




# INTEGRATION OF GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS PLUS INTO INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

## INTRODUCTION

Analyzing issues from a gender and diversity perspective is a competency. Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) helps to ensure the consideration and inclusion of the experiences of **diverse groups of people** in the development of federal initiatives, including training.

At times, we all make assumptions about people and groups based on our own experiences, and we forget to consider how much of our experience is unique to us, and how much can be generalised to include others. When incorrect and unchallenged, the assumptions we make in our work can lead to unintended impacts on and even discrimination against people and groups. This can happen in all areas of our work, including instructional design. **A key component of GBA+ is recognizing and challenging our own assumptions.**

One of the most common assumptions is that training is “gender neutral,” because it applies to all employees regardless of

-  Sex refers to a set of biological attributes and is associated with physical and physiological features. Sex is usually categorized as female, male or intersex, but there is variation in biological attributes and how those attributes are expressed.
-  Gender, on the other hand, refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions and identities of individuals. Gender helps determine how people perceive themselves and each other and how they act and interact. It can even have an impact on how power and resources are distributed in a society.
-  We all have multiple identity factors that intersect to make us who we are. This is called intersectionality. The “plus” in gender-based analysis plus acknowledges that GBA goes beyond sex and gender. It examines how sex and gender intersect with other identities such as: race, ethnicity, religion, age or mental or physical disability.





gender or other intersectional factors. **Effective training is inclusive, and not simply neutral.** The integration of GBA+ into your instructional design will make for better design and – ultimately – improve employee performance.

There is an old saying: “You can’t really understand another person’s experience until you’ve walked a mile in their shoes.” This is precisely what GBA+ is about – taking a moment to stand in someone else’s shoes, considering their perspectives and needs (through research or consultation) as you design and implement training.

This job aid outlines four steps to help you adapt your instructional design method to ensure that your organization’s training is sensitive to and mitigates the different impacts that training can have on diverse groups of people. It is not meant to be prescriptive, but instead to serve as a guide to **challenge assumptions** and to make training inclusive, without compromising performance objectives.

### RECOMMENDED PRE-REQUISITES TO JOB AID

**Experience in instructional design** – This job aid is intended for employees who know how to design training for the adult learner in the Government of Canada context.

**Completion of [Introduction to Gender-based Analysis Plus \(GBA+\)](#) course** – The 2-hour, introductory online course is the cornerstone of GBA+ training in the federal government, and will provide you with essential information on GBA+ and its related concepts. The course is your first step in developing your GBA+ competency; you will begin to develop the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA) you need to apply GBA+ to training design in your department or agency.





## STEP 1:

### ESTABLISH PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FOR YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

No matter what your specific approach to instructional design is, you will begin with analysis of expected performance and the target audience.

#### Expected performance

At the end of the training, **what do participants need to be able to do?** This analysis will include determining an overall performance objective, as well as establishing what knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA) learners require to accomplish the performance objective(s). This can be done any number of ways, depending on your individual and/or organizational approach to instructional design.

Ideally, you have been provided with a job/task analysis to inform your “model of performance.” This is your first opportunity to ask questions about whether GBA+ has been applied. In short, **unless a methodical gender-based analysis plus is part of the process of developing the job/task analysis, bias in the stated job requirements may be systemic, go unnoticed and undermine the inclusivity and effectiveness of the training.** For example,

consider: If the job requirements are

established by those currently in the job, and the job has always been done by a homogenous group of men or women, the requirements may reflect a limited set of possible approaches.

**NOTE** – Although the process used to develop a job/task analysis may be outside the scope of your design project, it is worth asking questions about this critical, foundational step to solid instructional design. Do not underestimate your influence; in asking questions, you raise awareness about the importance of GBA+ and you may play a role in ensuring a GBA+ is completed on the job/task analysis.

Questions to ask	Considerations
Who is affected by the stated job requirements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>How could diverse groups of people potentially be impacted by the job requirements?</li><li>Are certain groups potentially disadvantaged?</li><li>If so, is this justified given the <i>bona fide</i> (i.e. authentic, genuine, real) requirements of the job? How do you know?</li></ul> <p><b>Example:</b> The job requires carrying heavy gear on a regular basis. People with less upper body strength will struggle. This could disproportionately impact certain groups.</p>
Who is impacted by the people doing this job?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Who will be served by the people doing the job?</li><li>How might they be impacted?</li></ul> <p><b>Example:</b> Immigrant women tend to under-report violence due to isolation, fear of deportation, and experiences of language and</p>





	cultural barriers. Having diverse first responders trained in cultural competencies could mitigate this reality.
Who has been consulted in development of the job requirements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Whose point of view is reflected in the job requirements?</li><li>What assumptions informed the identification of requirements?</li><li>What types of measures are needed to ensure equitable and diverse representation during consultation processes?</li><li>Is infrastructure in place to ensure that specific population groups can participate (e.g. employees working in a region)?</li></ul> <p><b>Example:</b> There are likely assumptions about the need to do the job in a particular way. It may be necessary to look beyond the employees doing the job to ensure a diversity of perspectives. Consider consulting the target audience, or people in similar jobs that represent a number of diverse intersectional factors.</p>

### Target audience

You already have experience designing instruction, so you know how to design for the adult learner. You will consider prior experience and pre-requisites. But, have you fully considered the diversity of your learners?

**NOTE** – When considering your target audience, you may be tempted to consider gender differences in how people learn; however, a consensus about the role of gender in adult learning has not emerged. Research indicates that in relation to thinking skills and learning processes, males and females are more alike than different. (Kimmel et al.)

Questions to ask	Considerations
What are the demographics of your target audience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Are you making assumptions about the uniformity of the learners?</li><li>What type of gender and diversity disaggregated data are already in place in measure this?</li><li>How will your research methods ensure the collection of gender and diversity disaggregated data?</li><li>What other types of disaggregated data are needed to understand gender and other dimensions of the target audience?</li></ul> <p><b>Example:</b> It is difficult to understand your target audience if you don't have disaggregated demographic data. At minimum, you need sex or gender disaggregated data. Ideally, you will also have data disaggregated for other diversity factors.</p>





<p>Is there an acute gender or other diversity imbalance in a particular group or position?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✚ Is this a new or previously identified trend?</li><li>✚ Has it been analyzed?</li><li>✚ Is this trend found in other similar groups or departments?</li><li>✚ What is it about the position/group that seems to attract and/or retain members of one gender?</li><li>✚ What might be some of the barriers to entry/retention that are keeping others out of the position or group? Are certain members of your target audience potentially at a disadvantage?</li><li>✚ Obstacles to one's equal and full participation might include: security, finances, family life obligations, professional duties, legal constraints, moral/religious considerations, historic/structural/systemic vulnerabilities (e.g. Indigenous women, refugee members of the LGBTQ2 community), etc. Are resources available to respond to these needs?</li><li>✚ Has your communications approach considered diverse audiences?</li><li>✚ Do diverse members of your target audience:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ know the opportunity exists?</li><li>○ feel welcome to apply?</li></ul></li></ul> <p><b>Example:</b> Although this may fall outside the scope of training design, consider informal as well as formal barriers to full participation. Evidence indicates that informal networks and recruitment can exert even greater influence than the formal.</p>
<p>How are training participants selected? Are participants self-selected to be on training or appointed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✚ If appointed to participate, who makes the decision and based on which criteria?</li><li>✚ If participation is self-selected, how is the training advertised?</li><li>✚ Should strategies for recruiting a diversity of participants be considered? Although this may be outside your mandate as an instructional designer, candidate selection is part of the learning continuum; it would be worthwhile encouraging those selecting for training to do a GBA+ of their selection process.</li></ul> <p><b>Example:</b> If participants are selected by a manager without specific and defensible criteria, the (often unintended) consequence may be the exclusion of certain groups of people. If candidates self-select, they may incorrectly assume the training/job is not open to them, especially if they are "different" from those currently in the job/taking the training. The absence of appropriate training is likely to limit development and/or promotion prospects, which may lead to systemic discrimination.</p>





## STEP 2: DESIGN AND DEVELOP YOUR TRAINING

Now that you have established your performance objectives and the KSAs required to meet them, you will design the training “intervention.” Whether in the form of eLearning, classroom

training or another format, your training will include a series of activities and experiences that facilitate achieving the performance objective.

**BE COMPREHENSIVE** - Training policies and programs should consider all relevant moments on the learning continuum, including: candidate selection, the training itself, job-skills transfer, and skills maintenance.

**Revisit the key questions:**

Questions to ask	Considerations
Are certain groups potentially at a disadvantage because of the design of your training?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Is the training being adapted to account for unanticipated gender- or diversity-specific differences?</li><li>Will the option of language and ASL interpretation services be available/integrated into the design of your training depending on end-user needs?</li></ul> <p><b>Example:</b> Does the training require a long work day and/or fall outside standard work hours? If so, is this justified? Evidence indicates that requiring unusual hours can disproportionately impact parents with young children or employees with other caregiver responsibilities.</p>
Who has been consulted in developing your design?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Have you looked at best practices elsewhere?</li><li>Have you consulted with a diverse cross-section of the end users of your training?</li></ul> <p><b>Example:</b> We all have assumptions and biases. Researching best practices and consulting a diverse cross-section of end users will help to ensure a comprehensive consideration of possible issues.</p>
Are you using inclusive language and appropriate images?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Is the oral and written text using non-gendered and inclusive language? In French and in English versions?</li><li>Are images and illustrations reflecting and valuing experiences of a diverse population?</li></ul> <p><b>Example:</b> This is a simple – yet important – consideration. The more learners “see” themselves in the learning materials, the greater the potential for learning.</p>
Is the end user demonstrating mastery of the KSAs required to meet the performance objective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Does your measurement approach take into account the diversity of your learners?</li></ul> <p><b>Example:</b> Using a range of instructional and assessment methods will help to ensure that diverse learners have the opportunity to learn <u>and</u> demonstrate their mastery of the KSAs.</p>






### STEP 3: IMPLEMENT YOUR TRAINING

Now you are ready to test your design. Ensure that you include a diverse sample of the end user in your sample/pilot group of learners. Remember, these questions and considerations are not meant to be prescriptive, but to help ensure assumptions and unintended biases are challenged. See Annex A for some recommended general principles when teaching a diverse student body.

Questions to ask	Considerations
Who is the most appropriate facilitator?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Is it critical for the facilitator to be a subject matter expert?</li><li>Is the facilitator sensitive to diversity and aware of the specific gender and diversity issues affecting the learning environment?</li></ul> <p><b>Example:</b> An effective facilitator understands the audience and the subject matter. However, they do not necessarily need to be a subject matter expert. “Think outside the box” when considering facilitator selection. Be selective, yet open-minded, in your choice.</p>
Is the training venue accessible, safe and adapted to diverse groups of people?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Consider distance, and travel considerations, from home/work (e.g. accessibility of public transit).</li><li>Ensure appropriate restroom facilities, including accessible restrooms and gender-neutral restrooms.</li><li>Safety includes being in an environment that is free from sexual (or other) harassment, especially if the training is taking place in a remote and/or isolated location.</li></ul> <p><b>Example:</b> Although it may seem inconsequential, having a restroom for one gender far from all others sends a message: “You don’t belong here.” Details like this can send a strong (even if unintentional) message to members of your target audience.</p>
Does the training time create barriers to participation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Does the training time conflict (without good reason) with other responsibilities (e.g. care-giver responsibilities)?</li><li>Does the training time coincide with faith-based holidays?</li><li>Does the time of the training create safety concerns?</li></ul> <p><b>Example:</b> Training that takes place during certain religious holidays may make it difficult for some to participate, due to their religious observances. Rescheduling or modifying the training schedule may be a simple solution that will ensure the training is more inclusive.</p>
Has a process been established to monitor the incorporation of gender and diversity issues in the course content, and to ensure that diverse groups of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Is distribution of learners being monitored within each session?</li><li>Is there a gender or other diversity imbalance among learners?</li><li>What mechanisms are in place if trends in gender or other diversity discrepancy begin to appear?</li></ul>












people equally participate in the training?	 Is course information and content equally accessible to different demographic groups? <b>Example:</b> Women attending training with almost all men may feel hesitant to “speak up” or appear “different” from the majority. This could be further complicated by language or cultural differences. This can be mitigated, for example, by ensuring either mixed-gender or single-gender groups, as appropriate.
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### STEP 4: EVALUATE YOUR TRAINING


Has your training achieved its desired outcome? Has performance improved? You will want to ensure you have gender and diversity disaggregated data at this stage to assess the success of your training for **all** learners. With the appropriate disaggregated data you will be able to identify and analyze any trends, and apply findings to further improve your training to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion.

Questions to ask	Considerations
Do your final recommendations reflect any gender or diversity issues raised during analysis and evaluation of the training?	 What indicators would you require to assess the success of diverse groups of people?  Have baseline indicators been established to measure the effectiveness of the training, and are they conducive to assessing the impact on diverse groups?  Are gender, cultural, or other stereotypes being reinforced in the delivery of the training? <b>Example:</b> Ask your target audience directly about this. Did they experience any barriers to their learning – in the training design, delivery or from peers – as a result of their gender, age, education, language, geography, culture, income or any other consideration? Look for trends in answers, remembering that one person’s perspective is just that – one person’s perspective.
Does the evaluation form identify the trainees’ gender and other diversity factors in order to monitor that diverse needs and expectations have been met?	 How are diverse groups involved in the management and monitoring of the training?  Are there gaps in the quantitative or qualitative data needed to effectively measure training outcomes? If so, how could these gaps be filled?  What additional data is needed to better understand the different impacts? <b>Example:</b> Access to disaggregated data is essential to inform your analysis and evaluation.
Will any impact analysis explore how diverse participants are applying the newly acquired skills and content?	 How will the differential impacts of targeted training interventions on different groups of men and women be monitored/evaluated to ensure they have the desired effect?







	 What data collection methods would be conducive to measuring outcomes for diverse groups of women, men and gender-diverse peoples?  <b>Example:</b> When you evaluate job skills transfer, using disaggregated data will allow you to identify any trends related to differential impacts on diverse groups of women, men and gender-diverse peoples.
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## CONCLUSION

Performance improvement is a critical outcome of learning. As such, carefully and methodically designed training impacts the culture and effectiveness of an organization at its very core.

Applying a rigorous GBA+ to all our instructional design in Government of Canada can – over time – have a broad and meaningful impact on diversity and inclusion in Canada.





## ANNEX A

The Center for Teaching Excellence of the University of Virginia recommends the following [general principles](#) when teaching a diverse student body:

- ✚ Keep your expectations high. Provide support so that learners can reach them.
- ✚ Give all learners equal attention and equal access to advice. Don't overlook capable but less experienced learners.
- ✚ Give all learners equal amounts of helpful and honest criticism. Don't prejudge learners' capabilities.
- ✚ Revise curricula to include different kinds of racial and cultural experiences. Avoid including them in stereotypical ways.
- ✚ Monitor classroom dynamics to ensure that no learners become isolated.
- ✚ Vary the structure of the course to include more than just individual and abstract modes of learning.
- ✚ Don't call on any learner as a "spokesperson" for his or her perceived group.
- ✚ Recognize and acknowledge the history and emotions your learners may bring to class.
- ✚ Respond to non-academic experiences – such as racial incidents or sexual harassment – that may affect performance.





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