

## Racial Equity Committee Terms of Reference

<b>Policy Type:</b>	Board	<b>Approval Date:</b>	November 2019
<b>Sub-Category:</b>	Governance	<b>Amended:</b>	June 2020
<b>Last Review Date:</b>		<b>Next Review Date:</b>	

### Purpose, Responsibilities and Delegated Powers of the Committee

The Racial Equity Committee provides guidance, recommendations and support to the Board on the AOM's ongoing work to improve racial equity in midwifery. The Committee will aim to act as a voice for racialized midwives through diverse representation on the Committee and through ongoing engagement with racialized midwives of diverse experiences. The Committee will work to explore historic and contemporary, systemic and interpersonal racial discrimination, inequity and oppression that racialized midwives face within the midwifery profession and beyond. However, the Committee does not have sole responsibility to address the issues that it identifies. The AOM Board, staff and membership recognize the broader ownership that it must take in resolving racial inequities.

This Racial Equity Committee is intended to give voice to the perspectives and experiences of racialized midwives. In recognizing that Indigenous communities experience multigenerational trauma and ongoing systematic racism rooted in Canada's colonial history and present day policies, the AOM's Indigenous Midwifery Advisory Circle (IMAC) gives voice to the perspectives and experiences of Indigenous midwives. As such, the unique experiences of racism and colonization as experienced by Indigenous midwives is outside the scope of this Committee. This committee also recognizes the intersectionality of both Indigenous and racialized individuals, and leaves it up to such individuals to centre themselves in the work they most closely align with.

The responsibilities of the Racial Equity Committee are to:

- Explore the ways in which racial discrimination and inequities experienced by racialized midwives manifest within the midwifery profession, how they present challenges and barriers for midwives, and how they can be addressed;
- Critically analyze the current state of the profession from a racial equity lens to identify existing gaps that need to be filled, barriers that must be addressed, and strengths that can be built upon;

- Advise the Board on interventions to help develop their perspectives on racial equity and advance Ontario midwifery into a more racially equitable profession for midwives, and consequently racialized midwifery clients as well;
- Assist the Board and committees in incorporating racial equity into the AOM's strategic goals, objectives, priorities, policies and practices;
- Maintain a global, equitable and inclusive view of racial diversity in the midwifery profession;
- Monitor and work to improve the recruitment and retention, professional growth, and career satisfaction of racialized midwives;
- Review Board and AOM processes, composition and governance, such as recruitment, election, and meeting processes, for inclusion and equity; and
- Keep abreast of broad trends and best practices related to anti-discrimination work and for combatting systemic oppression.

## **Composition**

Members of the Racial Equity Committee will:

- Self-identify as racialized;
- Represent diversity of lived experience as a racialized person, of years in practice and a variety of practice contexts (e.g. urban, rural, large and small practices);
- Have knowledge or previous experience in racial equity and/or anti-discrimination work or a strong commitment to learn and contribute to this work;
- Have an interest in racial equity work and its application to midwifery;
- Recognize the impacts of systemic, intersectional and interpersonal racism on racialized populations;
- Be willing to engage in thoughtful constructive discussion and reflection about midwifery practice in Ontario and how racial equity practices best apply.

The Racial Equity Committee will be comprised of the following voting members:

- A maximum of 8 midwife members
- 2 student members
- 1 faculty representative from the Midwifery Education Program (MEP)
- 1 Board member

AOM staff will attend meetings to provide resource to the committee. Unless an appropriate racialized staff is not available, staff supporting the Committee will identify as racialized.

Anyone else may attend Committee meetings as a guest upon invitation of the Committee. This may include the Executive Director and President, regardless of their racial identity.

In recognizing that there are different and complex power dynamics in midwifery that

may put some individuals in vulnerable situations, the Committee is committed to fostering an environment that enables members to freely, safely and respectfully engage in meaningful discussions. If a Committee member identifies that an individual's attendance during a specific discussion contributes to the vulnerability of a member, the individual may be requested to recuse themselves of the discussion as appropriate.

### **Selection and Term of Office of Committee Members**

A call for members will be circulated to all AOM members. Interested members will be asked to submit a statement of interest. The Board will select Committee members who are best able to give voice for racialized midwives and help the Committee to fulfill its purpose and responsibilities. Once the inaugural committee is formed, the Board will solicit advice from the Committee regarding new members who apply to join.

Committee members will serve two-year terms renewable three times. Student members serve a two-year term, or a term that ends once the member is no longer a student, whichever is shorter. Terms will be completed as of the Annual General Meeting each year. For those serving on the Committee from its initiation, the term will be deemed to start as of May 2020.

The Committee members may recommend a member of the Committee to the Board to serve as Committee Chair. To foster Board accountability, it will make best efforts to select a sitting member of the Board as Chair unless the Board determines that appointing a different chair would best serve the purpose of the Committee. The term of office of the Chair is 2 years, renewable once. The term can be renewed a second time if there are no other eligible candidates.

A vice-chair may be chosen as the Committee determines appropriate, and will be appointed by the Committee. The term of office of the Vice-Chair is 2 years, renewable once. The term can be renewable a second time if there are no other eligible candidates.

### **Rules for Meetings**

In recognizing the vulnerabilities of racialized people in discussing race and racism in the presence of people in positions of power, the Committee will strive to create a protective space for members to speak candidly and have conversations that will lead to transformative change. When developing and approving meeting agendas, the Chair and/or Committee members will identify which portion of the meetings may be attended by the Executive Director and/or President as guests, if they are racialized. The Executive Director and/or President (if racialized) will attend approximately one third of the meeting or as per the Committee's needs. If an AOM

staff or Board member wishes to meet with the Committee, a request will be made to the Chair who will consult the Committee to evaluate the request and facilitate this meeting with the Committee.

The Committee will meet as required, at the request of the Chair, and will meet a minimum of two times per year, including one full day meeting to be in person with members off call. Members may be required to provide input between meetings via telephone or e-mail. Minutes for each meeting will be recorded and circulated.

Decision-making will be done by consensus where possible. Where this is not possible and a decision needs to be made, varying viewpoints will be considered, with a priority placed on the experiences and/or perspectives of the most marginalized or least empowered members in an effort to center these voices and reach an equitable decision. Upon considering these viewpoints, a decision will be reached by majority vote. Quorum will be a majority of voting Committee members.

Members who either miss more than two meetings in a row (except due to attending births or other extraordinary circumstances) or miss two meetings in a row without notifying the Chair, will have their membership on the Committee revoked.

### **Commitment to Anti-oppression, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

The AOM recognizes the dignity and worth of every person and is committed to creating an environment that is safe, accessible, inclusive and respectful of members, Board members, staff, and the Ontario public. The AOM recognizes that inequity is maintained by oppression, discrimination against, and systemic marginalization of people based on the protected grounds identified by the Ontario Human Rights Code.[1] All members of this committee (as with all AOM Committees) are expected to foster equity and inclusion, in accordance with the expectations set out in the AOM's *Policy on Anti-Oppression\*, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* (November, 2016). The AOM will work to ensure a safe space in which members of all committees will work. Training to support anti-oppression, diversity, equity and inclusion will be made available to members of all committees, work groups and task forces as required.

\* for a definition of anti-oppression, see AOM's policy on Anti-Oppression, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Members of any AOM Committee who are unwilling to meet the expectations of the Anti-Oppression, *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* policy may, at the sole discretion of the Executive Director have their membership on this committee revoked.

## **Reporting and Accountability Requirements**

The Committee is a Committee of the AOM Board and accountable to the Board. In accordance with the AOM Constitution article 6, the committee is advisory in nature. It is established by the Board to carry out its mandate and to carry out the directions given to it from time to time by the Board. Committee members are responsible for implementing Board decisions with regard to the Committee's mandate.

Due to the highly sensitive nature of information that will form part of the Committee's work, prior to joining the Committee, members will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement. A signed confidentiality agreement, one that covers the term of their membership on the Committee, is a requirement to serve on this Committee.

The Committee Chair will provide a written report to the Board of Directors at least once per year about the key issues affecting the program and the deliverables being achieved. Any staff/consultants hired to undertake specific work related to the Committee's work will be hired by and report to the Executive Director.

The Board of Directors is committed to racial equity as an ongoing and central part of the work of the AOM. However, as with all of its Committees, the Board of Directors has the authority to dissolve this Committee. The Committee may be dissolved if, upon consultation with racialized midwives, the Board determines that there is no longer a need for it, or if there has been sufficient evidence to suggest that the Committee is no longer productive.