What is a needs Analysis?

Note that while this analysis is presented in linear form, the process is often iterative and cyclical.

Identify as many problems related to employees and religion as you can.

Problems, in this case should stem from concerns that employees of minority religions have about practicing their religion at their institution.	One problem should be identified at a time. Problems should be clearly stated and focused.

Gather information and data about the problems identified.

Talk to employees who raised concern about the religion that is not recieving equity.	Research what other institutions have done about this problem and contact them for insight.

Act equitably and with a positive vision in mind.

Propose solutions that align with institutional policies and have been reviewed by the employee(s) who raised the concern.	Be persistent but not impatient. Give direction to concerned employees about how to help.

Positive Vision Statement

The goal and purpose of acknowledging the religious needs of employees from culturally diverse backgrounds is to allow the free expression and practice of religion on campus without hindrance because of living on or being in a work environment. In addition, there should be acknowledgment and proper reporting of religious bias incidents. Equity should be practiced when considering the needs for all religions. For example, it may not be equitable if your institution is affiliated to a certain religion to implement certain changes related to religion.

Keep in mind your institution's affiliations, whether public or private, or religiously affiliated. Depending on certain factors such as these will determine if certain religious accommodations are appropriate or necessary for your institution.

Employees, supervisors, and administrators must be willing to review the overall positive vision and refer to it when implementing new institutional policies about the free expression and practice of religion on campus.

An example of a positive vision statement could be: The Office of International Student Services receives many students from countries where Islam is the majority religion. Our office would like to create a more welcoming and respectful environment for people practicing the religion of Islam, while acknowledging the importance of the Brethren heritage of our institution.

Comprehensive Mission Creation

This mission should be a reachable goal, rather than broader statement as defined in the positive vision section, which is trying to achieve a broader outcome. The mission statement should be narrowly focused on one topic, should be clear and not include ambiguous words or phrases, and should answer the following questions:

1. What is the specific problem trying to be solved?
   (ex. Employees are not aware of religious heritage of the institution.)
2. Did an employee raise concern about the problem?
   (ex. Yes, an employee was wondering why certain practices are done on campus.)
3. What would the institution look like if this problem was solved?
   (ex. Employees would understand the religious heritage of the institution in order to give them more insight into why certain events are held on campus.)
4. Who are the parties involved with this problem?
   (ex. International educators, religious life, diversity office, history department)

Now, once the problem has been clearly identified, answer the following questions:

1. Is the institution public, private, or religiously regulated?
   (ex. Private)
2. Are solutions feasibly based on the selection in question one?
   (ex. Yes, our institution has employees who are willing to help implement meaningful solutions.)
3. Will implemented solutions solve religious bias incidents or solve issues of religious injustice at the institution?
   (ex. Yes, education on our institution's religious heritage will help employees understand that they are not being excluded if they believe in a different religion or are nonreligious.)
4. Will the implemented solutions provide learning and leadership opportunities for employees?
   (ex. Yes, the solution will most likely be some kind of seminar or educational experience.)
5. Do the proposed solutions align with institutional/state/federal policies?
   (ex. Yes, there are no policies against the brainstormed solutions at this point.)

MEASURING MISSION STRENGTH

Rating Key: 1 = does not meet standards

                2 = slightly meets standards

                3 = equitably meets standards

                4 = surpasses the standards

Standards being Measured	Rating
1. Employees of the religion/religious practice raised concern about inequity and therefore initiated the problem being explored.	
2. The problem is clearly and concisely identified.	
3. All possible solutions have been brainstormed and suggested.	
4. All possible parties involved have been identified and contacted if considered necessary.	
5. The proposed mission statement is agreed upon and is focused on one topic and does not include ambiguous words or phrases.	
6. The proposed problem is able to be solved by the institution based on the affiliation of the institution? (i.e. public, private, religiously regulated)	
7. Brainstormed solutions have been narrowed down to possible feasible solutions?	
8. Do these feasible solutions solve issues such as ones found in previous religious bias incidents or religious injustice?	
9. Will the implemented solution(s) provide learning and leadership opportunities for all employees?	
10. Are appreciative knowledge, constructive relationships, and positive attitudes toward this religion/religious practice gained through the proposed solution(s)?	
11. Do the proposed solutions align with institutional/state/federal policies?	

NOTES:

IDENTIFYING CONCERNS

When identifying concerns, it is important to keep in mind the person or group who will benefit from the action. If possible, speak with a person or several people of the religious practice that is being advocated and be aware of the goals and concerns of these people. Questions to consider asking someone from the religion would be:

- What would an ideal solution look like for this situation?
- How feasible is this ideal solution? (cost, labor, etc.)
- What would an equitable solution look like for this situation?
- What are some concerns you have with implementing a solution?

Also, within the committee or group working toward the solution, raise the following questions:
- What are some concerns we have with implementing a solution?
- What has happened elsewhere when similar solutions have been implemented?
- What is the feasibility of implementing proposed solutions?

Note: At this point, we are still brainstorming so allow everyone to voice concerns no matter how abstract or trivial they may seem.

NEED INDICATORS

This step may be one of the most crucial of the needs analysis. The need indicator should be raw data collected from employees. The data most likely will come in the form of interviews with employees, however other measures can be used. When interviewing and sampling views of a certain issue, be sure to interview as many people as possible that are relevant to the concern being raised. Relevant people could include, but are not limited to: person(s) who raised initial concern, protesters against implementing solutions to the concern, employees with diversity/religious background and/or training. Use the following table to help collect data:

Who raised initial concern? (person(s), group(s), etc.)	● ● ●
What is the concern raised? (i.e. problem identified from mission statement)	
Who is against implementing solutions to this problem? (protesters, etc.)	● ● ●
What are the concerns of people who are against implementing solutions to the problem?	

What external data can you find about the concern raised?	
What internal data can you find about the concern raised? (i.e. percentage of employees who share the concern)	
To what extent are the brainstormed solutions to this concern at all feasible? (i.e. financially, practical, sustainable, etc.)	
On a 1-10 scale, how important is it that this issue be addressed? (1 = not very important; 10 = very important)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
On a 1-10 scale, how sustainable to your institution's mission are the brainstormed solutions? (1 = short-term sustainability; 10 = long-term sustainability)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Keep in mind that the data you collect should reflect that there is reasonable cause for implementing a solution, and the solution should have long-term sustainability.

PRIORITY ASSESSMENT

Mentioned briefly before, the problem and concerns raised should be reasonably long-term in their impact. If problems and their solutions only have short-term implications, the problem is most likely a passing trend and should not be as heavily considered as a problem that has raised concern previously and has obvious long-term sustainable solutions. Use the following table to help determine if the priorities have both reasonable cause and long-term sustainable solutions.

Prioritize concerns from greatest concern to least concern.	● ● ● ● ● ●

What data is there to support the priority of your top concerns?	● ● ● ● ●
What has happened with other institutions' solutions to the problems/concerns raised? Have the solutions proved to be long-term sustainable solutions?	
Is there a clear, focused goal that has been set out as the basis for concern?	
Are possible brainstormed solutions feasible?	
Are possible brainstormed solutions equitable?	
Have possible brainstormed solutions been make available for critique for the parties who raised concern?	
What are the expected outcomes or predicted impact that the implemented solutions will have?	● ● ● ● ●
Will brainstormed solutions provide needed equity for the religious practice that raised the concern?	
On a 1-10 scale, how invested in providing religious services is your department or institution? (1 = not very invested; 10 = very invested)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
What services do similar departments or institutions provide similar to what you are hoping to implement?	

Client Worksheet for Needs Assessment

Positive Vision Statement/Comprehensive Mission:

Concerns Raised/Problems Identified:

Need Indicators vs. Priorities

Need Indicators	Priorities

MAKE CONNECTIONS

Identify allies and stakeholders who may be able to help with the identified concern or who may have influence on the implemented solution. List all possible connections that could possibly be used for this solution.

Name of Connection (i.e. employees who raised concern, allies, stakeholders, religious leaders, etc.)	Reason for Connection (i.e. how will this person be beneficial?)	Contact Information (i.e. phone, email, fax, etc.)

Do Research

Research what solutions to similar concerns have been implemented. Look specifically at the shortcomings of the implemented solutions in order to prevent repeated mistakes. Also, look for similar departments or institutions that have implemented a solution to this concern or have had success with implementing solutions to employee concerns. Based on your findings, you may be able to add additional connections to the previous section. Also, this would be a good time to interview employees who raised concern to make sure that researched solutions are equitable to the needs of the employees. If needed, scholarly research could be done using resources such as academic journals. Be transparent and maintain open communication with the employees who raised initial concern in order to make sure that the research is providing useful information in relation to the proposed concern.

Analyze Problem Based on Research

Does the research support positive outcomes from the proposed solutions?	**YES / NO**
What are some examples of similar situations and the solutions that worked?	
Has the brainstormed solution(s) worked in other situations?	**YES / NO**
Has the brainstormed solution(s) received positive feedback when implemented in other situations?	**YES / NO**
Is the brainstormed solution financially feasible based on the proposed budget?	**YES / NO**
Do stakeholders find the brainstormed solution(s) feasible and responsible?	**YES / NO**
Do the individual(s) who raised the initial concern find the brainstormed solution(s) responsible and equitable?	**YES / NO**
When the solution was implemented at another division, was it well documented? (If so, gather documentation)	**YES / NO**

What are some mistakes or hardships that other divisions have had when implementing a similar solution?	● ● ● ● ●
Are you able to contact the divisions who have implemented similar solutions?	**YES / NO**
What research was done by divisions who implemented similar solutions?	● ● ● ● ●

WORKSHEET FOR STEP 2: SUMMARIZE FINDINGS

WHO WERE THE MOST VALUABLE CONNECTIONS MADE:

WHAT WERE THE FINDINGS FROM YOUR RESEARCH:

CONCLUSIONS FROM ANALYSIS OF BRAINSTORMED SOLUTIONS BASED ON RESEARCH: