

The Equity By-Law of the English Debating Society

Updated: September, 2020

Contents:

1. Introduction
2. Guidelines for Equitable Actions
3. Equity Team
4. Procedure for Equity Complaints
5. Amendments to EDS Equity By-Law

1. Introduction

1.1. The EDS Equity By-Law aims:

- 1.1.1. To ensure a safe and equitable space for all participants at any EDS affiliated events
- 1.1.2. To provide a clear and comprehensible guideline for the EDS Equity Team, Executive and members to refer to for all Equity purposes and protocols
 - 1.1.2.1. Note that this document does not exhaustively detail every aspect of Equity, individuals are encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have with the Equity Team and/or the CUSID Ombudspersons
- 1.1.3. To ensure all members have access to resources, reparation and action in relation to equity

1.2. By-Law Scope and Application

- 1.2.1. This By-Law is applicable:
 - 1.2.1.1. To all members of the EDS at any EDS affiliated event
 - 1.2.1.2. To any members of the EDS who are representing the EDS at a
 - 1.2.1.3. CUSID debate-related event
 - 1.2.1.4. To any participant that attends any EDS affiliated event
 - 1.2.1.5. In conjunction with any relevant laws, policies, code of conduct and/or constitutions at all CUSID debate-related event that EDS members attend

1.3. For the purposes of this document:

- 1.3.1. **Equity** is defined as the creation and protection of a space free from judgement, discrimination, and/or harassment on the basis of: race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, or disability
- 1.3.2. **The English Debating Society (EDS)**, the debating society at the University of Ottawa, will be referred to as the EDS within the scope of this document

- 1.3.3. The Equity By-Law of the English Debating Society will be referred to as the **EDS Equity By-Law**
- 1.3.4. **EDS Members** is defined as in the EDS Constitution
- 1.3.5. **EDS Events** is defined as all events hosted by the EDS; this includes, but is not limited to:
 - 1.3.5.1. Weekly meetings
 - 1.3.5.2. EDS tournaments
 - 1.3.5.3. Fundraising activities
 - 1.3.5.4. EDS socials
- 1.3.6. **AGM** is defined as the Annual General Meeting held by the EDS at the end of the school year to elect the executive for the oncoming school year
- 1.3.7. **Complainant** is defined as a member of the EDS, or a participant of an EDS event, who files an Equity complaint to the EDS equity Team and/or the CUSID ombudspersons
- 1.3.8. **Respondent** is defined as the member of the EDS, or the participant of an EDS event, against whom an Equity Complaint has been filed
- 1.3.9. **An Equity Violation** is defined as participation in inequitable behaviours as outlined in *Section 2: Guidelines for Equitable Actions* or a situation in which Equity, as defined earlier in this section, has not been upheld
- 1.3.10. **An Equity Complaint** is defined as an issue brought to the attention of the Equity Team or the Equity Officer(s) by an individual regarding an Equity Violation
- 1.3.11. A **formal warning** is defined as a warning given to an individual - whether by the EDS executive and/or the Equity Team - regarding the Equity Violation. This will be either:
 - 1.3.11.1. A verbal warning; and/or
 - 1.3.11.2. A written warning
- 1.3.12. **CUSID Ombudsperson(s)** is defined as the debate Equity Officer at the National and Provincial level
 - 1.3.12.1. If at any time, an individual does not feel safe interacting with the Equity Team and/or believes the Equity Team has done enough, the individual can contact the CUSID Ombudspersons regarding an Equity Complaint

1.4. Division of Document

- 1.4.1. This By-Law will be divided into sections as follows:
 - 1.4.1.1. Introduction
 - 1.4.1.2. Guidelines for Equitable Actions
 - 1.4.1.3. The Equity Team
 - 1.4.1.4. Procedure for Equity Complaints
 - 1.4.1.5. Amendments to EDS Equity By-Law

2. Guidelines for Equitable Actions

- 2.1. **Members of the EDS are obligated to act in accordance with *Section 2: Guidelines for Equitable Actions* at all EDS events or at events in which the member is representing the EDS**
- 2.2. **All participants in any EDS-affiliated events are under obligation to act in accordance with *Section 2: Guidelines for Equitable Actions***
- 2.3. **All EDS members are expected to uphold equity within meetings, debate rounds, and all other EDS-related events**
 - 2.3.1. Equitable behaviour must be practiced for all club interactions, including interpersonal social interactions.
 - 2.3.2. Judges are encouraged to address inequitable behaviour either immediately within rounds or through the RFD.
- 2.4. **Inequitable behaviour is behaviour at all EDS affiliated events which goes against the definition of Equity, as outlined in *Section 1: Introduction*; this includes, but is not limited to:**
 - 2.4.1. Discrimination and harassment; this means participants and/or EDS members will not engage in any/all of the following:
 - 2.4.1.1. the use of offensive language or behaviour
 - 2.4.1.2. denigrating comments on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, or disability
 - 2.4.1.3. **Speech that disparages or discourages other debaters**
 - 2.4.1.4. **Discriminatory or inequitable arguments (ex: victim-blaming, eugenics, xenophobia, racism)**
 - 2.4.1.5. Physically, sexually and/or verbally harass, threaten, assault and/or intimidate other participants and members
 - 2.4.1.5.1. Allegations of sexual assault and/or harassment will be taken extremely seriously
 - 2.4.1.5.2. Please note that consent is paramount; individuals should seek consent throughout any romantic or sexual encounter. Consent can be revoked at any time, and must be respected
 - 2.4.1.5.3. Being under the influence of any intoxicants is not an excuse for any behavior committed
 - 2.4.2. Other inequitable behaviours include but are not limited to:
 - 2.4.2.1. Forcing another individual into partaking in an activity they are uncomfortable in doing
 - 2.4.2.2. **Pressuring another party into partaking in an activity that they do not want to (aggravating factors include using power disparities**

due to factors such as age, social status or positions of authority to exercise stronger pressures)

2.4.2.3. Damaging or destroying any property that does not belong to them

2.4.2.4. Any other similar behaviours

2.5. If a member or participant is found to have violated any of the above, they will be dealt with in accordance with *Section 4: Procedure for Equity Complaints*

3. The Equity Team

3.1. The Team will consist of 2-5 (ideally an odd number for voting purposes) equity officers who have the responsibility to uphold equity within the club, as outlined in this by-law

3.2. The Equity Team shall be appointed in August of every year by an Equity Appointments Committee

3.2.1. The Equity Appointments Committee shall be elected every year at the Annual General Meeting.

3.2.2. The Equity Appointments Committee shall be composed of:

3.2.2.1. One (1) member of the incoming Executive

3.2.2.2. One (1) standing member of the Equity Team

3.2.2.3. Three (3) Members of the Society who do not hold positions on the executive or equity team

3.3. The Appointments Committee, under the guidance of any retiring Equity Officer(s), shall appoint the Equity Team in August of each year.

3.3.1. The Appointments Committee must give at least one week to solicit applications for the position of Equity Officer from the membership

3.3.2. The Appointments Committee must announce its decision for Equity Team no later than one week following the period for the solicitation of applications

3.3.3. The Appointments Committee must fill as many openings on the Equity Team as is possible

3.4. The Executive shall be responsible for providing access to training for Equity Officers. Such training may include bystander training, active listening, and racial sensitivity training.

3.5. The following criteria must be considered by the Appointments Committee when determining the appointment of the Equity Officer:

3.5.1.1. Preference to non-executive members

3.5.1.2. Clear understanding of the value of equity within debate and meets the role with care and concern for other members

- 3.5.1.3. Aware, or willing to become aware, of the lived experiences of others, specifically of minorities, ensuring that they are safe and protected within the debate community
- 3.5.1.4. Regular attendance at meetings
- 3.5.1.5. Relevant experience (i.e: mental health training, racial sensitivity training, first aid)

3.6. The following obligations are imposed on the Equity Team:

- 3.6.1. A [sober](#) Equity Officer must be present at EDS events to observe and act proactively (if need be, in accordance with *Section 4: Procedure for Equity Complaints*) to ensure an equitable environment through the prevention and/or diffusion of any equity issues
 - 3.6.1.1. If all Equity Officers are unable to attend a particular event, they must delegate their role to a member for the duration of the event and provide them the appropriate training
 - 3.6.1.2. All individuals at the event should be informed of this change and the new officer's contact information at least 12 hours prior (unless in case of emergency)
 - 3.6.1.3. The Equity Team must work alongside with the Chair of Socials in order to ensure a safe, inclusive and equitable environment at all EDS socials
- 3.6.2. At least one member of the Equity Team is obligated to be an Equity Officer for any tournaments that the EDS holds
 - 3.6.2.1. If need be, this Equity Officer will work with the Executive to select another Equity Officer for the tournament
 - 3.6.2.1.1. They will additionally give the member training as they see fit
 - 3.6.2.2. If all members of the EDS Equity Team are unable to be Equity Officer(s) for a tournament, then they must delegate their role for the duration of the tournament
 - 3.6.2.2.1. The Equity Officer(s) for the tournament will then be given training from the Equity Team in anyway they see fit
 - 3.6.2.2.2. The Equity Team must still oversee any presentations/ event done by the appointed officers and make the necessary amendments at their discretion
- 3.6.3. The Equity Team must receive and investigate equity complaints which may arise at EDS events, and attempt to resolve said claims in accordance with *Section 4: Procedure for Equity Complaints*
- 3.6.4. The Equity Team must uphold, and ensure other members uphold, the EDS Equity By-Law

- 3.6.5. The Equity Team must provide up-to-date contact information so those in need can easily access equity
- 3.6.6. The Equity Team has special obligation to ensure that minorities (notably: people of color, women and gender minorities) are safe and protected within the debate community
- 3.6.7. The Equity Team must conduct an annual equity survey at the AGM regarding the satisfaction of the membership, the summarized results of which must be made available to the public
 - 3.6.7.1. All members attending the AGM will be given 15 minutes to complete an equity survey and any proxy voters should also complete the survey in their own time
 - 3.6.7.2. This survey will be used by the oncoming equity officer at their discretion to make informed decisions for the benefit of the club.
 - 3.6.7.3. All survey participants would remain anonymous except to the Equity Team conducting the survey and, later, to any oncoming additions to the Equity Team
 - 3.6.7.4. The results of the survey should be made into an exit report to be submitted to the Ombudspersons and then to their successor
- 3.6.8. The Equity Team must take an active role in providing education and training to the membership to prevent prevalent equity violations.
 - 3.6.8.1. Education and training includes:
 - 3.6.8.1.1. A seminar at least once per semester. In order to do this, the Equity Team is required to work with, or advise, the current VP Training in ways they see fit
 - If a club member wants to run a seminar that would benefit club equity, the Equity Team would be obligated to aid them
 - 3.6.8.1.2. Working with CUSID Ombudspersons and any Club Equity Officers in order to gather resources and information
 - 3.6.8.1.3. Due diligence within meetings and other events with the intent of preventing equity violations
- 3.6.9. The Equity Team must work alongside with the Chair of Outreach in order to recruit, welcome and retain new members (especially of minorities) into a safe, inclusive and equitable space
- 3.6.10. Equity officers must ensure that individuals know who to speak to when in need of accommodations (e.g. wheelchair accessible room or tournament housing). Equity officers must offer to act as a liaison/advocate as well as identifying the relevant executive member should the individual wish to request these accommodations directly.

3.7. Equity Officer Resignation from the Team

- 3.7.1. The following requirements are set up for the voluntary resignation of an Equity Officer:
 - 3.7.1.1. The resignation shall be made in writing and handed to the President at least three weeks before the abdication of the duties of their position unless otherwise deemed appropriate by the Executive and remainder of the Equity Team
 - 3.7.1.2. In the case of a vacancy of the position of Equity Officer within the Team, the Executive must solicit applications within three meetings to fill that position
- 3.7.2. The following conditions are set up for the involuntary resignation of an Equity Officer
 - 3.7.2.1. If the equity officer is absent for 6 consecutive meetings, then the remainder of the Equity Team and the Executive have the authority to select a new equity officer at their discretion.
 - 3.7.2.2. In the event that a serious or unresolvable Equity Complaint has been made against an officer of the current Equity Team (See *Section 4: Procedure for Equity Complaints, Section VI* for more details)

4. Procedure for Equity Complaints

4.1. Stipulations of an Equity Complaint

- 4.1.1. In all cases of equity, all parties involved will remain anonymous and the issue will be treated with the utmost confidentiality
- 4.1.2. The issue will only be discussed between the affected individuals, the Equity Officer(s) selected by the complainant. The issue may only be discussed with the remainder of the equity team and/or the current EDS executive, with the consent of the complainant
- 4.1.3. Names of all parties involved and the issue itself will never be shared with anyone not directly involved unless it is deemed absolutely necessary and, even so, must require the express approval of all parties involved before it can be discussed
- 4.1.4. If the complainant feels not enough has been done by the Equity Team and the EDS executive or the resolution was inadequate, they have the right to go to the CUSID ombudspersons
 - 4.1.4.1. The CUSID ombudspersons have the right to enact any procedures they see fit and can overrule the EDS Equity Team if absolutely necessary

- 4.2. If an individual believes that an Equity Violation has been made, then the individual has the right to file an Equity Complaint with one or more Equity Officer(s) against the individual who has committed the Equity Violation or to report a situation in which Equity was violated**
- 4.3. If an individual has an Equity concern, and is unsure whether they ought to report it or if it is serious enough to be reportable, they should discuss the matter with one or more Equity Officers. The maintenance of Equity is of the utmost importance within the EDS so that all individuals feel comfortable within the club sphere**
- 4.4. The Equity Officer(s) must treat the situation with the utmost respect and discretion and the Equity Procedure will begin. This includes:**
- 4.4.1. Discussion
- 4.4.1.1. The issue will be discussed between the Equity Officer(s) selected by the complainant and the affected party to make sure the issue is clearly understood. At at the discretion of the complainant and Equity Officer(s)
- 4.4.1.2. The Equity Officer(s) selected by the complainant will outline the further steps that can be taken and help the complainant decide if they would like to pursue further action or if further action is necessary
- 4.4.1.2.1. The Equity Officer(s) selected by the complainant would only override this decision if neglect of the complaint could cause future harms to the affected individual and/or the club as a whole
- 4.4.2. Investigation
- 4.4.2.1. Upon the direct approval of the complainant, an investigation can be conducted by the Equity Officer(s) selected by the complainant
- 4.4.2.1.1. The Equity Officer(s) selected by the complainant is expected to talk to all parties involved (which may include bystanders) in order to understand what exactly happened
- 4.4.2.1.2. The Equity Officer(s) selected by the complainant is expected to remain impartial throughout the entire process
- 4.4.2.1.3. The Equity Officer(s) selected by the complainant is to come to a decision at the end of the investigation to aid them in the reparation process
- 4.4.3. Reparation
- 4.4.3.1. Upon the completion of the investigation, the Equity Officer(s) selected by the complainant is expected to use their best judgement in order to make reparations

4.4.3.2. Upon first offence, education, mediation and reconciliation should be primarily emphasized. The Officer may use more punitive measures at their discretion in case of further offences.

4.4.3.3. Reparation procedure for an Equity Complaint Against Members and Participants at EDS Events: Following an investigation, the Equity Officer(s) selected by the complainant may at their discretion, and with explicit approval from the complainant(s), attempt to enact the following resolutions for an equity violation:

- Present a formal warning to the respondent(s)
- Demand an apology from the respondent(s) to the complainant(s).
- Request the respondent(s) remove themselves from the specific event
- Pursue efforts to re-educate the respondent(s) and explain why:
 - their actions were inequitable
 - it negatively impacted the other party
- If it is a recurring issue in the club at large, the Equity Team must pursue further measures to prevent the issue occurring again

4.4.3.3.2. If the complainant and the selected Equity Officer(s) deem Executive action necessary for the resolution of the Equity Complaint, they may approach the Executive and request their assistance in enacting resolutions. Executive actions for resolving Equity Complaints include but are not limited to:

- Presenting a formal warning on behalf of the EDS, to the respondent(s).
- Demanding an apology on behalf of the EDS, from the respondent(s) to the complainant(s).
- Pursuing efforts to re-educate the individual and explain why:
 - their actions were inequitable
 - it negatively impacted the other party
- Temporary dismissal of the respondent(s) from EDS events.
- Permanent dismissal of the respondent(s) from EDS events.
- Change in club policy

4.4.3.4. **Reparation procedure for an Equity Complaint against a member of the Executive:** If a member of the Executive has an equity claim made against them or has violated equity, said member must be excluded from any Executive discussion, and vote regarding the appropriate resolution to said complaint. This includes any/all consequences outlined in 4.4.3.2

4.4.3.5. **Reparation procedure for an Equity Complaint Against an Equity Officer:** In the event that a complaint has been made against an officer of the current Equity Team or there is a recommendation by another equity officer, the issue must be brought to the attention to the remainder of the Equity Team and they jointly decide what necessary action must be taken, which includes any/all of the following:

- A formal warning
- An apology to the complainant(s)
- Re-education
- If the complaint is deemed a serious violation of club equity or an agreement cannot be reached, the Executive and remainder of the Equity Team have the authority to select a new officer at their discretion and take the necessary steps for impeachment

4.5. If requested by the Executive, the Equity Officer(s) involved are obligated to write a report on the situation and present the findings to the Executive

4.5.1. Express permission to reveal the issue must be obtained before writing the report

4.5.2. All parties are to remain anonymous in the report

5. Amendments to EDS Equity By-Law

5.1. Any member of the EDS in good standing is entitled to make amendments to the EDS Equity By-Law; however certain conditions must be met in order for an official revision of the EDS Equity By-Law to be made:

5.1.1. Amendments to the Equity By-Law must be presented to the Equity Team at least one week prior to a General Meeting. Equity Officers shall have the right to recommend to the club that they adopt or reject the proposed amendment.

5.1.2. The Equity By-Law shall not be amended or altered except by a 2/3 vote of members present at a General Meeting of the Society