# Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Reconciliation and Accessibility (EDIRA) Committee – Terms of Reference

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| 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.

The EDIRA Committee is established by the Board to provide strategic advice, guidance, and oversight on matters relating to equity, diversity, inclusion, reconciliation, and accessibility, as they pertain to the mandate, policies, operations, and governance of the Nova Scotia Regulator of Dentistry and Dental Assisting (NSRDDA). The Committee's role is to support the Board in fulfilling its commitment to fostering an inclusive, anti-discriminatory, culturally responsive, and accessible regulatory environment that reflects and respects the diversity of the communities served.

## 2. Guiding Principles

The work of the Committee will be guided by the following principles:

- **Equity**: Advancing fairness by identifying and addressing systemic barriers to participation and opportunity in regulatory processes.
- **Diversity**: Recognizing and valuing the variety of identities, experiences, and perspectives of registrants, staff, Board and committee members, and the public.
- **Inclusion**: Creating an environment where all individuals feel respected, accepted, and valued.
- **Reconciliation**: Acknowledging the legacy of colonialism and acting in the spirit of reconciliation, and partnership with Indigenous Peoples.
- **Accessibility**: Ensuring equitable access to regulatory services and decision-making for all, including individuals with disabilities or other access needs.

## 3. Specific Responsibilities

The Committee has the following specific responsibilities.

### A. Strategy and Policy Oversight

- Develop and maintain an EDIRA policy for the NSRDDA; explore and collaborate with other organizations regarding EDIRA policies and recommend updates for this policy as often as required.

- Monitor that the Regulator's strategic plan includes EDIRA-related elements.
- Review and advise on the integration of EDIRA principles into policies, procedures, codes of conduct, and governance frameworks.
- Monitor progress on the implementation of EDIRA goals and initiatives.

### B. Learning and Capacity Building

- Support efforts to build organizational awareness and capacity to address systemic discrimination and bias.

### C. Stakeholder Engagement

- Listen and respond to EDIRA issues brought forward by members of the public and dental community.
- Advise on approaches to inclusive and culturally safe engagement with registrants, patients and families, Indigenous communities, and equity-deserving groups.

### D. Regulatory Functions

- Support the integration of EDIRA into core regulatory functions (e.g., registration, complaints, investigations, adjudication, quality assurance), in collaboration with relevant committees and staff.
- Support the Registrar in responding to EDIRA-related issues raised by the Board, Statutory Committees or staff.
- With support from the Registrar (or delegate), monitor the collection and use of disaggregated data to identify inequities and inform continuous improvement.

### E. Reporting and Accountability

- Report annually to the Board on EDIRA-related progress, challenges, and recommendations.
- Ensure a clear EDIRA reporting pathway for anyone (public, Board or Statutory Committee member, staff, or dental professional) to express a concern or complaint of an EDIRA nature.
- Review any complaints or concerns referred by the Board related to EDIRA issues within the Regulator's governance or operations.
- Ensure that any EDIRA issues reported are communicated to the appropriate person(s)/group(s), including their outcomes.

## 4. Membership and Quorum

- The Committee has a minimum of three (3) members and a maximum of five (5) members, including the Committee Chair, appointed by the Board.
- A quorum for Committee meetings consists of a majority of voting members of the Committee.

- Committee members shall be appointed for terms of up to two (2) years and may be reappointed for additional terms, not to exceed six (6) consecutive years in total. The Board retains the discretion to remove or replace any Committee member.
- Committee members may include public representatives, registrant members, and individuals with lived or professional experience on EDIRA-related work. The Board may appoint non-Board members or advisors to the Committee, where additional subject-matter expertise is beneficial.
- At least one Committee member shall be a public representative.
- The Chair of the Committee is not the Chair of the Board and will be appointed annually by the Board from among its members, on the recommendation of the Board Chair.
- The Board Chair is an ex officio member of the Committee but does not vote or count in meeting requirements for a quorum.
- The Registrar may attend Committee meetings in an *ex officio*, non-voting capacity.

## 5. Meetings and Organization

- The Committee:
    - Has a meeting calendar and annual work plan for the year
    - Holds special meetings as required
    - May hold in-camera sessions, as required, immediately before and/or after the Committee meetings; these sessions will be structured by the Committee Chair and will not include NSRDDA staff (including the Registrar)
    - May hold meetings in person, by teleconference, or by videoconference.

## 5. Minutes and Reporting Responsibilities

A member of the Committee will act as the recording secretary for meetings of the Committee. Minutes of the meeting will include highlights of major discussions and all recommendations, decisions, and directives of the Committee.

A draft copy of the minutes of each meeting, approved by the Committee Chair, will be circulated to the Committee within two weeks of said meeting (where practicable) for approval by the Committee at the next meeting.

The Chair of the Committee (or their designate) shall present a written report to the Board in advance of each Board meeting which includes:

- The membership of the Committee
- How many times the Committee has met since the last Board meeting
- A ‘for information’ section which provides a general update of the Committee’s areas of focus since the last Board meeting
- A ‘for decision’ section which includes:
    - Any recommendations being made to the Board for its approval

- The specific form of resolution(s) being presented to the Board for approval
- Background/context for each recommendation
- Research/consultations undertaken by the Committee in coming to its recommendation(s)
- Alternative(s) considered
- Rationale for the recommendation(s)

## 6. Decision-Making and Authority

- The Committee is advisory in nature and does not have decision-making authority unless explicitly delegated by the Board.
- Recommendations from the Committee shall be made by consensus where possible or by majority vote when necessary.
- The Committee shall coordinate with other standing committees, the Registrar, and staff to ensure alignment and avoid duplication of work.

## 7. Confidentiality

All deliberations of the Committee, and all records, material and information pertaining to NSRDDA obtained by a member of the Committee shall be considered confidential. Committee members shall maintain the confidentiality of such deliberations, and shall safeguard such records, material, and information from improper access. At no time will any Committee member use, disclose or divulge any confidential personal information obtained during the regular course of their work on the Committee.

## 8. Other

The Committee:

- Annually reviews and receives approval from the Board of its Terms of Reference to ensure they meet the needs of the Board
- Annually assesses its performance in carrying out its duties
- Through the Committee Chair, reports regularly to the Board on the results of its activities in such manner approved by the Board
- Provides an orientation to new Committee members and ongoing training and development opportunities for its members
- May recommend the engagement of external advisors, facilitators, or trainers to support specific initiatives, subject to Board approval

The Registrar or designate will support the work of the Committee.

## 9. Monitoring and Policy Review

The Chair of the EDIRA Committee will ensure that these Terms of Reference are reviewed in accordance with the Board's policy review cycle or as required by significant operational or environmental changes.

## 10. Accountability

The Chair of the EDIRA Committee is accountable for ensuring compliance with this policy.

## ANNUAL WORK PLAN – EDIRA COMMITTEE

| Meeting | Agenda Items |
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| October | • Review Committee TORs<br>• Confirm meeting schedule and priorities<br>• Orientation for new members (if applicable) (ideally within one month following their appointment)<br>• Review organizational strategic plan, with focus on EDIRA commitments<br>• Approve annual Committee work plan<br>• Confirm reporting requirements to the Board<br>• Review annual EDIRA update or dashboard from staff and assess performance against previous goals<br>• Review and advise on revisions to policies, procedures, and regulatory practices to embed EDIRA (e.g., registration, complaints, QA)<br>• Consult relevant Committees/staff for input |
| April | • Discuss reconciliation or community partnership efforts (e.g. Indigenous advisory mechanisms)<br>• Review approach to demographic/disaggregated data collection and use<br>• Review and finalize Committee's annual report to the Board (including progress, risks, and recommendations)<br>• Identify items for next year's EDIRA action plan<br>• Conduct Committee self-assessment<br>• Identify governance improvements for EDIRA integrations (e.g. Board competency matrix, onboarding practices, etc.)<br>• Discuss emerging social, legal, or policy developments (e.g., accessibility legislations, reconciliation obligations, health equity data policy trends) |
| Ongoing/Between Meetings (as needed) | • Review or provide feedback on draft policies, strategies, or training tools<br>• Participate in consultations, learning sessions, or external forums<br>• Engage with other Board committees to coordinate EDIRA integration |

- Provide advice on urgent EDIRA-related matters referred by the Board or Registrar

The Committee has the discretion to move items between and among meetings but will cover all items of the work plan over the course of a year.