

## What is Self-Identification?

It's about you! It's an act of identifying yourself as a particular kind of person and a feeling that you share and understand the problems or experiences of someone else. Also, it's an opportunity for you to identify with one of the Employment Equity groups: women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and racialized persons, to help ensure that ISED achieves a workforce that reflects the population it serves.

## What is employment equity and what is its purpose?

The purpose of the *Employment Equity Act* is to achieve equality in the workplace so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability and, in the fulfilment of that goal, to correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and racialized persons by giving effect to the principle that employment equity means more than treating persons in the same way but also requires special measures and the accommodation of differences.

## What are the four designated employment equity groups?

The *Employment Equity Act* identifies the following as designated employment equity groups:

- Women
- Indigenous peoples: persons who identify as Indians, Inuit or Métis
- Racialized persons: persons, other than Indigenous, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour
- Persons with disabilities: persons who have a long-term or recurring physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric or learning impairment and who believe they could be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment

## Who are Indigenous peoples?

Under the *Employment Equity Act*, Indigenous peoples is one of the equity groups. They are defined as “persons who are Indians, Inuit or Métis.” Additionally, according to the Treasury Board Secretariat, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada and Indigenous Services Canada, an Indigenous person is a North American Indian or a member of a First Nation or who is Métis, or Inuit. North American Indians or members of a First Nation include status, treaty or registered Indians, as well as non-status and non-registered Indians.

## Who are persons with disabilities?

Are you a person with a disability? Perhaps you are not sure whether your situation is considered as a disability? The answer is [found in the Act](#). The [Self-ID questionnaire](#) only includes some examples, but there are more.

According to the *Accessible Canada Act*, “disability” refers to any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment – or

functional limitation – whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society.

*Table 1 Previous and New Definition of Types of Disabilities*

<b>Previous Definition</b>	<b>New Definition</b>
Blind or visual impairment (unable to see or difficulty seeing)	A seeing disability affects vision, including total blindness, partial sight and visual distortion.
Deaf or hard of hearing (unable to hear or difficulty hearing)	A hearing disability affects ability to hear, including being hard of hearing, deafness or acoustic distortion.
Mobility (difficulty moving around, for example from one office to another or up and down stairs)	A mobility issue affects ability to move your body, including the required use of a wheelchair or a cane, or other issues impacting your mobility.
Coordination or dexterity (difficulty using hands or arms, for example grasping or handling a stapler or using a keyboard)	Issues with flexibility or dexterity affects ability to move joints or perform motor tasks, especially with your hands.
-	A mental health issue affects psychology or behaviour, such as anxiety, depression or social / compulsive disorder or phobia or psychiatric illness.
-	A sensory / environmental disability affects sensitivity to light, sounds or other distractions, as well as allergens and other environmental sensitivities.
-	A chronic health condition or pain affects ability to function on a regular or episodic basis due to migraines, Crohn’s disease, colitis, and other disabilities or health conditions.
-	A cognitive disability affects ability to carry out tasks involving executive functioning, such as planning and organization, learning information, communication and memory, including autism or Asperger’s syndrome, attention deficit disorder, and learning disabilities.
-	An intellectual disability affects your ability to learn and to adapt behaviour to different situations.
Other disability (including learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, psychological or emotional disability and all other types of disabilities) Please Specify	Other disability Please specify.
Speech Impairment (unable to speak or difficulty speaking and being understood)	-

## I have an invisible disability. Can I still self-identify as a person with a disability?

**Yes.** By selecting "Other disability" on the self-identification form. This option includes all invisible disabilities, i.e. illnesses or health issues not typically apparent from the outside. Examples include, but are not limited to: mental illness, anxiety disorder, learning disabilities, autism spectrum, auto-immune disorders, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, fragrance or chemical sensitivities, repetitive stress injuries, chronic pain, chronic fatigue, chronic dizziness, learning disabilities, sleep disorders, etc.

## Who are racialized people?

The term "racialized" refers to "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour" (Statistics Canada 2015).

It is the term used in Canada's human rights legislation and in Statistics Canada data Categories in the racialized persons variable include South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean, Japanese, "Visible minority, n.i.e. ('n.i.e.' means 'not included elsewhere')," "Multiple visible minorities" and "Not a visible minority."

The category 'Racialized persons, n.i.e.' includes people who may include written clarification such as 'Guyanese,' 'West Indian,' 'Tibetan,' 'Polynesian,' 'Pacific Islander.' The category 'Multiple racialized persons' will include participants who report more than one racialized persons group by checking two or more mark-in circles, such as 'Black' and 'South Asian.'

Statistics Canada also dictates that, "In the racialized persons variable, persons who reported 'South Asian,' 'Chinese,' 'Black,' 'Filipino,' 'Southeast Asian,' 'Korean,' or 'Japanese,' in combination with 'White' or a write-in response are included in the racialized people count for the specific racialized persons group reported. For example, respondents who checked 'Black' and 'White' are included in the 'Black' count. Respondents who checked 'Black' or 'Malaysian' are also included in the 'Black' count."

## Can I identify myself as belonging to more than one group?

**Yes.** In some instances, you may self-identify in more than one designated group. For example, if one parent is Indigenous as defined in the questionnaire and the other parent is a racialized person, an employee could self-identify as both an Indigenous person and a racialized person.

## Why should I self-identify in section A through C, and why is it collected?

In short – because your perspective counts! When you choose to self-identify, you are:

- leading the way to change,
- making a difference by sharing your unique talents, ideas, and perspectives, and
- helping to create a diverse and inclusive ISED that is representative of the population we serve.

Section A is mandatory for all employees. It contains your name, Personal Record Identifier (PRI), and contact information.

#### Section B

As an individual, self-identifying and consenting to share your information could mean that you are eligible for certain talent development opportunities. It can also assist in the case of accommodations, whether physical or other.

Self-identifying will also help the Department to: determine whether our diversity is representative of the population we serve so that we can improve our programs and services; support leaders to identify and remove barriers to employment for equity-deserving groups; and understand the positive impact that diverse perspectives have on our department as a whole.

#### Section C

You have the option to consent to the sharing of your information for Human Resources purposes. This includes referral for training and developmental assignments and, in the case of persons with disabilities, facilitating appropriate accommodation in the workplace.

As ISED evolves, developmental opportunities are used to ensure our diverse employee base continues to learn and advance as well, ex: Aboriginal Leadership Developmental Initiative (ALDI), Leadership Architect

### If I am not part of a designated group, why should I complete the self-identification form?

Part A is mandatory for all employees. Self-identification part B and C voluntary. However, the participation of every employee is important in helping ISED to:

- obtain an accurate profile of our workforce to determine to what extent it is representative of the population we serve,
- build the right programs and initiatives, and
- ensure there is a diversity of thoughts, which helps us be more creative and innovative.

### Will my information be kept confidential?

**Yes.** We recognize that self-identification is a personal decision. The information provided by employees is protected by the [Privacy Act](#) and the Treasury Board [Code of Confidentiality](#). Furthermore, the [Employment Equity Act](#) states self-identification information can only be used for employment equity purposes. With your permission, your information may be used to invite you to participate in employment equity activities such as focus groups or in selection boards. In Part C in the Self-Identification form, you can choose to consent to the sharing of your information for Human Resources purposes. This includes referral for training and developmental assignments

and, in the case of persons with disabilities, facilitating appropriate accommodation in the workplace.

## If the information is confidential, why do I have to include my name and employee number (PRI)?

We not only need to establish the current representation in our workforce but also track that representation over time. It is necessary to link self-identification information with occupational group, salary ranges, hiring, promotions and separations in order to determine how the Department and the public service is doing in meeting its employment equity goals. The PRI is used to gather information from MyGCHR. No individuals are identified to directors or managers, unless you have given permission to share your information. Only statistical information is available to management.

## Who has access to my self-identification information?

Very few people have access to your self-identification information as it is only accessible for employment equity purposes or ensuring a representative workforce. Within the corporate Human Resources Branch, only the Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce and the Digital HR team can access your information. Your manager does not have access to your self-identification information, unless you have given permission to share this information. Any workforce profile reports created using this information are in the form of aggregate statistical summaries that do not identify individuals. Representation below five people in a team or organization is not included on reports.

## Should I complete a new questionnaire even if I have completed one before at a different department?

**Yes.** Self-Identification data is not shared between departments. You may also choose to update your information at any time.

## Is it true that self-identification is only about filling representation gaps and if departments do not have any gaps, they will stop paying attention to employment equity?

This is an incorrect perception. The information collected through self-identification helps us plan for the future, monitor progress achieved and take action to maintain and/or increase our workforce representation. It allows us to better serve a diverse population, and to provide you with information and resources to enhance your career should you choose to self-identify and agree to Section C.

I have been accommodated in my workplace, should I still identify as a person with disability?

**Yes.** You are encouraged to self-identify even if you have been accommodated. The process of accommodation and the process of self-identification in a designated group are independent of one another. We cannot, by law under the *Employment Equity Act*, count you among the designated groups unless you have self-identified through the questionnaire. Please note that not all workplace accommodations are related to disabilities.

I've already completed the questionnaire and indicated that I did not belong to an employment equity designated group. My personal circumstances have now changed; can I update or change my status?

**Yes.** You can update or save changes to your status at any time in MyGCHR or by submitting a new questionnaire.

Can anyone else identify me for employment equity purposes?

**No.** You are responsible for completing a self-identification form and thus self-identifying. Only you can identify yourself as an Indigenous person, a racialized person, a person with a disability or a woman.

How is "self-declaration" in an appointment process different from "self-identification"?

Self-declaration is employment equity (EE) information provided on a voluntary basis by applicants during the appointment process. This information is used for statistical purposes related to appointments, and area of selection (in the case of processes where selection is limited or expanded to include EE groups).

Self-identification is the collection of EE data voluntarily provided by employees, and is normally collected through the self-identification questionnaire independently from the appointment process.

The Department can use self-declaration information provided by external applicants and employees for self-identification purposes when they are subsequently appointed as a result of the appointment process in which they self-declared, if they have given consent to this use.

Where is self-declaration and self-identification information stored?

Information from self-reports are kept in directories of applicants and the directory of presentations to the Public Service Commission of Canada and in the files of personal information of the Department, such as the staffing files and MYGCHR. When information of self-declaration is used for self-identification purposes, they are kept in the employment equity Treasury Board Secretariat database.

## Is there a certain quota the Department needs to meet?

**No.** A quota system would require that a fixed number of people be placed in certain jobs, regardless of their skills and qualifications. Instead, the department sets realistic goals and timetables, based on factors such as staff turnover, workforce growth rate, corporate culture, and business plan to ensure a workforce representative of the population ISED serves.

## What is a representation gap?

A representation gap is the difference between the availability of designated groups in the Canadian workforce and the representation of designated groups in the Department's workforce.

## How does diversity differ from employment equity?

The [Employment Equity Act](#) sets the minimum requirement of diversity and inclusion based on the four designated Employment Equity groups (Women, racialized people, indigenous persons and persons with disability). Based on this foundation, diversity is acknowledging and valuing the many aspects and behaviours that make each of us different from one another, such as sex, gender identity or expression, age, religion, sexual orientation cultural background, race, marital and family status, disability, regional affiliation, socio-economic status, and work and life responsibilities. Diversity and employment equity are not contradictory to each other, rather they complement each other. Both are designed to reflect the diversity in our society. The ultimate goal of both diversity and employment equity is the achievement of an equitable employment system free of discriminatory practices.

## Where can I get more information?

For further information, please email the [Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce](#)