FACULTY OF MEDICINE & DENTISTRY (FoMD)
Anti-Racism Policy

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Office of Accountability:	Vice Dean, Faculty Affairs
Office of Administrative Responsibility:	Vice Dean, Faculty Affairs
Approver:	Dean's Executive Committee and Department Chairs
Scope:	Compliance with this FoMD policy extends to all members of the FoMD including academic staff, support staff, clinical faculty, learners.

Overview

Racism and microaggressions are a commonplace, endemic aspect of our society. They manifest systemically, through exclusionary and discriminatory institutional practices and interpersonally, through everyday experiences affecting individuals. The historical legacies of racism in academia and healthcare continue to shape these institutions today, producing lasting inequities that affect both patients and practitioners (Boyer, 2017).

The impacts of anti-Indigenous racism experienced by First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples in Canada are profound and multi-faceted. It frequently presents as stereotyping, neglect, and systemic barriers that exclude Indigenous peoples from accessing care, leading to poorer health outcomes (Kolopenuk, 2024). This policy acknowledges these realities as fundamental to fostering equity, cultural safety and the dismantling of structural racism in academic and clinical environments.

The Public Health Agency of Canada identifies racism as a determinant of health (PHAC, 2020) and documents clear disparities between racialized Canadians, including Indigenous peoples, and non-racialized populations. Racialized Canadians experience higher rates of chronic disease, such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease, elevated cause-specific mortality, and report increased chronic stress and poor self-rated health (PHAC, 2022; Levy, 2013; Tjepkema et al., 2023).

Research shows racist ideals perpetuated in medical education and institutions contribute to biased clinical practice patterns among graduates, reinforcing systemic inequities and compromising equitable patient care (Hoffman et al., 2016).

In response to these realities, the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry (FoMD) supports a policy that adequately addresses racism in our learning and working environments, for the betterment of our community and the patients we serve.

Purpose

The Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry (FoMD) expects all members of its community to engage in respectful and appropriate behavior in all faculty-related activities. This policy aims to create and maintain work and learning environments free from racism.

The FoMD is committed to protecting and advancing the health, well-being, security and inclusion of groups marginalized within Canada, as well as all members of our diverse community regardless of citizenship or immigration status. This includes individuals and groups who experience racism and related forms of discrimination, including but not limited to:

- Indigenous Peoples within the Canadian context (*as defined by Sec 35(2) of the Constitution Act, 1982);
- Black individuals and communities who have been marginalized and excluded in Canada.
- Racialized and other individuals and groups affected by racism recognizing the diversity of ethnicities, cultures, racial identities, intersectional identities and colonial histories within our community.

The FoMD affirms that all members share responsibility in upholding this policy and fostering accountability. The FoMD commits to ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement to ensure the effectiveness of its anti-racism efforts.

The FoMD commits to cultivating a culture of respect where racism has no place.

Policy

The Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry (FoMD) does not tolerate racism. To combat and eliminate all forms of racism, FoMD is committed to:

- Maintaining a safe, confidential, and impartial mechanism for all members of the FoMD community to disclose concerns and make inquiries related to this policy.
- Providing education and mentorship for individuals who have caused harm, aimed at fostering accountability and growth.
- Raising awareness about racism through targeted educational programs for learners, faculty, and staff.
- Monitoring existing and new policies, procedures, and practices for unintended racial bias and inequities.
- Working collaboratively with clinical affiliates and relevant external organizations to identify and remove systemic barriers and promote inclusive clinical learning environments
- Offering training and resources (e.g. bystander intervention training) for all members of the FOMD community to recognize, safely intervene, and challenge instances of racism and microaggressions, where it is safe to do so.
- Providing support for individuals who have experienced racism.
- Promoting the creation of safe and respectful spaces for open dialogue and reflection on experiences of racism that centralize the voices and experiences of racialized FoMD members. This dialogue will help to facilitate healing and contribute to positive culture change across FoMD and clinical environments.

- Systematically collecting and analyzing data related to reports of racism, resolution outcomes, participation in educational programs, and feedback from FoMD community members.
- Transparently reporting progress on anti-racism goals periodically to foster accountability and community trust.
- Supporting research and scholarship on anti-racism initiatives within the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry to inform evidence-based approaches.
- Committing to updating this policy and associated procedures and programs regularly to respond to evolving understanding and best practices in anti-racism.

FoMD recognizes that eliminating racism is a dynamic, long-term goal that requires sustained effort, self-reflection, and community engagement to create lasting institutional change.

Reporting

All FoMD members are encouraged to report witnessed racism incidents. Where safe and appropriate, members are encouraged to speak up against racism and microaggressions when and where they occur. This aligns with the FoMD commitment to greater access, community and belonging in our clinical and academic spaces.

Concerns about racism can be reported in many ways:

- The FoMD has a 'no wrong door' approach. Racism incidents can be reported to any one of several sources such as a manager, supervisor, course coordinator, Department Chair, teacher or mentor, the Chief Wellness Officer, or for learners the Office of Advocacy & Wellbeing.
- Reports can be submitted via the FoMD Professionalism Online Reporting System - available for named and confidential or anonymous reports.
- Reports can be made to the University of Alberta Office of Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights.
- Where applicable, concerns may be reported to the Alberta Human Rights Commission

Individuals contacted through the any door approach are encouraged to provide a psychologically safe reception, supporting the reporter's agency in deciding what information to share. Throughout the reporting process, disclosers will be considered the primary decision-makers in matters pertaining to themselves and will be informed of all available options, within the boundaries of legal, safety, and policy obligations.

Management Responsibilities

Faculty leaders and supervisors hold a responsibility to participate in system-wide change that addresses racism. When a racism concern is brought forward, appropriate measures will be employed, including education and remediation. The choice of action will be tailored to the seriousness, frequency, and impact of the behavior. Leaders will receive support to implement educational and remedial measures effectively. Where warranted, (for example, egregious conduct or failed remediation) the appropriate university authorities will be notified for investigation and potential disciplinary action.

Privacy/Confidentiality

Privacy and confidentiality are essential for creating an environment where those who have experienced racism feel safe disclosing their experiences. Privacy and confidentiality will be protected to the greatest extent possible. However, limitations exist, where:

a) There is a likely risk of imminent and serious harm to self or others;
b) There is a legal proceeding involving the university;
c) Reporting or action is required or authorized by law.

Statement against retaliation

Retaliation against any person involved in a disclosure or concern (including complainant, witnesses and/or other person) related to racism is prohibited. The Faculty will refer all reports of retaliation to the appropriate university office and/or external organizations (such as professional colleges, associations, provincial health agencies, etc.) for investigation and resolution according to established complaints processes.

Definitions

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only, with no implied or intended institution-wide use.	
Disclosure	Any person within the scope of this policy who discloses having been subjected to or witnessed racism.
Race	A social construct used to classify people into different groups based upon general external physical characteristics such as colour of skin, hair texture, stature, and facial features.
Racism	A system in which one group of people exercises power over another group on the basis of “race.” It includes the belief in the inherent superiority and dominance of one “race” over all others. (Henry & Tator, 2006, p. 352). Racism takes several forms and often works in tandem with at least one other form of racism to reinforce racist ideas, behaviors, and policies. Racism can also include microaggressions.
Individual racism	Refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism in conscious and unconscious ways. Some of the cultural narrative about racism typically focuses on individual racism and fails to recognize systemic racism. Example: Believing in the superiority of white people, not hiring a person of colour because “something doesn’t feel right,” or telling a racist joke.
Interpersonal racism	Occurs between individuals. These are public expressions of racism, often involving slurs, biases, or hateful words or actions
Institutional racism	Occurs within an organization. These are discriminatory treatments, unfair policies, or biased practices based on race that result in

	inequitable outcomes for whites over people of color and extend considerably beyond prejudice. These institutional policies often never mention any racial group, but the outcome results in advantages for the dominant group. Example: Recognizing clinical signs in skin (jaundice, cyanosis, pallor, rashes, inflammation, bruising), for example, can be very difficult if the patient is dark skinned and the doctor has never been trained to recognize these signs in anything but light skin.
Structural racism	The overarching system of racism across institutions and society perpetuates systemic barriers that advantage white people while producing structural disadvantages for Indigenous, Black, and other racialized communities. Example: News and entertainment media in Canada have historically overrepresented Black, Indigenous, and other racialized communities in crime reporting, reinforcing harmful stereotypes (from Media Smarts). The creation of specific MD admissions pathways for Indigenous and Black students within medical faculties represents an institutional effort to address systemic barriers in access to medical education.
Microaggressions	**"***Microaggressions are the everyday, subtle, intentional — and oftentimes unintentional — interactions or behaviors that communicate some sort of bias toward historically marginalized groups [based on race, national origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, etc.] The difference between microaggressions and overt discrimination or macroaggressions, is that people who commit microaggressions might not even be aware of them*." (Kevin Nadal, professor of Psychology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice) Example: Mistaking a person of colour for a service worker, asking a person of colour "Where are you from" or "Where were you born".

Related documents:
University of Alberta Discrimination & Harassment Policy
AHS Anti-Racism Position Statement
Covenant Health Diversity & Inclusion

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