



OADN TOOLKIT

Incorporating Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in Associate Degree Nursing Education



Implemented August 2023

I. Introduction

Representing the over 1,100 associate degree nursing programs across the country, the Organization for Associate Degree Nursing (OADN) is the national voice and a pivotal resource for community college nursing education and the associate degree pathway. We work to expand networks that promote leadership, collaboration, and advocacy to further enrich nursing education and the communities we serve.

OADN is invested in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the profession of nursing and in nursing education. The Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) nurse is charged with threading diversity, equity, and inclusion in the professional practice. We believe the ADN nurse holds the key to making the future of nursing safe and equitable for all patient populations, nursing students, and educators of all backgrounds.

II. Purpose

This OADN Toolkit aims to provide ADN programs, educators, and administrators with the resources they need to evaluate their current curriculum, integrate new content to address health inequities and improve overall faculty and student diversity, equity, and inclusion. We hope you find the following evidence-based tools helpful in assessing and implementing DEI concepts into the curriculum.

Why is this important?

- ◆ Workforce diversity improves patient outcomes (Bonini & Matias, 2021; Gomez & Bernet, 2019).
- ◆ The need for more diversity in the nursing workforce creates challenges for the profession. For example, the lack of faculty diversity (AACN, 2022) limits the program's ability to recruit diverse students. The current makeup of the nursing workforce does not match the evolving and growing diversity in the United States (Fontenot &

McMurray, 2020). This can lead to cultural insensitivity and low levels of empathy (Valdez et al., 2023) and perpetuates ongoing systemic racism in the profession.

- In 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) declared racism a threat to public health (CDC, 2021).
- In 2021, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) released their Future of Nursing Report 2020-2030, emphasizing the nurse's role in closing health disparities. Additionally, the NASEM dedicated an entire chapter to nurse educators providing recommendations like integrating social determinants, health equity, and racism into the nursing curricula (NASEM, 2021). This toolkit will address this call from the NASEM.
- Accreditation requires DEI in the curriculum (ACEN, CNEA)
 - ACEN - [ACEN 2023 Standards and Criteria – Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing \(acenursing.org\)](#)
 - CNEA - [CNEA \(nln.org\)](#)
- Ongoing work is needed to change the tide and improve workforce and faculty diversity. Assessing and implementing new concepts and measures in the ADN curriculum is critical to advancing DEI and meeting accreditation standards among the standards set forth by our professional organizations.

III. Definitions

The OADN DEI Committee developed the following definitions to guide the committee's work:

Diversity	Diversity embodies all the ways that people are different. Diversity includes differences in race, ethnicity, gender identity, age, national origin, immigration status, religion, values, political identity, functional ability, sexuality, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language and learning preferences, and career goals.
Equity	Equity is realized when all people, regardless of identity or background, have equal access to resources and opportunities in society. Health equity is attaining equal access to healthcare and equal health outcomes for all communities regardless of socioeconomic status. Achieving health equity requires recognizing that everyone does not start from the same place and providing services according to patients needs in order to achieve excellent health outcomes for all.
Inclusion	The act of inclusion is open engagement with patients, communities, nursing students, nurses, nurse leaders, nurse researchers, and nurse educators. The inclusive environment includes providing an opportunity to foster a sense of belonging, through purposeful engagement, by welcoming, respecting, and valuing diverse individuals and groups.

IV. Using the Toolkit

This toolkit provides a list of curated resources to help the program navigate the assessment process and the subsequent implementation of DEI concepts into the program's curriculum. A panel of experts in diversity, equity, and inclusivity reviewed and approved the following resources.

The experts suggest a systematic approach starting with a full review of the curriculum and then implementing evidence-based content to fill the gaps discovered through the assessment process. The experts also provide a reminder that this process is iterative, ongoing, and should have a place in the program's quality improvement initiatives.

V. Steps & Suggested Resources

Step 1: Integrating DEI elements into the nursing curriculum begins with assessing the current curriculum, emphasizing the identification of gaps.

Assessing a nursing program for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) involves considering its curriculum content and teaching style regarding DEI evaluation. Here are some steps a program might take in order to conduct such an evaluation:

- ◆ **Gather a Diverse Committee:** Form a DEI committee made up of faculty, students, and alums with diverse backgrounds and experiences. This committee will oversee the assessment and subsequent actions.

Suggested Resource: [DEI Committee Good Start Guide | Division of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement at Rutgers University–New Brunswick](#)

- ◆ **Define DEI:** Make sure that everyone involved in the process clearly understands what diversity, equity, and inclusion mean within the context of nursing education and practice.

Suggested Resource: [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Glossary | College of the Environment \(uw.edu\)](#)

- ◆ **Review the Curriculum:** The committee should thoroughly review all parts of the curriculum. They should look for places where DEI concepts are currently addressed and where they could be improved.

The table below was adapted from Gallo (2022). This table can guide programs in their curricular assessments. Educators can examine the critical elements in each area of the curriculum by counting the frequency of content in each area. This can provide a roadmap for finding gaps.

Key Elements	Course Descriptions	Objectives (ELO)	Assignment Descriptions	Assignment Titles	In the Syllabi	Totals
Race						
Nationality						
Religion						
Culture, cultural background, cultural humility, ethnicity						
Age, older adult						
Sexual orientation, LGBTQIA+, gender, gender identity						
Veteran, veteran status, military						
Disability, ability, functional, learning						
Access to care						
Mental, behavioral, emotional, psychological						
Obesity						
Politics, political beliefs						

Family						
Geographic location						
Immigrants, Refugees						
Social determinants, disparities, social justice						
Bias, micro-inequalities						
First generation						
Health literacy						
Privilege						
Totals						

- ◆ **Identify Key Concepts:** Identify key DEI concepts that should be included in a nursing curriculum, such as cultural humility, health disparities, social determinants of health, implicit bias, and healthcare accessibility. *The table above provides a robust list of key concepts as well.*

- ◆ **Curriculum Mapping:** Map these DEI concepts to the existing curriculum, identifying where they are already addressed and where there are gaps.

Suggested Resource: [\(5\) 5 Steps for Curriculum Mapping | LinkedIn](#)

- ◆ **Student Experience Survey:** Survey current students and recent graduates about their experiences with DEI in the program. Did they feel that the curriculum prepared them to work with diverse populations? Did they feel included and respected regardless of their backgrounds?

Suggested Resource: [21 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Survey Questions to Ask \(proprofssurvey.com\)](#)

- ◆ **Faculty Training and Development:** Assess the current level of faculty understanding and commitment to DEI principles. Look into providing training and professional development resources to enhance their knowledge and teaching methods. Many open-access tools, including LinkedIn Learning, cover DEI concepts and ongoing professional development.
- ◆ **Review Admission Policies and Student Demographics:** Examine the diversity of the student body and consider whether admissions policies could be changed to attract a more diverse pool of applicants. Consider socioeconomic background, race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc.

Suggested Resource: [The Macy Foundation - Barriers and Belief Systems Webinar Series: Exploring the Barriers to Inclusion for Nurses with Disabilities](#)

- ◆ **Develop a Plan:** Based on your findings, develop a plan for incorporating DEI into the curriculum. This may involve adding new courses, revising existing ones, and/or incorporating DEI concepts into all courses. The resources provided below will help you guide the implementation of DEI into the program's curriculum.
- ◆ **Implement and Monitor the Plan:** Implement the changes and monitor their effect. Continuously review and revise your approach based on feedback and evolving best practices in the field.

Remember, DEI is not a box to be checked off—it is an ongoing commitment to creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students and preparing nurses to provide high-quality patient care.

The following are additional resources for assessing and evaluating DEI in your program's curriculum.

1. [Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(J.E.D.I.\) Toolkit | Department of Health Sciences \(unc.edu\)](#)
2. [ACE+ \(nln.org\)](#)
3. [Evidence of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Nursing Syllabi: A Descriptive Analysis | Journal of Nursing Education \(healio.com\)](#)
4. [Representation Matters - Teaching Assistants' Training Program \(utoronto.ca\)](#)
5. [Holistic Admissions \(aacnnursing.org\)](#)

Step 2: Implementing DEI concepts into the curriculum.

Once the assessment is completed and gaps are identified, the next step is the implementation of DEI concepts into the nursing curriculum. Here are some key steps to consider:

- ◆ **Establish Clear Goals and Objectives:** Based on the gaps identified, establish clear, measurable goals and objectives for integrating DEI into the curriculum. Make sure these align with the overall educational objectives of the nursing program.

Suggested Resource: [Knowledge, skills, and attitudes about diversity, equity, and inclusion among nurse educators - ScienceDirect](#)

- ◆ **Curriculum Design/Redesign:** Develop or revise course content to include DEI principles. This could involve developing new courses focused on DEI, integrating DEI content into existing courses, or both. A few areas that could be covered include culturally competent care, health disparities, social determinants of health, and unconscious bias. This recent (open access) study provides the results of a national ADN faculty survey demonstrating the curricular gaps in ADN programs. These are also great areas to evaluate for implementation.

Study Link: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1557308722001445>

- ◆ **Teaching Methods:** Consider using diverse teaching methods that cater to different learning styles and cultural backgrounds. This can include the use of case studies, role play, simulations, group projects, community-based projects, and online learning. Ensure that all teaching materials (e.g., case studies, images) reflect diversity.

Suggested Resource: [Inclusive Teaching Guide | Columbia CTL](#)

- ◆ **Faculty Training and Development:** Faculty must have the skills and knowledge to teach DEI concepts effectively. Provide professional development opportunities such as workshops, seminars, or courses on DEI.

Suggested Resource: [Free Diversity And Inclusion Training Courses: 8 to Consider \(getimpactly.com\)](#)

- ◆ **Student Support Services:** Ensure support services are inclusive and available to all students, considering diverse needs. This might involve enhancing language support services, disability services, or mental health services.

- ◆ **Recruit and Retain Diverse Faculty and Students:** Aim to recruit and retain diverse students and faculty. This enhances the richness of experiences and perspectives shared in the program.

Suggested Resources:

[best practices for Recruiting a Diverse Faculty \(csusb.edu\)](https://www.csusb.edu/best-practices-for-recruiting-a-diverse-faculty)

[Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Diverse Students: A Guide for Administrators in Higher Education.pdf \(equitynh.org\)](https://equitynh.org/Strategies-for-Recruiting-and-Retaining-Diverse-Students-A-Guide-for-Administrators-in-Higher-Education.pdf)

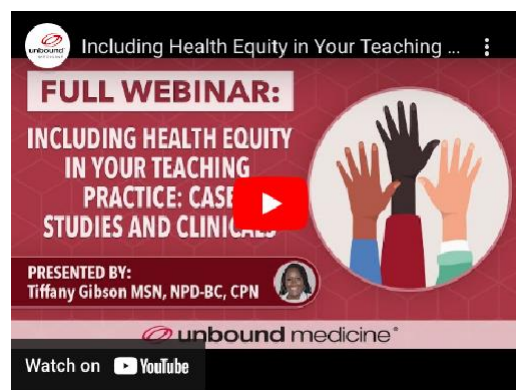
- ◆ **Partnerships with Diverse Communities:** Build partnerships with diverse local communities for student practicums and internships. This provides students with opportunities to apply DEI principles in a real-world setting.

Suggested Resource: [rockwood-infographic-partnership \(rockwoodleadership.org\)](https://rockwoodleadership.org/rockwood-infographic-partnership)

- ◆ **Continuous Evaluation and Feedback:** Implement mechanisms to evaluate the impact of these changes on student learning and the overall program quality. This could involve surveys, feedback sessions, and graduate follow-up. Use this feedback to improve DEI integration in the curriculum continuously.
- ◆ **Cultivate a Culture of Inclusion:** Foster a culture of inclusivity in the learning environment where all students feel valued and respected. This can include developing a program-wide DEI policy, creating safe spaces for discussion, and incorporating DEI into the program's mission and vision.

The following are additional resources for implementing DEI concepts into the curriculum.

1. [Genesee Community College - How to Infuse Diversity and Inclusion into Your Curriculum. Diversity and Inclusion - Genesee Community College](#)
2. [The Macy Foundation - Redesigning simulation-based learning environments to promote DEI and cultural humility](#)
3. [Including Health Equity in Your Teaching Practice: Case Studies and Clinicals](#)



VI. Conclusion

This toolkit serves as a comprehensive resource for ADN programs, educators, and administrators seeking to integrate diversity, equity, and inclusivity (DEI) into their nursing curricula. The steps outlined within it can assist nursing programs with evaluating current curricula for gaps and then creating evidence-based strategies to promote DEI.

Please note that this toolkit is an ever-evolving document. As its producer, OADN recognizes the ever-changing nature of DEI and its significance to nursing education; thus, the OADN DEI committee will conduct regular updates of this toolkit to reflect any recent advancements, research findings, or best practices related to DEI.

By adopting an iterative approach to teaching, nursing programs can continuously adapt and adjust their curricula to meet the ever-evolving needs of their students, patients, and communities. Through DEI, programs will also address health disparities while offering culturally competent care in addition to creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment for all their students.

Integrating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion into ADN curriculums is not only a requirement for accreditation but a moral imperative. By taking advantage of the resources and tools contained within this toolkit, nursing programs can take significant steps toward creating a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive nursing workforce that will ultimately contribute to improved patient outcomes and the elimination of health disparities.

Let us move forward with using this toolkit and its suggestions as our roadmap to make positive changes in nursing education and practice. With these actions in place, we can move towards a future where every nurse possesses the knowledge, skills, and mindset required to provide compassionate care to individuals from diverse backgrounds - creating health equity in society as we go together.



VII. References

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VIII. Resources

AONL Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Toolkit

<https://www.aonl.org/resources/DEIB-Toolkit>

APA Inclusive Language Guidelines

<https://www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/language-guide.pdf>