



Guide 04



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DEI Do's and Don'ts to avoid misunderstandings

For University Students | From ECDA

Purpose of the Tool

This tool is designed to raise awareness and support inclusive workplace practices in the microelectronics industry. It provides practical guidance on how to navigate everyday workplace situations with respect and fairness, helping to prevent misunderstandings that may arise from unconscious bias, stereotypes, or a lack of awareness.

The tool comprises 10 areas of work, each with examples of good and bad practice.

How to Use the Tool

Each example below presents a typical workplace situation, followed by:



Do–Good practice: Inclusive, respectful, and equitable behavior



Don't – Poor practice: Behavior rooted in bias, stereotypes, or exclusion

Important Note

This tool is not about “policing” behavior but encouraging mindful, inclusive practices that create a respectful and innovative work culture.

Practical Situations and Examples

Language



Do:

- use respectful and inclusive language (e.g., "Hi team", "Good morning, everyone", "Hello team", "Dear colleagues", "Hi all" instead of "Hi guys")
- adopt person-first language that prioritizes individuals over labels (e.g., "an employee with a disability," "a person of Asian descent").
- avoid assumptions about gender, race, age, or background—use neutral phrasing such as "The new hire should submit their report by Friday" or "Some employees may need additional training with new technology."
- address colleagues by their preferred names and titles, and always respect their chosen pronouns (verify pronouns and preferred names before communication)
- ensure accessibility in digital communications (e.g., subtitles, transcripts)



Don't:

- make jokes or comments based on stereotypes (e.g., "That's such a girl thing", "You're too sensitive", "Men are naturally better at math", "That's so gay")
- use outdated or disrespectful terms such as "the disabled employee," "handicapped," or "Oriental"
- assume gender in speech or writing (e.g., "he" as a default, or starting emails with "Dear Sir")
- use diminutives or overly familiar nicknames in professional settings (e.g., calling a colleague "sweetie" or "girl")
- make vague or biased judgments (e.g., "She's just not leadership material", "He's not technical enough")
- use cultural references that exclude international colleagues

Interruptions and Listening



Do:

- if someone is interrupted, return the floor to them: "I'd like to hear X finish their point"
- actively invite quiet team members: "Sarah, what's your perspective on this?"

- create psychological safety: "All ideas are welcome, even if they challenge our current approach"
- use phrases like "Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken yet", "I think Maria was about to make a point", "Before we move on, are there other viewpoints to consider?", "I notice we haven't heard from the remote team members"

Don't:

- regularly interrupt some people, or repeat their ideas as your own without credit
- allow the same individuals (often men) to dominate the conversation while interrupting or overlooking others
- allow vocal individuals to monopolize discussions
- dismiss ideas without proper consideration
- speak over someone who is already talking
- look at your phone while others are speaking
- roll your eyes or show dismissive body language

Technical Work & Competence

Do:

- assume all colleagues have the necessary technical competence unless stated otherwise. offer support based on role or need
- ask before assisting: "Would you like me to review this with you?"
- recognize expertise regardless of who it comes from
- useful phrases: "I'm happy to pair program if you'd like a second set of eyes", "Would you like to walk through the code review process together?"

Don't:

- question technical abilities based on gender, age, or background ("Are you sure you can handle this, given you are so young?")
- automatically offer "help" to women on technical tasks: "Are you sure you know how to handle this?" or "Let me help you with the technical part"
- assume senior/male colleagues are more technically capable
- make statements like "She might not be committed because she just had a baby", "He's a better cultural fit because he's more like us", "This might be too complex for someone with your background", "You probably need help with the hardware components", "Maybe someone more experienced should handle the client presentation"

Social Interactions and Networking



Do:

- include all colleagues in informal conversations and social activities
- make an effort to connect with colleagues from different backgrounds
- support colleagues who might feel left out of social circles
- initiate conversations with quiet or newer team members
- examples of inclusive social behaviors: "Would you like to join us for lunch?", "We could try a different type of restaurant that accommodates various dietary needs", "I'd love to hear about your experience working in [their home country]"



Don't:

- form exclusive cliques based on shared backgrounds, interests, or demographics
- always socialize with the same group of people while ignoring others
- plan activities that consistently exclude certain colleagues (due to cost, timing, or cultural barriers)
- make assumptions about what people would or wouldn't want to participate in
- make inside jokes that exclude international or newer colleagues
- make exclusionary comments like "They probably wouldn't be interested in this type of event", "We always go to the same bar after work - they can come if they want", "I only hang out with people from my department", "They're too different from us to fit in"

Acknowledging Contributions



Do:

- publicly acknowledge someone's input regardless of their role or seniority
- publicly credit ideas to their original contributors
- use specific examples when recognizing work: "Anna's debugging approach saved us 3 hours"
- another way to give proper credit: "As Maria suggested in yesterday's meeting...", "I want to highlight Sarah's contribution to solving the issue", "This success is thanks to the innovative approach proposed by our junior developer, Alex"



Don't:

- attribute ideas to senior/male colleagues without verification
- overlook contributions from junior or underrepresented staff
- use vague praise that doesn't specify actual contributions
- take credit for others' work, consciously or unconsciously

Feedback Giving



Do:

- give constructive, objective feedback focused on behavior and outcomes
- be aware of potential bias in evaluations.
- use specific, behavior-based feedback with examples
- separate performance from personality or communication style
- examples of constructive feedback: "The code review could be more thorough - I suggest checking for edge cases", "Your presentation was clear, but adding more technical details would strengthen it", "I noticed somebody missed some deadlines - let's discuss how to improve project planning", "Your technical skills are strong; working on documentation would help the team"



Don't:

- use vague, subjective language ("not leadership material")
- apply different standards based on demographics
- confuse assertiveness with aggression based on your prejudices
- use comments like "She's too aggressive in meetings" (when the same behavior in men is called "decisive"), "He's not technical enough" (without specific examples), "She talks too much" (when participation is valuable), "He's not a culture fit" (without clear, job-related reasons)

Conflict and Microaggressions



Do:

- address misunderstandings calmly and with the intent to learn
- publicly or/and privately support colleagues who experience microaggressions
- listen actively when someone reports feeling marginalized
- address microaggressions promptly and respectfully
- use similar phrases: "I want to understand your perspective better", "Thank you for bringing this to my attention", "Let's discuss how we can prevent this in the future", "I'll make sure this doesn't happen again"



Don't:

- dismiss concerns with comments like "You're overreacting" or "It was just a joke", "You are being too sensitive"
- ignore microaggressions because they seem "small"
- make the affected person prove the intent behind the behavior
- avoid the conversation because it feels uncomfortable
- use the following dismissive comments: "That's not what I meant", "You're making a big deal out of nothing", "I was just joking, you need to lighten up", "I don't see color/gender/differences"

Mental Health and Well-being



Do:

- respect when colleagues need mental health days
- provide information about employee assistance programs
- recognize signs of burnout and offer help
- create workload balance for all team members
- normalize conversations about stress management



Don't:

- dismiss concerns about stress or anxiety with comments like "Just tough it out" or imply that mental health issues are a sign of weakness
- use comments like "Everyone deals with stress, you just need to handle it", "Mental health issues don't belong in the workplace", "Taking medication shows you can't cope", "Real professionals don't get burnt out"

Dress Codes and Appearance



Do:

- respect diverse expressions of identity through clothing, hairstyle, or religious symbols, as long as they meet safety standards
- focus dress code policies on safety rather than personal preferences
- accommodate religious or cultural clothing requirements



Don't:

- make comments like "You look too exotic", "Your hair looks unprofessional", "That outfit is too ethnic for the workplace", "You should dress more like everyone else" based on someone's cultural or personal style
- apply dress code standards inconsistently across demographics
- ignore safety requirements while respecting personal expression

Parental Leave and Care Responsibilities



Do:

- support colleagues who take parental or care leave and normalize flexible work arrangements for all genders
- offer the same support to fathers and mothers taking leave
- plan projects considering team members' care responsibilities



Don't:

- assume only women will need flexible hours, or judge them for prioritizing family responsibilities
- make comments like "She won't be as committed now that she has kids", "Fathers don't need extended parental leave", "We can't put her on important projects because she might get pregnant", "He's lucky his wife handles all the childcare"

Implementation Guide

- **Self-Assessment:** review scenarios monthly and identify areas for growth
- **Daily Practice:** choose one "DO" to focus on each week
- **Reflection:** consider your interactions and their impact on colleagues
- **Continuous Learning:** seek resources and training on bias and inclusion

Find more opportunities and tools, get in touch with the ECDA team!



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