

Racial Equity Committee Terms of Reference

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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 promote racial justice and dismantle racism 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 and students 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 appropriately 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 participate in either one or both groups as appropriate.

The responsibilities of the Racial Equity Committee are to:

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

- Provide guidance to the Board and AOM staff in implementing racial justice principles
- 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;
- Provide guidance on the recruitment, retention, professional growth and career satisfaction of racialized midwives;
- Advise on 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-racism work and for combatting systemic oppression.

Composition

Members of the Racial Equity Committee will:

- Self-identify as Black and/or racialized;
- Represent diversity of lived experience as a Black and racialized person, with regards to years in practice, practice contexts (e.g., urban, rural, large and small practices) and intersectionality (e.g., 2SLGBTQQIA+, disability, international midwifery training, etc.);
- Have knowledge or previous experience in racial equity and anti-discrimination work (i.e., activism, community initiatives etc.) and a strong commitment to ongoing learning and contribution to racial justice in midwifery;
- Recognize the impacts of systemic, intersectional and interpersonal racism on racialized populations; and
- 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, of which at least 1 identifies as Black and 1 who identifies as 2SLGBTQQIA+*
 - 2 student members
 - 1 racialized faculty representative from the Midwifery Education Program (MEP) Consortium†
 - 1 Board member
- Staff who may attend meetings to provide resources to the Committee:
 - Director, Health-Care Equity, Quality and Human Rights (staff resource)
 - Manager, HEQHR (staff resource)
 - Policy Analyst(s), HEQHR (staff resource)
 - Administrative support from HEQHR (staff resource)

* In recognition of the sensitivity in disclosing certain identities including sexual and gender identity, the Committee will endeavor to have representation from 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals but will not require people to disclose their sexual and gender identity.

† If a racialized MEP faculty is unavailable to regularly attend meetings, the REC may at their discretion seek a designated racialized faculty advisor to consult with.

Other staff may attend as assigned. AOM staff will attend meetings as a resource to the Committee as non-voting members. 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 by the Committee. This may include the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and President, based on the Committee's discretion. The CEO and President may request to attend specific agenda items to support organizational commitments to racial justice. 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 engage in meaningful discussions freely, safely and respectfully. 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 solicit recommendations from the Committee in selecting members who are best able to give voice for racialized midwives and to support the Committee to fulfil its purpose and responsibilities. The Committee will make a recommendation by referring to the REC recruitment matrix to identify experiences and skills that may be under-represented on the Committee. The Committee will use the matrix to reflect on the voices that are represented on the Committee and those that are not, the objective being to identify gaps that need to be filled to ensure a broad representation of the diverse lived experiences and voices in midwifery and Ontario birthing communities. The matrix will be reviewed and updated from time to time to ensure it reflects the evolving needs of the Committee and racialized midwives.

Committee members will serve three-year terms renewable once. The term can be renewed a second time, for a one year term, if there are vacancies that are not filled or if there are no other eligible candidates to fill vacancy. Student members serve a two-year term, or a term that ends once the member is no longer a student, whichever is shorter. The term can be renewed once if there are no other eligible candidates to fill vacancy.

Terms will be completed as of the Annual Members' Meeting each year. If a vacancy exists and no eligible applications are received following a call, the position will remain vacant until filled by an eligible candidate.

The Committee members may recommend members of the Committee to the Board to serve as Committee Co-Chairs. To foster Board accountability, it will make best efforts to select a sitting member of the Board as Co-Chair, unless the Board determines that appointing a different Co-Chair would best serve the purpose of the Committee. If only one member is available to Chair the Committee, the Committee may proceed with a Chair until a Co-Chair that the Committee

recommends is available. The term of office of the Chair or Co-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. The general term of office does not include any period of time in which the member served as Chair or Co-Chair of the Committee.

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 Co-Chairs and/or Committee members will identify which portion of the meetings may be attended by the CEO and/or President as guests to meet the Committee's needs. If an AOM staff or Board member wishes to meet with the Committee, a request will be made to either one of the Co-Chairs who will consult the Committee prior to accepting their attendance. If it is not possible to consult with the Committee (i.e., due to time constraints), either one of the Co-Chairs will use their discretion to facilitate the request on behalf of the Committee, then open the meeting by first inquiring if the Committee approves the staff or Board member's request to attend the meeting.

Committee members will engage respectfully, honoring the diversity of voices and experiences on the REC. If a committee member's behaviour or conduct is harmful to another member or to the Committee, the Co-Chair(s) will address the individual directly. If the behaviour continues or if the behaviour is egregious, the individual may be removed from the Committee.

The Committee will meet as required, at the request of the Co-Chairs, and will meet a minimum of two times per year, including one full-day, in-person strategic planning meeting where members will strive to be 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 principles of equity and centering the perspectives of those who are marginalized. Upon considering these viewpoints, a decision will be reached by majority vote. Quorum will be 51% 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 Co-Chairs, may have their membership on the Committee revoked.

Commitment to Anti-racism, 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 [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Position Statement](#) and *Racial Justice Position Statement*. 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.

Members of any AOM Committee may report to the CEO if there are members who fail to comply with the expectations of the *Anti-Oppression, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* policy may. Members of any Committee who are unwilling to meet this policy may, at the sole discretion of the President have their membership on this committee revoked.

Reporting and Accountability Requirements

The Committee is a committee of the AOM Board and is 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 regards 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 Co-Chairs will provide a written report to the Board of Directors at least quarterly 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 CEO.

The Board of Directors is committed to racial and reproductive justice 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 Black and racialized midwives and the Racial Equity Committee (which may include former REC members), and the Director, HEQHR, 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. Such evidence will be determined after a thorough consideration and consultation to determine the cause of poor productivity and whether additional resources can support the Committee's productivity.