

What is Diversity and Inclusion?

At Net Impact Central, we are committed to supporting you in advancing your Chapter's mission, goals, and work to be as effective and successful as possible. To start, it's important to understand what we mean by "diversity and inclusion."

di·ver·si·ty

The term **diversity** is used to describe both individual differences and group/social differences. For example, diversity includes life experiences and personality types as well as race, socio-economic status, religion, gender, sexual orientation, etc. In other words, diversity is about who is invited to the table- who is part of your leadership team, board of advisors, expert panelists, and others who are directly involved in your Chapter? Just to be clear, diversity is not only about race or gender (the identities that are often initially thought of as diversity) but also includes ability, sexual orientation, religion, and all other aspects of one's identity within the definition of diversity.

in·clu·sion

The term **inclusion** is used to describe a state of being valued, respected, and supported. It's about focusing on the needs of every individual and ensuring the right conditions are in place for each person to achieve his or her full potential. Inclusion should be reflected in an organization's culture, practices and relationships to support a diverse membership. In other words, inclusion is about how your Chapter intentionally engages individuals who are associated with your Chapter so that their full selves and perspectives are embraced, respected, and integrated into the everyday fabric of your Chapter.

Your Chapter will be better poised to tackle the most pressing social and environmental issues of our time when you dedicate the time, energy, and resources into understanding and fostering authentic diversity and inclusion.

Key things to keep in mind:

1

We all have multiple identities from our race to our gender to our religion and more. Some identities are not visible. It is important to understand that identity is complex and intersectional. Some identities experience more power in society and some are more marginalized.

2

Avoid tokenism. This is the practice of doing something only to give the appearance that diversity is important to your Chapter. An example of this would be choosing someone to join your leadership team who belongs to a minority group just for appearance. People should not participate in your Chapter to meet any particular quotas that help your branding.

3

This work is challenging. When embarking on this work with your Chapter, you will likely come across people with differing views and/or ideas about how these concepts should or shouldn't play out in your Chapter. Take it one step at a time, and try to balance a strong conviction for this work with a listening ear.

4

You will make mistakes. Making mistakes is unavoidable in this work, and the goal is not perfection. The goal is to strive towards creating an increasingly diverse and inclusive Chapter. Know that at times someone might correct you and you might want to correct someone else. Assume everyone's best intentions and keep an open mind.

5

Reflect throughout the entire process (and for the rest of your life)! You will learn a lot throughout this process so build in time individually and as a team to reflect on what you are learning and what you could do differently as you progress.

