

SCHOOL OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
Dalhousie University

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Equity Committee Terms of Reference	
Location: S:\OccTherapy\COMMITTEES\Committee Terms of Reference\Last Approved Terms of Reference\Equity CommitteeTerms of Reference Revised 2014.doc	
Date Reviewed: COW: December 4, 2014	Date Approved/Revised: COW: December 4, 2014 March 4, 2010
Date of Approval: COW: February 1, 2001	
Comments: Language revised in 2010 to be aligned with the FHP Policy on Affirmative Action.	

Function:

The Equity Committee is responsible for identifying challenges to equity and recommending strategies to ensure appropriate policies and practices are integrated in the occupational science and occupational therapy programs. The Committee functions include advising on and supporting affirmative action and equity approaches for the recruitment, admission and progress of students from designated groups: Aboriginal peoples, African Canadians and Persons with (dis)Abilities. In addition, the committee is responsible for providing guidance on and identifying ways to address social inequalities and injustices at the institutional level (within the School) and in the everyday interactions and relationships among students, staff, faculty and community members involved with the School.

Preamble:

The Committee operates on the understanding that teaching, learning, scholarship, and the School's community relations are influenced by individual and collective experiences, both current and historical. The groups designated for affirmative action within the Faculty of Health Professions are included within the mandate of the Committee, but diversity is also understood more broadly to include differences of ethnicity, race, religion, gender, social class, physical/mental abilities, sexual orientation, parental status, age, and other social factors which may negatively influence educational experience. The Committee recognizes that attention to issues of diversity benefits everyone in the school community. The Committee does not replace existing formal mechanisms at the University that address equity issues, but rather is intended to complement those mechanisms.

Membership and Voting:

The Committee consists of a minimum of two faculty members, one of whom is designated as Chair. In addition, the Admissions coordinator of the Entry Level program will be an *ex-officio* member and will attend meetings as needed. Faculty membership is negotiated in annual workload agreements. Secretarial duties will be shared amongst committee members. All interested students, faculty and staff are welcome to join the committee, with no limits to numbers.

Decisions are normally reached by consensus. Students constitute 1 voting member, appointed by the Dalhousie Occupational Therapy Student Society (DOTSS).

Quorum:

Quorum is 50% plus one voting member. The Chair will cast a vote only in the event of a tie vote.

Authority:

The Equity Committee is a standing committee of the School of Occupational Therapy. Decisions requiring ratification will be brought to the Committee of the Whole.

In Camera:

In camera discussions may be conducted by faculty without student or staff members present regarding issues that refer to specific students. In camera items will be identified on the Committee agenda. In camera discussions or decisions will not be recorded in the minutes.

Objectives:

1. Upon request, the Committee provides assistance in the review and development of policies and procedures that may affect affirmative action and equity in admissions, accommodations, curriculum, and fieldwork.
2. The Committee may choose to undertake or advise on activities to promote awareness and education regarding affirmative action and equity issues in the school.
3. Outside of regular meetings, the Chair and/or other committee faculty members may act in an advisory capacity to the Director, other School committees, faculty, staff and students on issues related to teaching, learning, program development, scholarship and community relations as they may be affected by institutional inequalities and everyday inequities as well as to enhance attention to diversity.

Operational Procedures:

1. The Committee reports to Committee of the Whole at least once a year.
2. Minutes and reports are stored on the shared drive.
3. The Committee Chair provides oversight to ensure the work of the committee can proceed, including setting meeting dates, recruiting student members in September each year, ensuring agendas, minutes, and documents are available on the shared drive, writing the annual report, and collaborating with Committee members to ensure annual actions and priorities are identified in an action plan, and the work of the Committee is carried out in an effective manner.
4. Committee faculty members are responsible for keeping the School informed of actions and communications related to the activities of the Committee.
5. Student members are responsible for generating ideas for action, engaging in decisions of the committee, being accountable for completing tasks they have committed to (including communication with the rest of the students), bringing to the Committee relevant equity issues affecting the school for discussion and possible action, and collaborating with Committee members to ensure annual actions and priorities are identified in the action plan.

Please reference the School of Occupational Therapy Affirmative Action Policy at <http://www.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/faculty/faculty-health-professions/occupational-therapy/ELPC%20Policies/Affirmative%20Action.pdf>