

PROGRESS, NEW OPPORTUNITIES & ACTION

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY PLAY 2026-2027

The Employment Equity Plan for **May 1, 2026, to April 30, 2027**, reflects Queen's ongoing commitment to advancing equity in the workplace. Building on progress achieved in previous cycles, this plan also responds to emerging challenges, including the increasing complexity of initiatives and the need for sustained, coordinated efforts across the institution. These realities underscore the importance of a multi-year approach to employment equity, where meaningful change is achieved over time rather than within a single planning cycle. In this context, the plan outlines clear next steps across recruitment, retention, and professional development.

RECRUITMENT

Action Items

1. Establish a Federal Contractors Program compliance work plan to support reasonable progress.
2. Review and revise the Employment Equity Policy and Procedure.
3. Analyze QEAP self-identification data to better understand candidate self-identification practices and inform communication strategies.
4. Finalize the update on National Occupational Classification (NOC) within PeopleSoft
5. Review job classification practices and NOC assignments
6. Develop an evaluation rubric template for faculty hiring.
7. Review Indigenous identity verification practices to clarify their application in hiring processes.

RETENTION

Action Items

8. Strengthen senior leadership awareness, understanding, and commitment to Employment Equity.
9. Build shared understanding of Indigenous research and scholarship to support equitable evaluation and recognition.
10. Enhance onboarding and ongoing training and development for new Department Heads and Deans to support inclusive leadership practices.
11. Develop best practice guidelines for Associate Headships to support leadership development and mentorship for BIPOC faculty members.
12. Analyze representation and participation patterns among Employment Equity Representatives.
13. Analyze early retention patterns (6-12 months) among equity-deserving employees and their use of existing supports.
14. Launch the “You Always Count” campaign.
15. Host a BIPOC employee gathering
16. Identify and assess accessibility-related policies and processes that affect employees.
17. Review the Exit Survey and Internal Transfer Survey processes.
18. Develop a Stay Framework to support ongoing employee engagement.
19. Expand smudging locations and increase understanding of smudging practices across the University.
20. Finalize and seek approval for the Indigenous Cultural Practice and Ceremonial Leave Policy.

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| 21. Advance Queen's institutional commitment to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). |
| 22. Conduct an institutional environmental scan as part of the Dimensions Recognition Program to identify opportunities for advancing I-EDIAA across Queen's research ecosystem. |

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Action Items

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| 23. Launch the DEAP Tool for researchers |
| 24. Reactivate the Ontario Universities Employment and Educational Equity Network (OUEEEN) |
| 25. Enhance awareness, participation, and knowledge sharing through the Employment Equity Learning Community |
| 26. Implement the Indigenous Engagement Certificate for Employees |
| 27. Review the Diversity to Inclusion Certificate Program to strengthen ongoing learning and application in practice |
| 28. Explore opportunities to strengthen the competency framework through an I-EDIAA lens. |

GOALS' RATIONALE

RECRUITMENT

GOAL # 1:

Establish a Federal Contractors Program compliance work plan to support reasonable progress.

A structured compliance work plan will support a coordinated and proactive approach to meeting Employment Equity obligations under the Federal Contractors Program (FCP). Establishing clear priorities, timelines, and responsibilities will strengthen accountability and support sustained progress toward representation goals.

GOAL # 2:

Review and revise the Employment Equity Policy and Procedure

The Employment Equity Policy and Procedure require periodic review to ensure alignment with evolving legislative requirements, institutional priorities, and leading practices in Employment Equity. Revising these documents will support clear guidance and consistent application across the University.

GOAL # 3:

Analyze QEAP self-identification data to better understand candidate self-identification practices and inform communication strategies.

Response rates to the self-identification questionnaire are high which gives the opportunity for a deeper analysis to better understand how applicants engage with self-identification options, including decisions not to self-identify or to limit the use of their information for statistics purposes. Improved understanding of these patterns will help identify opportunities to strengthen communication about the purpose and value of self-identification in advancing employment equity.

GOAL # 4:

Finalize the update on National Occupational Classification (NOC) within PeopleSoft.

Accurate National Occupational Classification data is foundational to Employment Equity analysis and Federal Contractors Program reporting. Completing the transition to NOC 2021 will support data integrity, compliance, and readiness for future reporting requirements.

GOAL # 5:

Review job classification practices and NOC assignments.

Consistent and transparent NOC assignment practices are essential to reliable Employment Equity reporting and workforce analysis. Reviewing current practices will help identify opportunities to strengthen data quality and improve alignment with federal reporting requirements.

GOAL # 6:

Develop an evaluation rubric template for faculty hiring.

Providing search committees with a structured, equity-informed evaluation framework supports fair, transparent, and consistent assessment of candidate. This goal complements ongoing work on faculty recruitment and development and will support hiring units in making fair, bias-aware decisions. The rubric will be designed to: align with Queen's I-EDIAA priorities, promote equitable evaluation criteria across disciplines, and increase transparency and confidence in hiring decisions.

GOAL # 7:

Review Indigenous identity verification practices to clarify their application in hiring processes.

Clear and consistent Indigenous identity verification practices are important to maintaining the integrity of Indigenous-specific hiring initiatives while supporting equitable and culturally appropriate recruitment processes. Reviewing current practices will help clarify their application and identify opportunities for improvement.

RETENTION

GOAL # 8:

Strengthen senior leadership awareness, understanding, and commitment to Employment Equity.

Visible and sustained leadership engagement is essential to advancing Employment Equity at Queen's. Strengthening senior leaders' commitment and active participation in Employment Equity initiatives will help reinforce institutional priorities, promote awareness and across the University, and support the integration of Employment Equity considerations into decision-making and strategic planning.

GOAL # 9

Build shared understanding of Indigenous research and scholarship to support equitable evaluation and recognition.

Traditional approaches to evaluating scholarship may not fully recognize the breadth and impact of Indigenous research and scholarship. Building shared understanding will support more equitable approaches to evaluation and recognition within the academic environment.

GOAL # 10

Enhance onboarding programs for new Department Heads and Deans to support inclusive leadership practices.

Department Heads and Deans play a critical role in shaping workplace culture and employee experiences. Strengthening onboarding programs will help build leaders' capacity to foster inclusive environments and support equitable decision-making.

GOAL # 11

Develop best practice guidelines for Associate Headships to support leadership development and mentorship for BIPOC faculty members.

Associate Headships can serve as important pathways for leadership development within academic units. Developing best practice guidelines will help strengthen mentorship opportunities and support more equitable leadership pathways for BIPOC faculty members.

GOAL # 12:

Analyze representation and participation patterns among Employment Equity Representatives.

Participation in hiring committees may vary across faculties and units. Developing a better understanding of the composition of the Employment Equity Representative pool, representation across equity-deserving groups, and patterns of participation will help identify opportunities to broaden engagement, support equitable distribution of service responsibilities, and strengthen the sustainability of Employment Equity Representative involvement in recruitment processes.

GOAL # 13:

Analyze early retention patterns (6-12 months) among equity-deserving employees and their use of existing supports.

The early stages of employment can significantly influence employees' experiences of inclusion, belonging, and long-term retention. Understanding retention patterns and engagement with existing supports among equity-deserving employees will help identify opportunities to strengthen the employee experience.

GOAL # 14

Launch the “You Always Count” awareness campaign.

Maintaining accurate self-identification data supports effective Employment Equity planning and analysis. Increasing awareness of opportunities to review and update self-identification information will help improve data quality and support informed decision-making.

GOAL # 15:

Host a BIPOC employee gathering.

Creating opportunities for connection and community contributes to employees' sense of belonging and supports retention. Providing dedicated spaces for BIPOC employees to share experiences and build networks can strengthen inclusion across the University.

GOAL # 16:

Identify and assess accessibility-related policies and processes that affect employees.

Accessibility-related policies and processes are essential to ensuring equitable recruitment and retention for persons with disabilities. In support of Queen's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, this goal will identify accessibility-related policies and processes that affect employees and applicants and assess their potential impact on persons with disabilities. This work will help establish a foundation for future policy review.

GOAL # 17:**Develop a Stay Framework to support ongoing employee engagement.**

Regular one-on-one conversations provide opportunities for managers and employees to discuss workplace experiences, career development, and opportunities for improvement before concerns become barriers to success. A Stay Framework will provide a consistent approach to supporting these conversations, encouraging ongoing feedback, and informing workplace improvements across the University.

GOAL # 18:**Review the Exit Survey and Internal Transfer Survey processes**

Between 2021 and 2024, Queen's recorded 1,171 staff terminations and 418 internal transfers. However, only 293 exit surveys and 227 internal transfer surveys were completed during that period, revealing a considerable gap between those leaving or moving within the institution and those who were invited or chose to share feedback. Exit and internal transfer surveys provide valuable insights into employee experiences and organizational practices. Reviewing current processes will support more meaningful data collection and strengthen the University's ability to identify and address barriers affecting retention.

GOAL # 19**Expand smudging locations and increase understanding of smudging practices across the University.**

Smudging is an important Indigenous cultural practice that should be supported through accessible spaces and a respectful campus environment. Expanding approved smudging locations and increasing understanding of smudging practices will help remove barriers to participation, promote cultural safety, and advance the University's commitment to reconciliation.

GOAL # 20:**Finalize and seek approval for the Indigenous Cultural Practice and Ceremonial Leave Policy.**

The Indigenous Cultural Leave Policy is intended to support Indigenous employees in maintaining cultural connections and participating in community responsibilities. Finalizing and implementing the policy will promote consistent and meaningful support across the University.

GOAL # 21

Advance Queen's institutional commitment to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA).

Research assessment practices influence how scholarly contributions are recognized and valued across the University. Advancing Queen's commitment to DORA provides an opportunity to consider a broader range of research contributions and strengthen approaches to research assessment that recognize diverse forms of scholarly impact and excellence.

GOAL # 22

Conduct an institutional environmental scan as part of the Dimensions Recognition Program to identify opportunities for advancing I-EDIAA across Queen's research ecosystem.

The Dimensions Recognition Program provides a framework for identifying and addressing systemic barriers across the research ecosystem. An environmental scan aligned with Dimensions can help identify opportunities to strengthen equitable participation, recognition, retention, and career progression for faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and students.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GOAL # 23:

Launch the DEAP Tool for researchers, including an education plan

The DEAP Tool supports the integration of I-EDIAA principles into research design and practice. Launching the tool, alongside education and awareness efforts, will support meaningful adoption across the research community.

GOAL # 24:

Reactivate the Ontario Universities Employment and Educational Equity Network (OUEEN)

Participation in sector-wide networks supports knowledge sharing, collaboration, and institutional capacity-building. Reactivating OUEEN will strengthen opportunities to exchange promising practices and reinforce Queen's leadership in Employment Equity.

GOAL # 25:

Enhance awareness, participation, and knowledge sharing through the Employment Equity Learning Community (EELC).

Feedback received during the 2026 Employment Equity Forum highlighted a desire for greater opportunities for connection, information sharing, and peer learning among Employment Equity Representatives and others involved in recruitment processes. Strengthening awareness of the EELC and increasing participation will help maximize the value of this existing community of practice and support the ongoing development of Employment Equity knowledge and capacity across the University.

GOAL # 26

Implement the Indigenous Engagement Certificate for Employees.

Expanding understanding of Indigenous histories, perspectives, and ways of knowing is essential to fostering an inclusive and respectful workplace. Implementing this program will support employee learning and contribute to ongoing reconciliation efforts at Queen's.

GOAL # 27

Review the Diversity to Inclusion Certificate Program to strengthen ongoing learning and application in practice

The Diversity and Inclusion Certificate Program provides employees with foundational knowledge of diversity, equity, and inclusion principles and practical tools to support inclusive practices across the University. Reviewing the program will help strengthen opportunities for continued learning beyond the certificate through community learning and practical application in the workplace. Building on this foundation will support employees in deepening their learning, reflecting on emerging issues, and embedding inclusive practices into their everyday work.

GOAL # 28

Explore opportunities to strengthen the competency framework through an I-EDIAA lens.

Employee competencies define the knowledge, skills, and expectations that guide job architecture, performance management, professional development, and other human resources processes across the University. Exploring opportunities to strengthen the employee competency framework through an I-EDIAA lens will support greater alignment across these areas while informing future enhancements to the framework.

CONCLUSION

The 2026–2027 Employment Equity Plan reflects Queen’s continued commitment to advancing equitable and inclusive workplaces through intentional action, collaboration, and sustained institutional effort. While this Plan builds upon the progress achieved in previous years, it also recognizes that Employment Equity work must continually evolve to respond to emerging challenges, changing contexts, and new opportunities for growth.

Employment Equity is not a destination, but an ongoing process of learning, reflection, and action. Through the implementation of this Plan, Queen's reaffirms its commitment to creating a workplace that values diverse experiences and perspectives, supports belonging and inclusion, and advances equity in meaningful and measurable ways. **Together, through progress, new opportunities, and action, Queen's will continue working toward a more equitable and inclusive future for all members of its community.**