

# Intersectionality

## **What is Intersectionality?**

Intersectionality, which originated in black feminist theory and was developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, emphasizes how different aspects of an individual's identity (such as race, gender, class, sexuality, disability, and more) intersect and interact with each other, resulting in unique experiences and systems of oppression or privilege.

Discrimination and privilege are not experienced in isolation, but rather as interconnected and overlapping systems. By understanding the complexity of these systems, intersectionality highlights the need to recognize and address the overlapping structures of power and oppression that affect marginalized groups.

In higher education, intersectionality has implications for admissions, curriculum, campus climate, support services, and academic research. It highlights the importance of creating inclusive and equitable learning and working environments that account for the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of students and staff.

An example of intersectionality in higher education is a student who identifies as female, comes from a low-income background, and is a first-generation college student. This student may face specific challenges related to gender inequality, socioeconomic barriers, and navigating the unfamiliar terrain of higher education without the guidance of previous family experience. An intersectional perspective can help to provide support systems and resources that address the unique needs and barriers faced by individuals with multiple marginalized identities.

We invite you to engage with the following resources and learn more about intersectionality.

### Watch:

- [Kimberlé Crenshaw: What is Intersectionality?](#) - National Association of Independent Schools, from 2018 (1:54 Minutes)
- [What is intersectionality?](#) - Professor Peter Hopkins, Newcastle University, from 2018 (2:49 Minutes)
- [What Is Intersectionality? Why is it important? | Get Smarter With Blair Imani](#) - Blair Imani, from 2021 (7:15 Minutes)

### Read:

- [What is intersectionality, and what does it have to do with me?](#) - YW Boston blog, from 2017
- [Why Intersectionality is relevant for a fairer Europe](#) - Wadzanai Motsi-Khatai; Miriam Aced, Center for Intersectional Justice, from 2020

### Listen:

- [Intersectionality](#) - New Books in Critical Theory, from 2022 (11 Minutes)
- [Introduction to Intersectionality / Employment & Incentives](#) - The Linklaters Podcast, from 2022 (16 Minutes)

**Time for self-reflection:**

1. With which intersecting categories do you define your identity?

Write down five categories that make up your identity:

2. Copy only three of the above-mentioned categories, leaving out the two that most people are unaware of:

Why are these parts of your identity more hidden than others?

3. Now leave out two more aspects of your identity, copying only the one category that is most prominent to you:

What makes this category so important to you / to others?

How would it feel if this was all people saw in you?

Do you get to know people beyond the identity you assume they are?

## Deep Dive Material:

- [Kimberlé Crenshaw: The urgency of intersectionality | TED Talk](#) - Kimberlé Crenshaw | TEDWomen 2016, from 2016
- [“REACH EVERYONE ON THE PLANET...”](#) - Center for Intersectional Justice (CIJ); Gunda Werner Institute, from 2019
- [Intersectionality: Just another tool to fight discrimination?](#) - Alizé Larguier, EQUINET European Network of Equality Bodies, from 2023
- [Intersectionality + intro to podcast](#) – Woke as Science: Constance Sommerey; Darian Meacham (Hosts), Maastricht University, from 2023 (54 Minutes)  
Accessible Transcript Available on [Podcast Website](#) (go to Episode #1):