

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Reconciliation and Accessibility (EDIRA) Policy

Policy Number: G-02.04.00	Next Review Date: 2027
Approved by: NSRDDA Board	Approval Date: February 8, 2026

1. Purpose

The Nova Scotia Regulator of Dentistry and Dental Assisting (NSRDDA) recognizes the need for equity, diversity, inclusion, reconciliation, and accessibility in its discussions and decision-making. It is vital that the values of all Nova Scotians be considered when decisions about their oral health are being discussed.

This policy affirms the NSRDDA's commitment to fostering a respectful, inclusive, and accessible environment where all individuals feel valued and supported. This policy sets out the Regulator's approach to equity, diversity, inclusion, reconciliation, and accessibility (EDIRA), and reflects the organization's belief that safe, fair, and culturally aware regulation benefits everyone.

This policy is intended to guide the NSRDDA's efforts as it continues learning, listening and adapting its practices to better serve the public and support the professionals we regulate.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Board and Committee members
- All employees and contractors
- All regulatory activities (e.g., registration, complaints, investigations, adjudication, quality assurance and practice review)
- Organizational policies, procedures, programs, communications, and services
- Interactions with registrants, applicants, patients, the public, Indigenous communities and equity-deserving groups

3. Definitions

To help ground our shared understanding, the NSRDDA uses the following definitions:

- **Equity:** Ensuring everyone has fair access, treatment, and opportunity by identifying and removing barriers that may disadvantage some individuals or groups.
- **Diversity:** Recognizing and valuing the many ways people differ, including their identities, experiences, perspectives, and contributions.
- **Inclusion:** Fostering a sense of belonging where all individuals feel respected, valued, and able to fully participate and contribute.

- **Reconciliation:** Acknowledging and responding to the ongoing impacts of colonialism and working toward respectful and reciprocal relationships with Indigenous Peoples, in keeping with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action.
- **Accessibility:** Taking steps to make sure everyone can access or participate in our services, spaces, and decision-making processes – regardless of ability or circumstance.

4. Guiding Principles

The following principles reflect the values and intentions that guide our approach to EDIRA:

- **Commitment to Fairness and Safety:** Fostering equity and inclusion supports public safety and helps ensure that our regulatory processes are respectful and effective for all.
- **Learning and Reflection:** EDIRA-related work is a journey – the Regulator is committed to learning, listening, and evolving its practices with humility and openness.
- **Respect for Diversity:** We value the richness that diverse lived experiences, perspectives, and identities bring to our organization and our decision-making.
- **Cultural Responsiveness:** Our organization strives to be aware of and responsive to different cultures, contexts and lived realities, and to ensure our work does not unintentionally exclude or harm.
- **Designing for Accessibility:** The NSRDDA will aim to consider a wide range of needs and experiences when developing its services, policies and communications.
- **Reconciliation as Relationship-Building:** The NSRDDA is committed to building respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples and acting on its responsibilities as part of reconciliation.
- **Collaboration for Impact:** The NSRDDA recognizes that advancing EDIRA requires collaboration. We will work with staff, registrants, patients, Indigenous communities, and other partners to identify barriers, share insights, develop solutions, and strengthen our regulatory practices where needed.

5. The Regulator's Commitments

To bring these principles into action, the NSRDDA commits to the following:

A. In Governance and Leadership

- The Regulator will incorporate EDIRA into its strategic plan and decision-making frameworks.
- The Board and Committees will engage in learning and reflection to strengthen inclusive governance.
- An EDIRA Committee of the Board will provide advice and support to help the organization's progress.

B. In Regulatory Practice

- The NSRDDA will apply an equity lens to its policies and processes, looking for opportunities to make them more inclusive, accessible, and fair.

- The Regulator will explore ways to support culturally safe, trauma-informed, and bias-aware approaches in its regulatory functions.

C. In Stakeholder Engagement

- The NSRDDA will work (in collaboration with the Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network when appropriate) to create respectful and welcoming opportunities for registrants, members of the public, and equity-deserving communities to share their experiences and perspectives.

D. In Organizational Culture

- The NSRDDA will foster a work environment where all staff and volunteers feel valued, supported and able to contribute meaningfully.
- The Regulator will provide learning opportunities to build awareness and confidence around EDIRA-related topics, including anti-racism, cultural safety, and accessibility.

E. In Evidence and Accountability

- The NSRDDA will take steps to understand where gaps and barriers exist, including through respectful and ethical use of data and feedback.
- The NSRDDA will share its progress with the Board and community in a spirit of transparency and continuous improvement.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Who	Responsibility
Board	• Providing leadership, setting the tone, and ensuring this policy is integrated into the Regulator's strategic direction. • Understanding the value and impact of having a diverse Board when dealing with oral health matters of the public. • Supporting the NSRDDA's commitment to promoting EDIRA in all functions of the organization. • Supporting and empowering all voices of the Board. • Continually looking for opportunities for personal and professional growth relating to EDIRA • Being open to conversations that address EDIRA issues or personal biases they may hold consciously or unconsciously. • Encouraging individuals from all backgrounds to consider nomination to the Board.
EDIRA Committee	• Supporting and advising the Board on implementation, progress, and opportunities for improvement. • See the EDIRA Committee's Terms of Reference

Registrar	• Ensuring the organization has the tools, supports, and resources to implement this policy.
Staff and Committees	• Understanding the value and impact of having a diverse staff and committee membership when dealing with oral health matters for both the public and dental professionals. • Supporting the NSRDDA's commitment to promoting EDIRA in all functions of the organization. • Embedding inclusive, equitable, and accessible approaches into day-to-day work. • Maintaining a work culture that promotes EDIRA; this includes supporting and empowering all voices of the Committees. • Continually looking for opportunities for personal and professional growth related to EDIRA. • Being open to conversations that address EDIRA issues or personal biases they may hold consciously or unconsciously. • Incorporating EDIRA best practices in recruiting for all positions. • Conducting themselves, whether within or outside of the office premises, in a manner that aligns with and reflects the principles outlined in this policy.
All Individuals	• Contributing to a respectful and inclusive culture through personal learning and actions.

7. EDIRA Update

The NSRDDA is committed to tracking its progress and adjusting as it goes. Each year, an EDIRA update will be presented to the Board, including highlights, challenges, and areas for continued focus.

8. Monitoring and Policy Review

The Chair of the EDIRA Committee and the Registrar will ensure that this policy is reviewed in accordance with the Board's policy review cycle or as required by significant operational or environmental changes.

9. Accountability

The Chair of the EDIRA Committee and the Registrar are accountable for ensuring compliance with this policy.