

The Collection and Use of Student Data on

# RACE, ETHNICITY & ANCESTRY (REA)



**A framework to guide the collection and use of student data on race, ethnicity, and ancestry to support equity, diversity, and inclusion in BC public post-secondary institutions.**

*This infographic is based on a report prepared by the Planning and Institutional Research Office University of British Columbia in collaboration with DPM Research, for the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT), EducationPlannerBC (EPBC), and the British Columbia Registrars Association (BCRA). This infographic and the related report are available at <https://www.bccat.ca/intro/REASStudentData>.*

## INTRODUCTION

This research project addresses a systemic lack of disaggregated demographic data at BC public post-secondary institutions (PSIs); currently, none of the participating BC PSIs included questions about race, ethnicity, and ancestry (REA) at the time of application or registration. As REA data are necessary for the implementation, review, and continual improvement of institutional admissions policies and practices, this project was designed to provide a cross-sectional review of REA data collection practices at PSIs and in related sectors in Canada.

## TERMINOLOGY

### RACE

A social construct used to categorize people that is based on observable traits (skin colour, hair type, facial features, etc.)

### ETHNICITY

Shared cultural affiliations (language, religion, geographic origin, etc.): tied to multiple factors and highly subjective

### ANCESTRY

A term connected to land-based identities ("origin") and a self-assessment of one's ethnic/cultural heritage; ancestry data are not considered a reliable measure for service needs on their own (due to ambiguous references/timeframes) and should be complemented with other variables such as country of birth, language, etc.

# WHY COLLECT REA DATA?



## BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

- Provide better/more targeted services
- Remove barriers to access

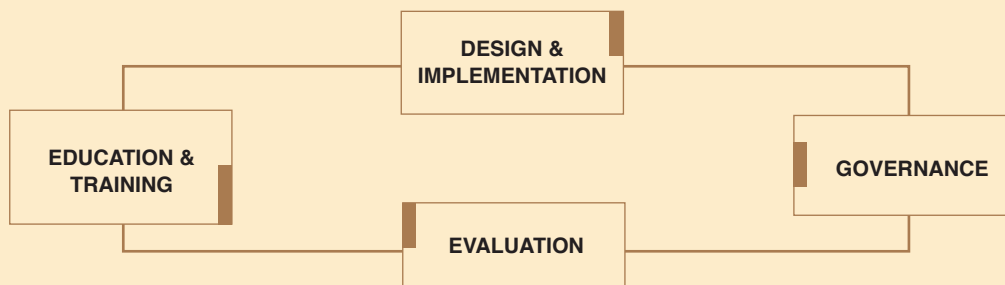


## BENEFITS TO PSIs

- Improve institutional reporting and quality assessment/improvement
- Inform institutional planning
- Undertake communications/outreach activities
- Support EDI strategies or policies

## EDI FRAMEWORK FOR THE COLLECTION AND USE OF STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

*This comprehensive framework is designed to guide PSIs in the development of institutional processes and tools to collect and use student demographic data in ways that help ensure an equitable, inclusive, and just environment for all communities and individuals.*



**Proactive transparency:** being transparent about how and why data is being collected and used



**Shared responsibility:** joint development and ownership of solutions with the community



**Intersectionality:** in creating solutions, understanding how dimensions of identity interact in complex ways



**Goal/outcome-oriented:** ensuring that data is not collected “for data’s sake”



**Adaptability:** approaching data collection in a forward-looking way that accommodates future changes

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

# PRIORITY ACTIONS

## DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION



Identify intended uses of the data



Ensure a participative approach in design and implementation



Design and implement a communication strategy

## GOVERNANCE



Build individual and systemic capacity for respectful engagement in data collection and reporting



Identify the rules, processes, and role delegations for these data



Ensure use of data does not cause further harm

## EDUCATION/TRAINING



Offer opportunities for all to receive education, training and be involved in dialogue



Develop training curriculum adapted to the institution's circumstances



Ensure that training is reviewed and available on a recurring basis

## EVALUATION



Identify benefits to students

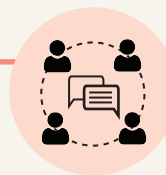


Document, document, document



Continually assess and collect feedback

# POSSIBLE RISKS AND HOW TO MITIGATE THEM:



## PUSHBACK FROM COMMUNITY

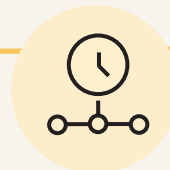
- Take a consultative, participative approach and ensure engagement with key stakeholders throughout all stages of decision-making
- Use transparent communications

## EXTENDED TIMELINES AND DELAYS

- Allocate sufficient time to ensure collaboration
- Be flexible in planned timelines where possible

## COLLECTING INCOMPLETE DATA

- Always offer “Prefer not to answer” option to participants
- Build trust with participants: communicate uses and benefits of the data; assure participants that they need not fear unintended consequences



## RESPECTING PRIVACY

- Build data governance policies in a way that respects privacy
- Be transparent about data use and access, and ensure that students grant permission for data use



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