



## Resources for Career Conversations with Students of Colour



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



We want to see students thrive, grow and build meaningful lives and careers. This guide offers a starting place to improve your literacy about the ways in which career navigation intersects with racial factors, ethnicity and culture. Also refer to the [student-facing version](#) of this document.

Just as you would with any other student you're coaching or advising, respect the individual's knowledge about their experiences. Take a strengths-based approach and support the student to identify and leverage their talents.

## TIPS TO GET STARTED

1. **Check your assumptions** and make space for the student's voice. You will be unable to grasp an individual's experience through a single coaching conversation. Let the student lead the conversation while you actively listen and ask questions.
2. **Career navigation varies from person to person:** students of colour may face particular structural barriers to employment due to systemic racism and racial inequities in the workplace. This may be the result of an individual's identities, the social location(s) they occupy, their experiences of discrimination/oppression and the role of power and privilege.
3. **Pay attention to intersecting identities:** students have overlapping and intersecting identities. For some, this may impact their experience of job search and career navigation. For example, racialized women may face racial and gender discrimination as they navigate their careers. Read more about intersections [here](#) and [here](#).
4. **Commit to using anti-racism, inclusive language:** use phrases, expressions, and term that are inclusive and respectful. While refining your language remember that subtle or casual racism also has an impact. Learn about microaggressions and remove them from your patterns of speech and behaviour. Read more about microaggressions here: <https://bit.ly/2TSzkSw>. Read more about anti-racism here: <https://bit.ly/2GxKCc0>.
5. **Know [students' employment rights](#) in Canada.**
6. **Identify appropriate resources** where students can find support and have them ready at all times.

7. **Speak Up - Respond to microaggressions and racism.** Read more about UBC's Speak Up campaign and how to be an active by-stander here: <http://really.ubc.ca/get-involved/>



## KNOW KEY TERMINOLOGY

Racism and race-related bias in a careers/workplace context includes intersecting ethno-racial factors such as ethnicity, culture, religion, country of origin, and citizenship status, indigeneity, and language(s). Below are some terms you should familiarize yourself with.

**PERSON OF COLOUR:** A term which applies to non-white racial or ethnic groups; generally used by racialized peoples as an alternative to the term "visible minority." The word is not used to refer to Indigenous peoples, as they are considered distinct societies under the Canadian Constitution. The word is not used to refer to Indigenous peoples, as they are considered distinct societies under the Canadian Constitution.

**RACISM:** An ideology that either directly or indirectly asserts that one group is inherently superior to others. It can be openly displayed in racial jokes and slurs or hate crimes as well as more deeply rooted in attitudes, values and stereotypical beliefs. [Source](#).

Racism can be individual (an individual person's prejudice or racial bias), cultural (cultural ideologies that are inherently racist), and/or systemic (institutional policies/practices that exclude groups). Read more about racism here: [bit.ly/2GwgsWC](http://bit.ly/2GwgsWC).

**RACIALIZED DISCRIMINATION:** “Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin, which nullifies or impairs the recognition, enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.” Source: UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 1. <https://bit.ly/2SUyuEX>

**MICROAGGRESSION:** “[B]rief and often subtle actions, remarks, or visual cues in our everyday interactions that communicate negative ideas about a group of people, usually a socially marginalized group” (Sue et al., 2007. Ref. in UBC’s Wiki, here: <https://bit.ly/2TSzkSw>).

If you would like to dive deeper into race-related key concepts for a better understanding, Google the University of Calgary’s Anti-Racism Education guide, Racial Equity Tools, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Racial Equity Resource Guide.

### THOUGHTS FROM AN ALUMNUS:

Q: What advice have you received that resonated with you and helped you navigate the early years of your career journey?

*If you open your mind to the idea that your career path is not set in stone, you will be able to take in so many diverse experiences, and come to realize what you like and dislike about a job, field, or a company. This will allow you to discover what you find fulfilling without the burden of feeling like you’ve “wasted time” trying to stick to something you may have lost interest in. Be open to new experiences and take time to reflect on how they have influenced your career journey.*

- Scott King, BA ‘16



## GET INFORMED

- Read FAQs asked by students of colour related to their career navigation in the [Career Navigation guide for Students of Colour](#).
- UBC’s Equity & Inclusion office offers several workshops related to intercultural communication, diversity, inclusion, and power and privilege, which are relevant to supporting students of diverse racial experiences and identities at UBC.
- Read the Social Justice section of [UBC’s Open Case Studies](#), for career advising topics related to supporting students of colour, such as: What’s in a Name?

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

- Awake to Woke at Work: Building a Race Equity Culture
- The Episodic Career by Feraï Chideya
- How Black Women Describe Navigating Race and Gender in the Workplace

*Always respect the individual’s knowledge about their experiences. Take a strengths-based approach and seek to support the student to identify and leverage their talents.*

## ENHANCE YOUR COACHING SKILLS

[Intercultural communication](#) is an essential skill for staff operating in culturally diverse environments. Understanding how to navigate cultural differences and communicate in a way that is inclusive is key to supporting students and providing individualized career coaching.

An important part of effectively coaching students of colour is actively choosing not to make assumptions and reducing your personal bias. [Appreciative inquiry](#) is one way to explore and ask students questions about their career navigation in a way that fosters open communication, reduces bias and assumptions, and creates a more inclusive environment where coaching and advising is individualized to the student’s needs, goals, and strengths.



## PROVIDE APPROPRIATE RESOURCE REFERRALS

Wondering where to direct students who ask about general UBC supports and peer networks for students of colour? Here's a list of a few great places to suggest they get started!

UBC's Equity and Inclusion Office: for resources, workshops, and education.

The [RAGA Centre](#) (Centre for Race, Autobiography, Gender, and Age): RAGA is a collaborative research centre, an inclusive space on campus, and hosts [events and conferences](#). The [RAGA Student Network](#) promotes critical scholarship and supports Indigenous students and students of colour.

[Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality & Social Justice](#): Faculty of Arts department at UBC that delivers programming, research and events related to race, culture, and social justice.

Many student led clubs and groups exist at UBC with a focus on racial justice and/or community development [AMS Cultural/Society/Identity Clubs](#)

[International Student Guide](#) for information about working, living and studying in Canada for international students.

[Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion](#) for information about diversity and inclusion in the Canadian workplace.

[Canada's Top 100 Employers For Diversity](#)

### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

[Navigating Stereotype Threat and Identity Management in the Workplace](#), by Ann Marie Ryan on *re:Work*.

[How Black Women Describe Navigating Race and Gender in the Workplace](#) by Maura Cheeks on the Harvard Business Review.

*This guide was developed on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Musquaem peoples.*

*This guide was developed collaboratively between the Centre for Student Involvement & Careers and the Hari B. Varshney Business Career Centre and in consultation with UBC'S Equity & Inclusion Office, the Centre for Accessibility, students, alumni, staff, and faculty who have lived and scholarly experience related to the subject matter.*  
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