



EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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**This guideline was
developed by
PGO's Diversity and
Inclusion
Committee**



PROFESSIONAL GEOSCIENTISTS ONTARIO

Executive Summary

Professional Geoscientists of Ontario (PGO) formally recognize that the lands on which we live and carry out our work are on the traditional territories of many nations of Indigenous people. As the regulator of the geoscience profession, the PGO recognizes that it serves an essential role in encouraging and promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in the profession. In a 2021-member survey, PGO members shared their desire to have an EDI professional practice guideline (PPG). As a result, this PPG was developed to support registrants (geoscience professionals) and certificate holders (geoscience organizations) to understand concepts surrounding EDI terms and outline why and how professionals and organizations can adopt a practice of inclusion. As part of adopting a practice of inclusion, geoscience professionals and geoscience organizations are encouraged to take meaningful action toward Truth and Reconciliation.

In the 2021-member survey, more than half of the participants indicated that they had experienced discrimination, a form of inequity, within their academic or work environment. There are many forms of inequity, and examples relevant to the geoscience profession described in the EDI PPG. By understanding the various types of inequity that can occur in workplaces and how they disproportionately impact those who may be underrepresented in their workplaces, professional geoscientists can better recognize these events when they occur and learn to respond accordingly. Along with the examples of inequity scenarios, the EDI PPG outlines inclusive actions that individuals can take. Additionally, through reviewing the EDI PPG geoscience professionals will gain an understanding of their roles and responsibilities related to EDI — as outlined in the *Code of Ethics of Professional Geoscientists* — and how to report incidents of inequity they may encounter in their practice of geoscience.

Organizations also have a role to play in advancing EDI and Truth and Reconciliation. Geoscience organizations can adopt strategies and implement policies and programs which can support an equitable, diverse, and inclusive workplace. Geoscience organizations also have additional roles and responsibilities outlined in various Ontario statutes that support equitable and inclusive workplaces — such as the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, *Human Rights Code*, and *Pay Equity Act*. By adhering to these legislative frameworks, geoscience organizations can work to establish psychologically safe and equitable workplaces which support all people to achieve their full potential.



PROFESSIONAL GEOSCIENTISTS ONTARIO

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List of Acronyms

2SLGBTQIA+ — An inclusive umbrella term for individuals who may identify as two-spirited, lesbian, gay, trans, bisexual, queer people and other sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions not listed

EDI — Equity, diversity, and inclusion

PGO — Professional Geoscientists of Ontario

PPG – Professional Practices Guidelines

MMIWG — Missing Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

TRC — Truth and Reconciliation Commission



1 Introduction

Professional Geoscientists of Ontario (PGO) is a non-profit, self-regulatory organization that is authorized by the Ontario government under the *Professional Geoscientists Act, 2000* to regulate the registration and licensing of Professional Geoscientists to protect the public and promote the study and profession of geosciences. PGO formally recognizes that the lands on which we live and carry out our work are on the traditional territories of many nations of Indigenous people.

PGO protects the public by regulating Ontario-registered geoscientists and advancing professional practice. Accordingly, it and all associated persons must embody principles founded on ethics, integrity, professionalism, respect, and trust.

Those regulated by PGO represent diverse backgrounds. Therefore, it is essential that all staff, volunteers, registrants, and future registrants, feel welcome to participate fully for PGO to be successful in protecting the public's interests. Addressing bias, whether perceived or real, within the organization will make it easier to ensure that the public safety mandate is met.

PGO recognizes that it serves an essential role in encouraging and promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in the geoscience profession. PGO values inclusion in alignment with Canadian human rights frameworks. As such, we believe, everyone has the right to be treated with full respect and dignity regardless of racial or ethnic background, gender, gender expression, physical ability, religious affiliation, country of origin, or any other basis protected by the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. It is essential that individuals work and thrive by being the best versions of their whole selves in their professional practices in a welcoming and inclusive environment.

PGO values the diverse backgrounds of its Council, staff, volunteers, Professional Geoscientists, Geoscientists-in-Training, and students intending to work in the profession. In doing so, PGO is committed to fostering an inclusive environment for all to share their experiences. Lastly, PGO recognizes that continually growing diverse talent strengthens the knowledge, innovation, professionalism and expertise of the profession and that professionalism in geoscience includes behaviour that respects others and fosters an equitable, diverse, and inclusive environment.

1.1 Purpose of the EDI PPG

These Professional Practices Guidelines (PPG) guide the professional geoscience practice in Ontario as it relates to the best practices of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). The purpose of these guidelines is to provide PGO registrants (professional geoscientists) and geoscience-employing organizations — certificate holders with a common set of expectations and recommendations to increase awareness which advances EDI in the Ontario geoscience profession. As part of adopting a practice of inclusion, geoscience professionals and geoscience organizations are encouraged to take meaningful action toward Truth and Reconciliation.

The objectives of the EDI PPG are to:

1. Define EDI terminology.
2. Outline the role and position of PGO to foster EDI.
3. Summarize key social challenges faced by geoscience professionals and equity-deserving groups in our society.
4. Highlight applicable legislation related to EDI in the Ontario geoscience profession.
5. Outline actions and best practices that geoscience organizations and professionals can adopt to advance EDI.
6. Summarize reporting options to formalize complaints.

1.2 Role of Professional Geoscientists in Ontario

Professional Geoscientists Ontario protects the public by regulating Ontario registered geoscientists and advancing professional practice. Accordingly, it and all associated persons must embody principles founded on ethics, integrity, professionalism, respect, and trust. Additionally, PGO recognizes that it serves an essential role in encouraging and promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion in the geoscience profession, and as such, PGO will develop goals and plans concerning these four strategic priorities:

1. Creating a welcoming PGO community that inspires all to achieve personal and professional fulfillment through volunteer opportunities and meaningful engagement.
2. Encouraging more students from diverse backgrounds to study and choose careers in geoscience.
3. Encouraging the development and retention of talent within the profession from diverse backgrounds to strengthen and foster innovation within the profession.
4. Encouraging parity of representation in the workplace, (staff, management and Boards of Directors) and parity of income, irrespective of racial or ethnic background, gender, gender expression, physical ability, religious affiliation, country of origin, or any other basis.

For more information on PGO's initiative to encourage and promote diversity and inclusion within the profession visit <https://www.pgo.ca/diversity-inclusion>.

1.3 EDI Definitions

Equity is a means of fairness according to one's respective needs. This does not mean that everyone gets equal measures of treatment (equality), but that people are supported based on their own individual requirements. As a simple example, if we give a group of people each a pair of size 9 shoes, this is being equal, but if we give each member of the group a pair of shoes that fits their feet, this is being equitable. **In an equitable environment, people are supported by systems and processes to reach their full potential** (Butler, 2013; Faraday, 2020; Onyeador et al., 2021; Pedulla et al., 2018).

Diversity is a measure of variety. Diversity indicators are often used to measure demographics or aspects of identity within organizations. Examples of common demographic categories used in Canada are gender, ethnicity/race, physical ability, and sexual orientation. **In a diverse environment, there is a rich variety of visible and invisible differences among individuals.**

Inclusion is an active and intentional practice that acknowledges and celebrates our differences; verbal and non-verbal inclusionary behaviours may be required due to educational, physical, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, and/or racial differences. **In an inclusive environment, people feel a sense of belonging and psychological safety which supports them to be themselves** (Carter, 2021; Warren et al., 2022; WISEST, 2021).

2 The Geoscience Profession and Society

2.1 EDI Overview

In 2021, PGO conducted a member survey which received responses from 340 members. This survey represents approximately 10% of the more than 3,400 registrants that were registered with PGO as of December 31, 2022. Seventy-eight percent of respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that their workplace supports diversity and inclusion initiatives and a further 65% were aware of these diversity and inclusion initiatives within their workplaces. Additionally, 70% of survey respondents indicated they somewhat or strongly agreed that as a self-regulating organization, PGO has a responsibility to raise awareness on issues of diversity and inclusion. In the member survey, the most requested action for PGO to take was to create a professional practice guideline to support diversity and inclusion in the profession.

2.1.1 Representation in the Profession

In the 2021 PGO member survey, participants recognized that the geoscience profession in Ontario is not representative of the society which geoscientists serve; only 44% of

respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that PGO was represented of all genders and ethnic backgrounds. Of those that participated in the 2021 PGO member survey, 62% of respondents indicated they were white/Caucasian, 2% identified as Indigenous peoples, and 23% identified as racialized persons. Additionally, 7% of respondents indicated they were a person with a disability and 10% belonged to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Thirty-six percent of respondents identified as women, 54% identified as men, 4% identified their gender as genderqueer, non-conforming, or non-binary, two-spirited, and 7% preferred not to answer.

As is shown in Figure 1 (below), the representation of PGO members (from the 2021-member survey) compared to the population of Ontario or Canada differs in a few notable ways. Men in the profession are overrepresented and women are underrepresented compared to both the Canadian and Ontario population. Racialized persons, Indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities in the profession are all underrepresented compared to both the Canadian and Ontario population. Non-binary members and those belonging to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community are potentially overrepresented compared to Canadian data; however, few Canadian studies have aimed to determine the size of this equity-deserving group until recently and the equivalent data for Ontario is not available.

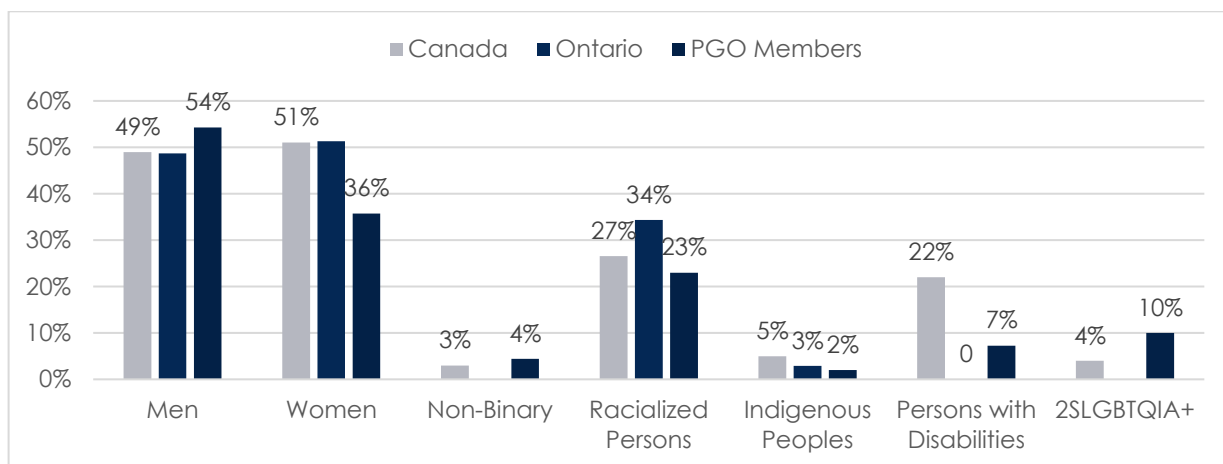


Figure 1: Demographic Comparison of PGO Members¹ and Canadian and Ontario Population²

¹ PGO. (2021). *PGO 2021 diversity & inclusion survey report*.

<https://www.pgo.ca/uploaded/files/events/pgo-2021-diversity-and-inclusion-survey-report.pdf>

² Statistics Canada. (2022a). *LGBTQ2+ people*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/12-581-x/2022001/sec6-eng.htm>

Statistics Canada. (2022b). Table 98-10-0447-01 Occupation unit group by highest level of education, major field of study, age and gender: Canada, provinces and territories. In <https://doi.org/10.25318/9810044701-eng> (Ed.). Statistics Canada.

Morris, S., Fawcett, G., Brisebois, L., & Hughes, J. (2018). *Canadian survey on disability reports: A demographic, employment and income profile of Canadians with disabilities aged 15 years and over, 2017* (Canadian Survey on Disability Reports, Issue.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2018002-eng.htm>

While women’s representation in the Canadian geoscience profession has increased over time it is still below 30% nationally — which is thought to be the level of sustainable representation. Additionally, there is less data and information available to quantify the level of representation of other equity-deserving groups, such as Indigenous peoples, racialized persons, persons with disabilities, and those belonging to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in the Canadian geoscience profession.

2.1.2 Equity-Deserving Groups

Canada’s *Employment Equity Act, 1995* defines the designated equity-seeking groups as women, Indigenous peoples, members of visible minorities³, and persons with disabilities. These groups may also be marginalized or referred to as equity-deserving. Equity-deserving groups have historically faced additional challenges due to instances of bias and systemic barriers. The impact of systemic barriers continues to cause challenges in Canadian society for equity-deserving groups, which results in a lower representation of these groups in professions, such as geoscience, and differences in experiences, which will be further explored in section 0.

Other equity-deserving groups recognized under Human Rights legislation exist in Canada. The 2SLGBTQIA+ community which includes two-spirited, lesbian, gay, trans, bisexual, queer people and other sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions, are often also considered an equity-deserving group in Canadian jurisdictions. Another group that may face additional barriers within the geoscience profession is newcomers to Canada. Importantly, due to multiple aspects of one’s identity, an individual may belong to one or more equity-deserving groups. For example, an Indigenous woman may belong to two equity-deserving groups: women and Indigenous peoples.

As a result of intersecting aspects of identity, some people face compounding challenges. This means that within an equity-deserving group, there can be a great deal of variance in people’s experiences and the challenges they face, even when they belong to the same group. For example, all women in Canada do not experience the same rate of violence, sexual exploitation, or murder; Indigenous women and girls experience disproportionately higher rates of harm than non-Indigenous women. The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) (2019) documented that:

- Indigenous women are three times more likely to be the target of violent victimization than non-Indigenous women.
- The majority of victims are Indigenous women between 15-34 years old.
- In many cases these instances of violence were not isolated events as more than 1/3 were victimized 2 or more times.

³ Statistics Canada is currently reviewing the term “visible minority”. We have used the term “racialized person” throughout the PGO EDI PPG.

- Indigenous women are more likely to be murdered; between 2004-2010, Indigenous women accounted for at least 8% of homicide victims, despite accounting for 4% of the total female population in Canada.
- Indigenous girls are also greatly over-represented as victims of commercial sexual exploitation to support themselves and their children and are more likely to become victims of trafficking and forced into sex work.

In addition to the National Inquiry into MMIWG, several studies have documented the challenges that equity-deserving groups face, including:

- Truth and Reconciliation [Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#)
- Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientist of Alberta's (APEGA) [Women in the Workplace: A Shift in Work Culture](#)
- Catalyst's [Building Inclusion for Indigenous Peoples in Canadian Workplaces](#)
- McKinsey and Lean In's annual [Women in the Workplace](#) report

2.1.2.1 Indigenous Peoples Rights

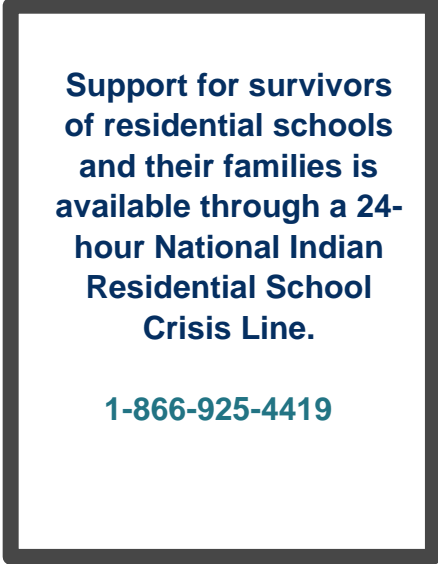
The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, Part I of the *Constitution Act, 1982* recognizes Indigenous peoples as rights holders in Canada. In the Canadian context, Indigenous peoples include First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. Indigenous peoples have lived on Turtle Island — what we now call North America — for thousands of years. As a result, Indigenous peoples have developed distinct cultures and languages, and have rich histories often tied to their deep knowledge and connection to the land and environment.

For hundreds of years, Indigenous and non-Indigenous people have engaged in treaties which incorporated land and resource sharing and defined our relationships. Ontario has 133 First Nations Communities and is home to many Métis and Inuit people. Additionally, there are more than 40 treaties and agreements in Ontario. Unfortunately, Canada's colonial treatment of Indigenous peoples has not always been in line with the intended values of the treaties. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report documents that cultural genocide has been occurring in Canada for over a hundred years because of various policies and laws. Cultural genocide is “the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the groups to continue as a group” (TRC, 2015, p. 1). The TRC report (2015) describes how the various Indigenous policies in Canada involved:

- Land control enacted through the misuse of the treaties,
- The ‘pass system’ which restricted the movement and gathering of Indigenous peoples between reservations for more than 60 years,
- Governance control was enacted through the replacement of traditional Indigenous governance systems with patriarchal band councils,
- Spiritual control was enacted through the banning of cultural practices and the destruction of cultural artifacts, and

- Social control was enacted through the residential schools and 60's scoop, both of which separated children from their families, cultures, and languages.

Specifically, the TRC focuses on the residential school system and its impact on survivors. The residential school placed 150,000 Indigenous students from 1883 until the 1990s in over 100 schools (TRC, 2015). The schools were frequently underfunded, poorly constructed, and had poor oversight which resulted in the abuse, neglect, and death of many children. In 2022, the Members of (Canadian) Parliament unanimously voted to recognize the residential school system as genocide. Additionally, since 2020, ground-penetrating radar around former residential schools has been used to locate the remains of thousands of children across Canada (Berkowitz, 2021; Luo, 2022). More information in ongoing discoveries of unmarked graves near former residential schools is available on the University of Windsor's interactive website, [*Missing Children of Residential Schools*](#).



**Support for survivors
of residential schools
and their families is
available through a 24-
hour National Indian
Residential School
Crisis Line.**

1-866-925-4419

The segregated school system was designed to destroy Indigenous peoples' culture and has contributed to inter-generational trauma and long-standing racism in Canada. Through the TRCs consultative process survivors were able to tell their own truth, embrace Indigenous oral traditions, and document their stories for future generations to learn from. Additionally, the TRC's Calls to Action outline the path to reconciliation in Canada. Alongside EDI efforts, PGO recognizes the need for taking action toward Truth and Reconciliation. PGO encourages geoscience professionals and geoscience organizations to learn the Truth and take meaningful actions toward Reconciliation.

As discussed in this section, in addition to being an equity-deserving group in the Canadian context, Indigenous persons are rights holders. In developing new projects, early and effective engagement is essential to developing relationships with Indigenous people and reduces the likelihood of risks to local communities and geoscience-informed projects. As outlined in the United Nations' (2007) *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP), Indigenous peoples should be given "free, prior, and informed consent" (p. 23) before being impacted by any development project. Geoscience professionals, therefore, have an important role to play in engaging with Indigenous peoples and taking steps toward Truth and Reconciliation.

2.2 Applicable Legislation

This section contains an overview of applicable legislation which relates to equity, diversity, and inclusion in the geoscience profession and geoscience-employing organizations in Ontario.

2.2.1 Professional Geoscientists Act, 2000

The *Professional Geoscientists Act, 2000* is the profession's governing legislation. The *Professional Geoscientists Act, 2000* as well as the *By-Laws* and *Code of Ethics*, guides the PGO and all who work within the field of geoscience in Ontario to perform their duties. As part of their professional obligations, geoscience professionals should understand their obligations in the *Code of Ethics* and the complaints process as it relates to EDI.

2.2.1.1 Code of Ethics of Professional Geoscientists, O. Reg. 60/01

The *Code of Ethics* applies to professional geoscientists in Ontario. Additionally, the *Code of Ethics* can be used to guide PGO Council, staff, and volunteers, and Geoscientists-in-Training and students intending to work in the profession in their work. The following excerpts from the *Code of Ethics* are relevant to equity, diversity, and inclusion:

2. A professional geoscientist shall be guided in [their] professional conduct by the principle that professional ethics are founded upon integrity, competence and devotion to service and to the advancement of human welfare and by the conviction that [their] actions enhance the dignity and status of the profession.

4. (1) A professional geoscientist shall not compete unfairly with others or compete primarily on the basis of fees without due consideration for other factors to ensure that [their] engagement is based on the merit of the services performed or offered.

5. (1) When acting in a professional capacity, a professional geoscientist shall at all times act with,

(a) good faith, fairness and loyalty to associates, employers, clients, subordinates, employees and other professionals;

(b) due regard to public needs;

(c) devotion to high ideals of personal honour and professional integrity;

(2) A professional geoscientist shall,

(a) regard [their] duty to public safety and welfare as paramount;

(b) endeavour at all times to enhance the public's regard for professional geoscience by promoting awareness and knowledge and by discouraging untrue, unfair or exaggerated statements about it;

(3) A professional geoscientist shall,

(a) act towards other professionals with courtesy and good faith;

(b) demonstrate understanding, professionalism and technical expertise to geoscientists-in-training under [their] supervision;

(d) not maliciously injure the reputation or business of another professional;

(f) give proper credit for professional geoscientific work carried out by others;

(g) uphold the principle of fair compensation for professional geoscientific work;

(h) provide the opportunity, where possible, for the professional development and advancement of associates and subordinates; and

(i) improve the practice of the profession through the interchange of geoscientific information and the sharing of experience.

(4) A professional geoscientist has a duty to co-operate with other professionals with whom [they are] called upon to work.

12. (1) A professional geoscientist shall advise the Registrar of any act or omission of a member that [they] believe to be contrary to this Code.

(2) A breach of this Code constitutes an act of professional misconduct if the breach results in a finding that the member has not engaged in the practice of professional geoscience in accordance with the law or honesty and integrity.

2.2.1.2 Disciplinary Matters – Complaints and Disciplinary Proceedings Relating to the Practice of Professional Geoscience, O. Reg. 258/02

As outlined in section 12 of the *Code of Ethics*, professional geoscientists are obligated to report breaches in the *Code of Ethics* to PGO. The regulations related to disciplinary matters are relevant to persons who are filing a complaint against a PGO member or to members who have had a complaint filed against them. Further details on PGO's formal complaints process are described in section 4.4 of this document.

2.2.2 Ontario Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19

The *Ontario Human Rights Code* outlines rights of "equal treatment with respect to services, goods, and facilities" (section 1), "equal treatment with respect to the occupancy of accommodation" (section 2), "contract on equal terms without discrimination" (section 3), "equal treatment with respect to employment" (section 5 (1)), "right to freedom from harassment in the workplace by the employer or agent of the employer or by another employer" (section 5 (2)), "right to equal treatment with respect to membership in any trade union, trade or occupational association or self-governing profession" (section 6) without discrimination.

Prohibited grounds for discrimination in Ontario are related to race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability. If you believe or others have been discriminated against based on any of the prohibited grounds, you can file a complaint through the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal, further described in section 4.5.

2.2.3 Employment Standards Act, 2000, S.O. 2000, C.41

Despite being prohibited by human rights legislation, women are commonly paid less than men; pay inequity due to gender and ethnicity are well documented in Canada. The geoscience profession is not immune to pay inequities. For example, the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta (APEGA) (2021), conducted a study of their member data and found the gender pay gap started at 1% for new graduates and grew to 11.6% for women in executive roles. Section 42 of the *Employment Standards Act* ensures “equal pay for equal work” and is intended to ensure that people of all genders are paid fairly for completing similar work.

2.2.4 Ontario Pay Equity Act, R.S.O 1990, c. P.7

In addition to the *Employment Standards Act*, Ontario has proactive pay equity legislation — the *Ontario Pay Equity Act* — which aims to “redress systemic gender discrimination in compensation”. In contrast to section 42 of *Employment Standards Act*, the *Ontario Pay Equity Act* is meant to close pay gaps between roles which have been traditionally female-dominated and roles which have been traditionally male-dominated. Additionally, Ontario’s pay equity legislation applies to all private sector employers with 10 or more employees.

2.2.5 Occupational Health and Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. 0.1

Ontario’s *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) outlines expectations for preventing and protecting people’s physical and psychological health and safety. Similar statutes to the OHSA exist across Canada and are increasingly recognizing the importance of psychological health and safety. Psychological health and safety efforts aim to promote well-being and prevent and address psychological health and safety incidents, such as harassment, workplace violence, and bullying. The types of psychological health and safety incidents relevant to equity, diversity, and inclusion will be further described in the next section.

2.3 Types of Inequities

On the 2021 PGO member survey, 52% (n = 162) of respondents indicated they had experienced inequity within their academic or work environment. Of these 162 inequity incidents, 91% of respondents indicated they had experienced discrimination, 78% had experienced exclusion, and 76% had experienced prejudice. Additionally, people described these incidents as being related to gender (sexism), ethnicity (racism), abilities (ableism), age (ageism), language (English was not their first language), and pregnancy (sexism). This section defines and provides examples of various forms of inequities that may occur in geoscience professionals’ workplaces.

2.3.1 Discrimination

As defined by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (2008), discrimination is “any form of unequal treatment based on an *Ontario Human Rights Code* ground, whether imposing extra burdens or denying benefits. It may be intentional or unintentional. It may involve direct actions that are discriminatory on their face, or it may involve rules, practices or procedures that appear neutral, but disadvantage certain groups of people. Discrimination may take obvious forms, or it may happen in very subtle ways.” (page 14).

Types of discrimination outlined by the *Ontario Human Rights Code* may change over time as they are recognized through the court systems. For example, discrimination against someone who is pregnant is considered a form of sex discrimination and discrimination against a person because they are a parent is considered discrimination due to family status. While language is not recognized as a prohibited ground under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, differential treatment towards someone because their first language is French — for example — may still be considered an element or factor in discrimination. See the Ontario Human Rights Commission's website (<https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en>) for more information on types of discrimination.

Examples of discrimination in the geoscience profession include:

- Verbal or written comments about someone based on one or more aspects of their identity which imply differences in ability or value to society, (e.g. “Those people don’t belong here,” or “That was so articulate.”).
- Hiring or assigning work to someone based on one or more aspects of their identity, (e.g. “They won’t want to do field work because they are a mother/father, so we should hire the person without children instead” or denying fieldwork to a woman or persons with a disability because we think it might be difficult to accommodate them).

2.3.2 Harassment

The OHSA defines workplace harassment as “engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought to reasonably be known to be unwelcome”. Harassment is often an escalation of discrimination. The definition of workplace harassment includes workplace sexual harassment and psychological harassment or personal harassment. Additionally, section 1 of OHSA defines workplace sexual harassment as:

- Engaging in a course of vexatious comments or conduct against a worker in a workplace because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, where the course of comments or conduct is known or ought to reasonably be known to be unwelcome, or
- Making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making it is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the worker and the person knows or ought to reasonably know the solicitation or advance is unwelcome.

Examples of harassment in the geoscience profession include:

- Overt verbal comments about someone based on one or more aspects of their identity, (e.g. racist, sexist, or homophobic comments).
- Displaying or circulating offensive pictures or videos (e.g. displaying calendars of naked women or pornographic material in the workplace).
- Touching an individual without their express consent.

2.3.3 Bullying

Bullying is a form of workplace harassment that is often overt, repeating, and targets one or more individuals. Bullying results in a psychologically unsafe or toxic work environment as individuals may be isolated from the rest of the group. Bullying can escalate to instances of workplace violence and contribute to employee turnover. The *Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act* defines workplace violence as “the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker.”

Examples of bullying in the geoscience profession include:

- Sending unsolicited texts or emails,
- Spreading rumours about an individual or individuals,
- Targeting an individual or individuals with pranks or jokes.

2.3.4 Bias

Bias is favouring or disliking one thing over another. Our preferences and biases are shaped by our experiences, our cultures, our values, and the messages that we have received throughout our lifetime. Biases help us make automatic decisions which aim to keep us safe. Unfortunately, we may act on these biases in our interactions with others in ways that may be harmful, discriminatory, or exclusionary. We may also unconsciously use stereotypes — generalizations about others — to make small decisions throughout our day in ways that may be harmful or discriminatory. The impact of these small or big decisions can accumulate into much bigger impacts in workplace systems. While we might believe our workplaces and the profession are meritocracies, there may well be embedded biases which advantage some people over others. For this reason, meritocracy has been called a myth (King, 2022). As an example, the gender pay gap documented by the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta (APEGA) (2021) starts small early in a professional’s career and continues to increase until retirement. Additionally, small decisions on hiring, work allocation, and training or networking opportunities throughout a person’s career may limit some professionals and advantage others. These limitations are not necessarily based on differences in competencies or expertise — which are valued in a meritocratic system — but are frequently attributed to identity factors (i.e. gender, ethnicity, ability) and embedded biases. As a result, the

leaders in many organizations are not representative of the communities in which we live and work (McKinsey & Company & LeanIn.Org, 2022).

2.3.5 Microaggressions

Microaggressions are brief, common, verbal or non-verbal discriminatory slights or insults which are intentionally or unintentionally directed toward others (Nadal et al., 2013). Those from underrepresented groups experience microaggressions frequently and these issues are frequently not addressed or reported. Despite the name, ‘micro’, these experiences can have longstanding traumatic impacts. Nadal et al. (2013) describe how microaggressions can take different forms:

- **Micro-assaults** are ‘overt-isms’ (e.g. sexism, racism, ageism), including intentional verbal and non-verbal offences. For example, sexist, racist, or homophobic jokes or intentional exclusion of individuals based on their identity are micro-assaults.
- **Micro-insults** are unintentional negative messages about different groups. An example would be to tell someone, “I was surprised at how articulate you were in your presentation.”
- **Micro-invalidations** minimize the experiences and feelings of others. Gaslighting would be a form of micro-invalidation. An example would be to tell someone they are being too sensitive if they bring up a concern.

Microaggressions are likely the most frequently occurring form of inequity that you may notice in your workplace. By learning ways to address microaggressions you can prevent more serious occurrences of inequity, such as discrimination, harassment, bullying, or workplace violence (Peltier-Huntley, 2022).

2.3.6 Lateral Violence

Lateral violence occurs between members of marginalized, equity-deserving, or underrepresented groups. Lateral violence can be used by an aggressor — often one who shares a common aspect of their identity with their target — to gain power over another individual. For example, a Latino man who harasses another Latino man is committing lateral violence. Lateral violence may appear as the various forms of inequities described above, including bias, microaggressions, discrimination, harassment, or bullying.

3 Actions to Foster EDI

Many studies have shown that organizations which reflect the diversity — or are representative — of their local population or communities are more profitable, safer, and better places to work. Internationally, the role of regulating bodies, including financial firms, professional regulators, governments, and the governance of private and not-for-profit organizations is shifting towards a representation that is similar to the communities in

which they operate. In Canada, this trend started with financial institutions and the federal government following the establishment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. Additionally, social movements such as Black Lives Matter, the #MeToo movement, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, have also raised awareness of social challenges to individuals and organizations within Canadian society. Regulatory associations, such as members of the Canadian Network of Agencies for Regulation are increasingly discussing their roles and strategies to embed EDI and take actions toward Truth and Reconciliation within regulators' mandates. Furthermore, section 15(2) in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, established in the constitution in 1982, allows organizations to collect and analyze data to ensure that everyone has the same equitable access and opportunities to employment opportunities, pay, and advancement within their careers.

3.1 Geoscience Organizations' Roles and Responsibilities

PGO encourages geoscience organizations to take an active role in fostering EDI and taking action toward Truth and Reconciliation. Additionally, geoscience organizations should familiarize themselves with the Calls for Justice resulting from the [National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#) as they pertain to how geoscience professionals engage with and are perceived in Indigenous communities. To support organizations in building respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples, the Mining Association of Canada (MAC) has developed the [Towards Sustainable Mining: Indigenous and Community Relations Protocol](#). Additionally, in 2023 MAC released [Towards Sustainable Mining](#) protocols related to EDI and psychological safety and respectful workplaces.

As outlined in various legislation listed in section 2.2, geoscience organizations in Ontario have statutory responsibilities to ensure a workplace free of discrimination and harassment, to protect human rights, and to eliminate pay inequities. Leaders within geoscience organizations may have the role and responsibility to create policies, programs, and strategies which meet the minimum requirements outlined in various laws or statutes and mitigate potential instances of bias. Organizations can employ the support of qualified experts to help with defining the challenges within their organizations and co-create strategies and actions to support fostering EDI and taking actions toward Truth and Reconciliation.

As outlined in the OHSA, employers are required to have a Workplace Violence Policy and Program and a Workplace Harassment Policy and Program. For more details on creating policies and programs to prevent workplace violence and harassment, see the Ministry of Labour's Health and Safety Guidelines on [Workplace Violence and Harassment: Understanding the Law](#).

In line with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, the Ontario Human Rights Commission recommends that employers have a human rights strategy which includes:

- A plan for preventing, reviewing, and removing barriers,

- Anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies,
- An internal complaints procedure,
- An accommodation policy and procedure, and
- An education and training program.

For more details on creating a human rights strategy as described above, see Ontario Human Rights Commission's [Policy Primer: Guide to Developing Human Rights Policies and Procedures](#).

[In line with human rights legislation, geoscience organizations should examine systems, policies, and programs for instances of potential bias which may occur between when an employee is hired and they retire. For example, hiring practices can be examined to ensure job descriptions include only relevant hiring criteria and make use of inclusive language. Next, job posting processes can be reviewed to ensure they are in fact reaching a representative applicant pool. Finally, interviewers should be aware of their own unconscious biases, including tendencies towards affinity biases — where we tend to prefer people who are like us. Interviewer biases can be mitigated by adopting a structured interview format which ensures all candidates are evaluated similarly.](#)

Employers may need to consider pay equity and/or equal pay for equal work in their organization. Ontario's *Pay Equity Act* may apply to geoscience employers who have 10 or more employees and the *Employment Standards Act* will apply to all to all Ontario employers. Additionally, the principles of pay equity and equal pay for equal work can be used to reduce systemic biases in any compensation system. For more information on pay equity, see the Pay Equity Office's [Guide to Understanding the Pay Equity Act and Pay Equity vs Equal Pay for Equal Work](#).

3.2 Geoscience Professionals' Roles and Responsibilities

PGO encourages geoscience professionals to adopt practices which foster EDI — as described in this guideline — and Truth, Reconciliation, and Justice — in line with recommendations from the TRC Calls to Action and the MMIWG Calls for Justice. To support their rights described in the previous sections, geoscience professionals should be familiar with their employer's policies and programs related to human rights, workplace accommodations, workplace occupational health and safety, and pay equity. Finally, geoscience professionals have professional obligations under *The Professional Geoscientists Act* described in section 2.2 which are directly related to EDI.

As a result of these various statutes, geoscience professionals have the right, among other things, to request workplace accommodations, have the right to be paid fairly, and have a safe workplace where they are treated fairly. Geoscience professionals should familiarize themselves with their workplace policies and programs, so they are aware of how to request workplace accommodations or raise concerns about inequities. More details about reporting inequities are included in section 4.

In relation to EDI and Truth and Reconciliation, as summarized in section 2.2.1.1 of this document, professional geoscientists, when acting in a professional capacity, must, among other things:

- Consider public safety and welfare as paramount (section 5(2a) of the *Code of Ethics*),
- Uphold the dignity and status of the profession (section 2 of the *Code of Ethics*), and
- Report misconduct of other members who violate the *Code of Ethics*, to the Registrar (section 12 of the *Code of Ethics*).

As part of their mandatory continuing professional development program, geoscience professionals can adopt a practice of fostering inclusion, also known as allyship. Allyship is a practice where those with relative privilege and power support those who have been historically marginalized. Researchers distinguish allyship behaviours as being either reactive or proactive (De Souza & Schmader, 2022). Reactive allyship occurs in the moment in response, often in response to a form of inequity described in section 0. Examples of reactive allyship include speaking up about an offensive joke or ensuring a peer is given credit for their ideas. Conversely, proactive allyship involves planned actions which support those from underrepresented groups to achieve a sense of belonging, improve workplace psychological safety, or achieve their full potential as a professional. Examples of proactive allyship include mentoring a geoscientist-in-training from an underrepresented group or ensuring adequate toilet facilities are available during fieldwork. Specific examples of allyship actions are included in Table 1. In reviewing the table, consider ways to seek out the perspectives of others to understand their needs and experiences in different work environments.

Table 1: *Allyship Examples in Different Work Environments*

Work Environment	Reactive Allyship	Proactive Allyship
<p>In Offices</p> <p><i>Key challenge: Differences in work allocation or opportunities may prevent career advancement for underrepresented individuals</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure people receive credit for their ideas by highlighting their contributions and accomplishments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor a professional from an underrepresented group • Take bystander awareness training to be prepared for reactive allyship opportunities
<p>Field or Site Work</p> <p><i>Key challenge: Lack of adequate toilet facilities in remote locations</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a safe, private, clean place for fellow workers to relieve themselves and/or change menstrual products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for washroom access as part of work planning and communicate expectations on available

Work Environment	Reactive Allyship	Proactive Allyship
		facilities to the team ahead of time
<p>In Communities</p> <p><i>Key challenge: Lack of inclusive or psychologically safe environment for some</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared to act as an active bystander and speak up in situations that are unsafe or discriminatory to peers or community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include psychological safety considerations to protect peers and community members in community interactions and remote/site work which includes an escalation plan
<p>In General Communication</p> <p><i>Key challenge: Inclusive language is not being used or people feel uncomfortable engaging in EDI discussions</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be an active bystander and follow up with those who use exclusive or offensive language • Correct a misuse of someone’s pronouns • Defending coworkers who receive unwanted comments on how they are dressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use inclusive greetings such as “folks” or “all” rather than “guys” or “gentlemen” • Use the term partner rather than wife/girlfriend/ or husband/boyfriend • Share your pronouns in your email signature and video conference platforms
<p>Online</p> <p><i>Key challenge: Flexible work is valued less than in-person work</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not make assumptions and instead be curious about others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquire about your team members’ needs and working preferences

4 Reporting

4.1 Overview

Geoscience professionals should know how and when to document and report instances of inequity. While many inequity incidents can be addressed using bystander interventions — such as speaking up in the moment or by confronting those involved shortly afterwards — there can be benefits to formally documenting and reporting inequities. Similar to physical health and safety incidents, recording and reporting inequities which pose a risk to psychological safety and well-being can prevent a reoccurrence or the occurrence of more serious incidents. What may start as unchecked bias can escalate into more harmful instances of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or workplace violence. Learning how to recognize and safely speak up as an active bystander promotes a psychologically safe workplace. Additionally, as a witness, you may be able to provide important evidence about the inequity incident that supports resolution and justice for the receiver.

Past studies have shown that instances of inequities are largely underreported and as a result go largely unaddressed. Research by Peltier-Huntley (2022) found that as few as 22% of discrimination and harassment incidents in the Canadian mining industry were formally reported. Additionally, a report by Rio Tinto and Elizabeth Broderick & Co. (2022) found that Rio Tinto employees at the receiving end of workplace discrimination and harassment incidents were disproportionately from underrepresented groups, such as women and Indigenous peoples. Additionally, previous studies have found that those from underrepresented groups experience less psychological safety in their workplaces (Thorpe-Moscon & Ohm, 2021) and therefore may be less likely to speak up about inequities they are experiencing.

4.2 Documenting Inequities

After witnessing or experiencing an inequity incident you should document what occurred. This documentation can be used as evidence to support a formal complaint which could be submitted to an employer, PGO, or the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal. Even if you or the person who was on the receiving end of the incident do not want to formally submit the complaint right away, you can still complete the documentation step. You can ask anyone who may have witnessed or supported the receiver directly after the incident to provide supporting documentation. As outlined in the *Code of Ethics* if the person or persons who are committing the discrimination or harassment incident are geoscience professionals you, as a professional geoscientist, are obligated to advise the Registrar (PGO) of the breach to the *Code of Ethics*.

As comprehensively as possible you should document the following information:

- What happened
 - Describe the incident (i.e. *The harasser* said or did (what) to *the receiver*).
 - What impact did the incident have on the receiver or others involved (e.g. “I noticed that *the receiver* was upset following the incident,” or “I was shocked at what had just happened and froze”).
 - Did anything else happen directly after the incident (e.g. “I checked on *the receiver* to see how they were doing,” or “I went to see a co-worker for support”).
- When did the incident occur — include both date and time.
- Who was involved in the incident (e.g. receiver, harasser, bystander/witness) and what are their roles (e.g. geoscience professional, client, supervisor, contractor, community member).
 - You may also want to record the contact information, employer or other details that can support contacting witnesses in the future.
- Where did the incident occur — include an address and/or description of the place or location.
- Retain or document any other forms of evidence (e.g. photographs, videos, emails, screenshots of text messages, etc.).

Documentation can be recorded in a journal, logbook, or electronically in an email or document. If you are concerned the incident may impact your future employment, you may want to retain a copy of your documentation personally.

4.3 Making a Formal Complaint within Geoscience Organizations

As outlined in section 3.1, geoscience organizations or employers in Ontario need to have a number of policies which aim to prevent and provide resolution to workplace inequities. If a geoscientist experiences a form of inequity within their workplace, — such as overhearing a racist comment made by a co-worker — they can submit a formal complaint to their employer.

Due to the low rate of formal reporting, employees should be encouraged to raise formal complaints. If formal complaints are not submitted, the problems could persist, and more people may be negatively impacted. To encourage reporting, employees should be treated using a trauma-informed approach when they raise a formal complaint. Using a trauma-informed approach means assuming the receiver has experienced psychological harm and that efforts should be made to minimize creating any additional psychological harm. Therefore, a goal of the reporting process should be to prevent further psychological harm to the receiver and/or those who witnessed the incident, so they are psychologically safe and supported. Establishing trust and offering options for reporting are important to creating psychological safety. As part of the formal complaints process, employers should provide more than one avenue for employees to raise a formal complaint. For example, an employer could provide access to an anonymous reporting hotline or third-party legal resource, or direct employees to raise complaints to either their supervisor, a senior leader or a human resource professional.

Remember when experiencing or re-living trauma people may freeze, flee, or fight. As a result of experiencing psychological harm, people's memories of the events may be inconsistent and how they may have reacted during or after the event may seem out of character. By adopting a trauma-informed approach the receiver should be made to feel safe and supported, and you should work to establish trust with them.

4.4 Making a Formal Complaint to PGO

PGO has established a guideline to support members or members of the public with filing a formal complaint about Professional Geoscientists in Ontario. As outlined in the guideline, complainants can inquire about their concerns with PGO before filing a formal complaint. Visit PGO's [Report a Registered Geoscientist](#) for more information.

Once the formal complaint process has been initiated with PGO, there are up to four stages in the process:

1. Filing of the complaint with the Registrar
2. Evaluation, investigation and review of the complaint by the PGO Complaints Committee

3. Decision by the Complaints Committee whether the complaint can be addressed at this stage, is dismissed, or sent to the Discipline Committee
4. If the matter is sent to the Discipline Committee, then a determination is made on whether disciplinary steps are to be administered by PGO.

PGO's complaint system allows for complainants to remain anonymous, however, those that provide contact details can expect their information to remain confidential up to the point that a public hearing occurs. The Complaints Committee and Discipline Committee members are generally from diverse identities and the composition will change based on the nature of the complaint and the required knowledge base to review the complaint.

For more information about how to file a complaint with PGO visit <https://www.pgo.ca/protecting-the-public/report-a-geoscientist#>.

4.5 Making a Formal Complaint to the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal

If the incident occurred in Ontario, then a formal complaint can be filed through Ontario's Human Rights System. If the incident occurred in another jurisdiction a complainant should access the human rights system of that federal, provincial, or territorial jurisdiction. [Ontario's Human Rights System](#) consists of:

- The Ontario Human Rights Commission who promotes and provides proactive support to prevent human rights incidents, such as education and policies.
- The Human Rights Legal Support Centre who provides legal support to those that have experienced discrimination under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.
- The Ontario Human Rights Tribunal who accepts and decides on formal complaints.

Human Rights complaints in Ontario must be filed within 1 year of the incident or within 1 year of the last incidents if there were multiple occurrences.

5 Additional Resources

As organizations and individuals work to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion within the Ontario geoscience profession and take actions toward Truth and Reconciliation, it can be helpful to understand the actions geoscience regulators and associations are taking in these areas. These additional resources will support professionals and geoscience organizations in taking the next steps on their EDI Journey:

- [ACEC-BC's Allyship Guidelines](#)
- [Canadian Centre for Women in Science, Engineering, Trades and Technology \(WinSETT\)](#)
- [Engineers Canada's Managing transitions: Before, during and after leave](#)
- [Ethical Considerations in the Professional Practise of Geoscience](#)

- [Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Guidance for Staff and Volunteers of Geoscience Canada](#)
- [Ontario Human Rights Legal Support Centre](#)
- [Sexual Harassment and Assault Resource Exchange \(SHARE\)](#)
- [Women in Geoscience Canada](#) is a not-for-profit organization that advocates for increased gender balance in geology, geophysics, and related disciplines.

For more information on PGO's initiative to encourage and promote diversity and inclusion within the profession visit <https://www.pgo.ca/diversity-inclusion>.

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7 Contributors and version control

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7.1 Contributors

Name	Role	Version
Prairie Catalyst Consulting	Author	V1.0

7.2 Version Control

Version	Date	Issue Type	Filename	Description
V1.0	24-Nov-2023	For Use	PGO EDI PPG - Rev V1.0 – 24-Nov-2023	Finalized