

Inclusive Excellence Toolkit

Inclusive Excellence (IE) at Texas Christian University is designed to infuse diversity and inclusion efforts into all aspects of the university, ensuring that diversity and inclusion are essential to the mission and success of every area of the university. The Inclusive Excellence Framework (IEF) allows each unit of the university to review current operations and intentionally plan a strategy to identify and support DEI initiatives within the unit. Inclusive Excellence views diversity, equity, and inclusion as the responsibility of every member of the TCU community. A diverse and inclusive campus leads to innovation, broadened perspectives, and social understanding, values that are foundational aspects of higher education.

We pledge to keep inclusive excellence at the highest level of institutional importance and as a foundation to all that we strive to do. The IE Toolkit was designed to assist offices, departments, and colleges in implementing Inclusive Excellence. It is intended for staff, faculty, students, administrators, and other individuals who want to begin the discussion, exploration, and practice of embedding inclusiveness throughout their areas of responsibility.

The IEF provides a structure for campus and community initiatives related to TCU's goal of Inclusive Excellence. The IEF is based on six components that reflect an organized approach and configuration to maintain progress toward the goal of Inclusive Excellence: 1) Equity and Access; 2) Campus Culture; 3) Curriculum; 4) Learning and Development; 5) Community Engagement; and 6) Institutional Infrastructure. Each of the six components should be utilized when identifying specific objectives, initiatives, and strategies to advance and promote diversity and inclusion efforts that support the achievement of TCU's mission of inclusive excellence.

Inclusive Excellence was developed by experts at the [Association of American Colleges and Universities \(AAC&U\)](#) to help colleges and universities integrate diversity and educational quality efforts into their missions and institutional operations. They note, making excellence inclusive is thus an active process through which colleges and universities achieve excellence in learning, teaching, student development, institutional functioning, and engagement in local and global communities.

¹ The TCU Inclusive Excellence Toolkit was adapted, with permission, from the University of Denver Inclusive Excellence Toolkit by Treviño, Walker & Leyba (2009).

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

In using the toolkit, it is important to keep in mind several key ideas:

- Inclusiveness and excellence are conceptualized as symbiotic: to excel, we must practice inclusiveness.
- IE shifts the responsibility for diversity and inclusiveness from one individual or department to everyone on campus. While individuals might drive the process, the responsibility for change and inclusiveness is assumed by every member of the campus community.
- IE changes the way the university has historically conceptualized diversity. Rather than setting and tracking numerical goals for diverse faculty, staff, and students, the emphasis is on transforming the institution into a vibrant community that embeds diversity throughout the institution.
- IE employs a broad definition of diversity that includes dis/ability, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, religion, nationality, age and other important social dimensions that are part of a community.

One of the assumptions supporting Inclusive Excellence is that diversity is an integral asset to the mission of the University. Diversity is not valued occasionally or purely numerically. Nor is it an issue to be managed, contained or avoided. Rather, TCU views diversity as a constant benefit to be actively, intentionally, and consistently supported with the objective of achieving numerous learning and organizational outcomes. Stated differently, the gifts, talents, histories, traditions, worldviews, and cultures that our diverse communities bring to the University is a form of “gold” that can be “mined” to produce a multiplicity of educational outcomes to improve the climate for inclusiveness at the University.

The ultimate goal is to make inclusiveness habitual for everyone at TCU. This toolkit and assessment are designed to foster an inclusive culture on our campus and in our community. We invite you to use the following worksheets to help you practice and implement Inclusive Excellence!

USING THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit consists of three parts to help your unit improve its practice of Inclusive Excellence: 1) Inventory/Assessment, 2) Analysis, and 3) Action.

PHASE ONE: ASSESSMENT

Taking stock of how your unit is doing in implementing Inclusive Excellence.

Use the tables below to think through an overview of inclusiveness in your unit in each of the six areas that correspond with the TCU's **Inclusive Excellence Framework (IEF): Equity and Access; Campus Culture; Learning and Development; Curriculum; Community Engagement; and Institutional Infrastructure**. The six components of the IEF provide questions to reflect on as a unit, division, or individual and should be used to guide specific objectives, initiatives, and strategies.

- By “unit,” we mean the department, program, work area, or office of which you are a part. It is important to be clear on what specific area you are describing, so that you outline the strengths and change areas for which you are actually responsible and in which you can actually make change. (To answer some questions with the entire campus in mind will greatly skew your descriptions, and ultimately your action plan!)
- Challenge yourself (selves) to be honest about whether, on the whole, your area is or is not described by the question. Answering “no” does not mean you/your area is bad, any more than answering “yes” means there isn’t more that could be done.
- In the last column, describe some of the reasons for your response. Be specific and honest, as the details will help you continue/improve.
- Some of the areas may not apply to your unit; you can skip these (mark “NA”), and/or consider how your unit does/can have an impact on the larger organizational structures of which you are a part. Use broad definitions when considering the applicability to your unit.
- Feel free to add additional measures and questions (one blank row is provided) as they apply to your specific area.
- What do you do if you find that not every question applies to you? This is a general toolkit for multiple areas, so if the questions do not apply to you, just select NA. What do you do if you work in an area that does not engage with students in person? You can either skip these questions, or you can try to adjust them to fit the area you deal with specifically.

IE GOAL 1 – Equity and Access <i>Equity and Access for all constituents (students, faculty, staff, alumni, volunteers) is essential to achieving a diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus. What opportunities are being presented to constituents and what gaps exist in the current structures?</i>	Yes/ No/ In Progress/ NA	Comments, evidence of completion (e.g., numbers, documents, programs, etc.)
Who are our constituents and how do we recruit our constituents?		
How do we provide support to those who are here?		
Are we relying on traditional methods to recruit (students/employees)? How have we updated our practices to address our current and future needs?		
Who benefits and who is excluded from these established processes and how should these processes		

be modified or should they be eliminated?		
Do current employees actively assist in efforts to recruit and retain diverse undergraduate and graduate students or faculty and staff?		
Are multiple individuals from diverse groups represented within the unit's leadership and management?		
Does the unit have a history of including members of diverse groups in the selection processes for students, faculty, and staff?		
Is inclusive excellence an integral part of employee orientation in your unit?		
Notes:		
IE GOAL 2 – CAMPUS CULTURE <i>Campus culture drives the feelings, perceptions, and actions of the community. What is the experience for students, employees, and other constituents? What does it feel like to be on this campus, in a class, or as a visitor? Our goal should be to align practices for inclusion across campus activities and processes, both inside and outside the classroom, to ensure all individuals feel welcomed, valued, respected, and included.</i>	Yes/ No/ In Progress/ NA	Comments, evidence of completion (e.g., numbers, documents, programs, etc.)
Who are we including or excluding when planning?		
What best practices are we using to ensure that individuals feel welcomed, valued, and respected?		
Are we living up to the mission of the university? How is this being evaluated and by whom?		
What data do we have to identify areas of growth and improvement?		
Is the climate for inclusiveness of the unit welcoming to members of diverse groups? How can we tell?		

Do students, staff, faculty, alumni, and members of the public from different backgrounds feel welcome working in, studying in, and visiting our unit?		
Is inclusive excellence embedded in the evaluation, promotion, and/or merit process? Are employees recognized and valued for their contributions to mentoring diverse students/employees; teaching diversity courses; embedding diversity into their courses/training; and other diversity activities?		
Has leadership participated in diversity training along with all other employees, thereby sending a message to the rest of the unit of the importance of learning about and understanding diversity and inclusiveness?		
Notes:		
<p>IE Goal 3-Learning and Development <i>Learning and Development include educational opportunities for our community members to explore perspectives and concepts that increase our awareness on topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion. By enhancing our learning opportunities, we assist in improving the overall campus community by encouraging inclusive environments. Workshops and training with a focus on DEI benefit students, faculty, staff, and administrators in personal and professional development.</i></p>	<p>Yes/ No/ In Progress/ NA</p>	<p>Comments, evidence of completion (e.g., numbers, documents, programs, etc.)</p>
What DEI learning opportunities are offered to your unit?		
What DEI learning and development opportunity needs are specific to your unit?		

How are learning and development opportunities advertised and encouraged?		
What is the impact of learning and development for your unit?		
How are you accessing and monitoring what individuals have learned?		
How do staff and faculty monitor language, strategies, microaggressions, or stereotyping that could potentially impede students' success?		
Notes:		
IE GOAL 4- Community Engagement <i>Community engagement includes providing more access to our campus for under-represented groups in the community by building pathways to connection and fostering a sense of belonging. How do we build and sustain purposeful, mutual partnerships with Fort Worth communities, especially those with a large proportion of under-represented groups?</i>	Yes/ No/ In Progress/ NA	Comments, evidence of completion (e.g., numbers, documents, programs, etc.)
Are we engaged with communities that are historically marginalized and underrepresented at TCU?		
How are we building partnerships to create solutions for community DEI challenges?		

How well do we monitor, measure, and set expectations for outreach and engagement with underserved populations?		
What impact do we have in diverse communities in surrounding areas?		
Notes:		
IE GOAL 5- CURRICULUM <i>Curriculum, pedagogy, research, and scholarship each express principles and perspectives related to DEI. Diversity and Inclusion learning opportunities are designed to promote intercultural competence in these areas as undergraduate and graduate students prepare to enter the workplace. How do curriculum and other academic endeavors infuse diversity, equity, and inclusion?</i>	Yes/ No/ In Progress/ NA	Comments, evidence of completion (e.g., numbers, documents, programs, etc.)
How does our pedagogy model inclusive teaching practices?		
How does our teaching attend to students' different social identities and backgrounds?		
How do the design, teaching, and assessment in our classes deliberately cultivate an environment in which all students are treated fairly, have equal access to learning, feel welcomed, challenged, and supported?		
How do we increase the concepts of intercultural competencies in the classroom?		
How do we increase course offerings that are rooted in DEI and embed DEI in current course content?		
Are students in your unit provided with the skills and knowledge to successfully manage and deal with diversity? (For example, do they learn how to discuss issues of diversity using civil discourse? Do they build skills in interacting with		

individuals who are different than they are?)		
Is access to additional academic opportunities shared equitably?		
Is the unit aware of field-specific barriers to the academic progress and achievement of diverse students?		
Notes:		
IE GOAL 6 – Institutional Infrastructure <i>The institutional infrastructure refers to the policies, procedures, accountability methods, communications, performance measures, and organizational structures of the university. We should create an institutional infrastructure that enhances DEI, based on the concept of shared accountability. Inclusive Excellence reviews both university-wide and unit infrastructures.</i>	Yes/ No/ In Progress/ NA	Comments, evidence of completion (e.g., numbers, documents, programs, etc.)
How do we develop and improve policies and procedures that support DEI?		
How do we communicate regularly and transparently to stakeholders regarding the progress of DEI?		
How are we accessing and monitoring our progress?		
How are we building support and allocating human resources (structural, financial) to reach goals?		
When new projects or initiatives are introduced to the unit, is inclusive excellence part of the project and process?		
Is Inclusive Excellence embedded in the evaluation, promotion, and/or merit process? Are employees		

recognized and valued for their contributions to mentoring diverse students/employees; teaching diversity courses; embedding diversity into their courses/training; and other diversity activities?		
Are there aspects of the unit's history with regard to inclusion or exclusion that need to be made more transparent or acknowledged?		
Does leadership practice diversity/inclusive excellence? Is the value of diversity and inclusiveness supported through actions?		
Notes:		

Once you have completed the inventory above **AND** discussed it with others from your area, proceed to **Phase Two: Analysis**

PHASE TWO: ANALYSIS

How well is your area practicing and implementing Inclusive Excellence?

Using the questions below to review the inventory you conducted in Phase 1, analyze the “state” of inclusiveness in your unit and what it could be. In this section, your goal is to see **what** needs to be done. (In Phase Three, you’ll work on the specifics of **how** to move forward.)

When using this document, reflect on “diversity.” What does diversity mean to you and your unit? What diverse voices will help your unit be more representative of the diversity in the community? Reflect on who’s not at the table.

Our Strengths:

- Where are our areas of strength? Where is inclusiveness being practiced?
- How can we maintain or enhance those areas?
- How can we celebrate and publicize those successes that have led to greater inclusiveness?

Where Can We Improve?

- In which areas (where inclusiveness needs to be embedded) do we need to improve?
- Are there some areas (“low hanging fruit”) that could quickly and effortlessly be changed to be more inclusive?
- What resources do we have and/or need to do so?
- Are there some areas that will take longer to change?
- What resources do we have and/or need to do so?
- What areas/items would have the most far-reaching and/or longest-lasting impact?

Once you have completed the inventory above **AND** discussed it with others from your area, proceed to **Phase Three: Action**.

PHASE THREE: ACTION

How will you move forward in practicing and implementing Inclusive Excellence?

Use the matrix below to lay out a priority and detailed plan for how your area will implement Inclusive Excellence. (See generic example.)

Action Item	Action Step	Who's Responsible	Timeline/Deadline	Priority (ease and/or significance of impact)
<i>EXAMPLE</i> IV.D. Are the traditions and celebrations of the unit inclusive?	Change name of the annual "Christmas Party" to "Holiday Party," explicitly acknowledging multiple celebrations at that time of year.	"Office Social Team," the volunteer committee members who have historically organized holiday and birthday observances for the unit.	For this fall/winter's holiday season.	High (relatively simple to do!)

Treviño, J.; Walker, T.; Leyba, J. (2009). Inclusive Excellence Toolkit. Retrieved from <https://www.du.edu/gsg/media/documents/InclusiveExcellenceToolkit-DUCME3-09.pdf>