Nations, minority is a term which can refer to both objective factors (such as the existence of a shared ethnicity, language or religion) and subjective factors (including that individuals must identify themselves as belonging to a national or ethnic, religious or linguistic minority group).
- **Multicultural Competency:** A process of embracing diversity and learning about people from other cultural backgrounds. The key element to becoming more culturally competent is respect for the ways that others live in and organise the world and an openness to learn from them.
- **Neurodivergent:** (sometimes abbreviated as ND) describes a brain that functions in ways that diverge significantly from the dominant standards of 'normal'. For example, a dyslexic person is neurodivergent.
- **Neurodivergence:** the property (of a person or brain) of being significantly different from the typical.
- **Neurodiversity:** the existence within a population of individuals with different brain structures.
- **Neurodiverse:** an adjective describing populations which contain individuals with different neurology's. The word neurodiverse should not be used to describe an individual or a condition; it refers only to populations.
- Neurotypical: synonymous with neurodivergent.
- **Neurotypical:** abbreviated as NT is often used to describe people who are not neurodivergent and falls within what society says is "normal"
- **Non-Binary:** Describes identities that do not fit into the man/woman binary.
- **Oppression:** The systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Oppression fuses institutional and systemic discrimination, personal bias, bigotry and social prejudice in a complex web of relationships and structures.
- **Patriarchy:** Actions and beliefs that prioritizes masculinity. Patriarchy is practiced systemically in the ways and methods through which power is distributed in society (jobs and positions of power given to men in government, policy, criminal justice, etc.) while also influencing how we interact with one another interpersonally (gender expectations, sexual dynamics, space-taking, etc.).
- **People of Colour:** A collective term for people of Asian, African, Latinx and Native American backgrounds, as opposed to the collective "White".
- **Prejudice:** A preconceived judgement or preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgment and can be rooted in stereotypes, that denies the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized.
- **Privilege:** Exclusive access or access to material and immaterial resources based on the membership to a dominant social group.

- **Queer:** An umbrella term that can refer to anyone who transgresses society's view of gender or sexuality. The definitional indeterminacy of the word Queer, its elasticity, is one of its characteristics: "A zone of possibilities."
- **Race:** A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly race), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic, and political needs of a society at a given period
- **Reasonable adjustment:** Are changes an institution makes to remove or reduce a disadvantage related to someone's disability. For example: making changes to the physical environment, or providing equipment, services or support.
- **Safe Space:** Refers to an environment in which everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves and participating fully, without fear of attack, ridicule, or denial of experience.
- **Sexual Orientation:** An individual's enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction to another person. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Transgender people may be straight, lesbian, gay or bisexual.
- **Social Justice:** Social justice constitutes a form of activism, based on principles of equity and inclusion that encompasses a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others.
- **Stereotype:** A form of generalisation rooted in blanket beliefs and false assumptions, a product of processes of categorisation that can result in a prejudiced attitude, critical judgment and intentional or unintentional discrimination. Stereotypes are typically negative, based on little information and does not recognise individualism and personal agency.
- **Structural inequality:** Systemic disadvantage(s) of one social group compared to other groups, rooted and perpetuated through discriminatory practices (conscious or unconscious) that are reinforced through institutions, ideologies, representations, policies/laws and practices. When this kind of inequality is related to racial/ethnic discrimination, it is referred to as systemic or structural racism.
- **System of Oppression:** Conscious and unconscious, non-random and organised harassment, discrimination, exploitation, discrimination, prejudice, and other forms of unequal treatment that impact diverse groups. Sometimes is used to refer to systemic racism.
- **Tokenism:** Performative presence without meaningful participation. For example, a superficial invitation for the participation of members of a certain socially oppressed group, who are expected to speak for the whole group without giving this person a real opportunity to speak for her/himself.
- **Trans**: Functions as an umbrella term to describe the experience or status of being a different gender from the gender assigned at birth.
- **Transphobia:** Negative attitudes and behaviours towards transgender people. Transphobia can manifest in many ways, including fear, aversion, hatred, violence or anger towards people who do not conform to social gender expectations.
- **Unconscious Bias**: Unconscious bias is when we make judgments or decisions based on prior experience, our own personal deep-seated thought patterns, assumptions, or interpretations, and we are not aware that we are doing it.

- **Prejudice:** A feeling which is favourable or unfavourable toward a person or thing, not based on actual experience, knowledge thought or reason.
- **Stereotype:** An often unfair and untrue belief that many people have about other people or things with a particular characteristic.
- **White Supremacy:** A power system structured and maintained by persons who classify themselves as White, whether consciously or subconsciously determined; and who feel superior to those of other racial/ethnic identities.