

Center for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

UoL Policy Document
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
2022 – 2029

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

The University of Limassol (UoL) is dedicated to cultivating an inclusive environment where diversity is embraced, equity is upheld, and all individuals irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, ability, religion, nationality, or any other dimension of diversity, are valued, respected, and empowered to flourish academically, personally, and professionally. This document is an expression of our commitment to fostering a community that values diversity, promotes equity, and celebrates inclusivity in all aspects of university life. Additionally, it is designed to guide the university community in creating an environment that celebrates diversity, promotes equity, and embraces inclusion as a core value.

The UoL Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (UoL Center for DEI) is an innovative entity in Cyprus, dedicated exclusively to addressing issues of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and their interconnection with the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Additionally, the UoL Center for DEI considers how these principles relate to environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG). Simply put, the UoL Centre for DEI is an organizational effort to increase diversity in representation at every level of our university, to actively respond to individual and systemic prejudices, behaviors, policies, and practices that ensure that everyone has fair access to opportunities, and to promote an environment where people with different identities experience a sense of appreciation and respect.

In light of these considerations, UoL is pursuing a comprehensive approach to implementing meaningful policies about DEI, in alignment with its Sustainability Strategy (2024-2029) and Gender Equality Plan (2022-2026). Moreover, our university's stance on DEI is consistent with relevant policies implemented by the United Nations, the European Commission, the All European Academies (ALLEA), and the Cyprus Commissioner for Gender Equality.

HISTORY OF CHANGES

Version	Publication date	Changes
1.0	13.05.2025	Initial version

APPROVAL

Version	Approving Body/Person	Date Approved
1.0	Management Committee	13.03.2025

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INTRODUCTION

The UoL Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (UoL Center for DEI) is committed to fostering a vibrant and inclusive academic environment that embraces all community members' diverse identities, perspectives, and experiences. Our DEI policy serves as a guiding framework for our efforts to dismantle barriers to equity, promote social justice, and cultivate an atmosphere of respect and belonging for students, faculty, and staff. Recognizing that diversity enriches educational experience and strengthens our institution, we aim to integrate DEI principles into every facet of university life, from research and curriculum development to community engagement and advocacy. This policy outlines our commitment to ensuring that every individual feels valued and empowered to contribute to the university's mission, while also addressing the critical social challenges that persist within and beyond our campus. Through intentional actions and collaborative partnerships, we strive to create a sustainable, equitable future that enhances the overall well-being and success of our university community.

VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

The UoL Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion envisions a university community where diversity is not only acknowledged but celebrated; where every individual, regardless of their background, feels a profound sense of belonging, safety, and empowerment. We strive for an inclusive academic environment that values diverse perspectives and fosters innovation, creativity, and collaboration, enabling all members of our community to thrive.

Our mission is to promote and implement comprehensive diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives that enhance the educational experience for all students, faculty, and staff. Through research, advocacy, educational programs, and community engagement, we aim to dismantle systemic barriers to equity, cultivate awareness and understanding of diverse identities, and empower individuals to actively contribute to a just and inclusive society. By integrating our DEI goals with the university's broader objectives, we seek to create sustainable change that positively impacts both the institution and the wider community.

KEY DEFINITIONS

To ensure a shared understanding of the principles guiding our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts, we provide the following key definitions:

- Diversity refers to the range of human differences, encompassing but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, socioeconomic status, and cultural backgrounds
- Equity involves the fair treatment and distribution of resources, opportunities, and support to ensure that all individuals have access to the same outcomes, recognizing that different individuals may require different levels of assistance to achieve similar results
- Inclusion signifies the active, intentional, and ongoing effort to create environments in which any individual or group can feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued
- Accessibility pertains to the design of systems, environments, and services that enable individuals with disabilities to participate fully and equally in all aspects of university life
- Social Justice emphasizes the pursuit of equitable treatment and opportunities for marginalized and underrepresented groups, seeking to address systemic inequalities and

promote a more just society. By grounding our DEI initiatives in these definitions, we aim to cultivate a common language and understanding that informs our practices and policies across the university community.

CORE PRINCIPLES

The UoL Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is guided by a set of core principles that underpin our commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment.

- Equity serves as the foundation of our work, emphasizing the importance of fair treatment and the provision of resources tailored to the unique needs of individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- We believe in Inclusion, which entails creating spaces where everyone feels valued and empowered to contribute, thus enriching our academic community.
- Respect is paramount; we commit to honouring the dignity and worth of every person, recognizing that diverse perspectives enhance collaboration and innovation.
- Collaboration is essential to our approach, as we actively seek partnerships within the university and the wider community to drive meaningful change.
- Finally, we uphold Accountability, ensuring that our actions align with our DEI goals and that we continuously assess our progress, welcoming feedback and adapting as necessary.

By adhering to these core principles, we aim to cultivate a university environment that not only embraces diversity but also champions equity and inclusion at every level.

FOCUS AREAS

- Race: The UoL community is a diverse entity, embracing the full spectrum of ethnic and racial backgrounds. Discrimination based on race, ethnicity, or national origin is unacceptable. This encompasses discrimination based on skin colour or other physical characteristics associated with race.
- Gender: At UoL, we acknowledge the notion of gender as a spectrum rather than a binary. This encompasses gender identity across the full spectrum, including individuals who do not align with the traditional gender categories of male, female, transgender, or non-binary. The freedom to express gender in a manner that aligns with or deviates from conventional norms is also recognized, where the choice is entirely up to the individual. Therefore, it is the policy of UoL to prohibit any form of unfair treatment of an individual based on their sex or gender. All individuals, regardless of gender identity, are treated with equal respect and afforded equal rights and opportunities.
- Sexual Orientation: UoL provides unwavering support and raises awareness about the fundamental right to express one's sexuality and sexual orientation freely, without fear of discrimination or exclusion. It is our firm belief that an individual's sexual orientation, regardless of whether it aligns with the categories of gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, or other, should not be subject to questioning, discrimination, or exclusion from our community.

- Age: Our community extends a warm welcome to individuals of all ages. It is unjust for any individual to be subject to discriminatory practices based on age. Such discrimination can occur at both ends of the age spectrum, targeting individuals of either older or younger age groups. UoL unequivocally denounces age-related stigmas and ageism in all their forms.
- Disability: We are committed to ensuring the full inclusion of individuals with physical, mental, or intellectual disabilities, as well as those with other related medical conditions. At UoL, discrimination based on disability is not tolerated. It is, therefore, imperative that these factors never be utilized as a rationale for the exclusion of any individual from full and active participation in our vibrant community.
- Beliefs and Opinions: UoL is committed to fostering an open and diverse community that respects the freedom of expression. Therefore, the University welcomes individuals from different religious backgrounds, outlooks, and political opinions or affiliations, including those who do not identify with any belief system. The unfair treatment of individuals based on their beliefs, opinions, or affiliations is unacceptable.
- Status: At UoL, we push the values of promoting justice and equal opportunity for all, irrespective of socioeconomic background or civil and family status. Income level, an individual's civil status, or familiar responsibilities, are insufficient criteria to establish any type of ranking. At this institution, it is our firm belief that such statuses do not impact their standing within our community.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Achieving the goals outlined in our DEI policy requires the active participation and commitment of every member of the University of Limassol community. This section details the specific responsibilities of university leadership, faculty, staff, and students to ensure the successful implementation and sustainability of our DEI initiatives.

University Leadership

- Commitment: University leaders are responsible for articulating a clear and compelling vision for DEI that aligns with the institution's overall mission and strategic goals. Leadership must ensure that adequate resources—financial, human, and material—are allocated to support DEI initiatives, programs, and infrastructures.
- Accountability: Leaders are tasked with establishing and monitoring performance metrics to measure progress toward DEI goals. Regularly report on DEI progress, challenges, and outcomes to the University community to maintain transparency and accountability. Ensure that University policies are inclusive, equitable, and regularly reviewed to address systemic inequities.
- Advocacy: The University builds and maintains partnerships with external organizations, stakeholders, and communities to support and enhance DEI efforts. This demonstrates a personal commitment to DEI through actions, decisions, and communications, serving as role models for the entire university community.

Faculty and Staff

Faculty and staff participate in ongoing DEI training and professional development opportunities to increase cultural competence and inclusive practices. They also integrate diverse perspectives and

inclusive content into the curriculum, ensuring that teaching materials reflect the diversity of the student body and society, provide mentorship and support to students and colleagues from diverse backgrounds, helping to create an inclusive and supportive academic environment, and they implement inclusive practices in teaching, research, and service to ensure that all students feel valued and supported. Additionally, they work collaboratively across departments and disciplines to promote DEI initiatives and share best practices, while they engage with the broader community to foster partnerships and initiatives that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion beyond the campus.

Students

Students are expected to show respect for the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of peers, faculty, and staff, fostering a culture of mutual respect and understanding and they are encouraged to engage in university activities, discussions, and organizations that promote DEI, contributing to a more inclusive campus climate. They are also encouraged to support peers who may face challenges related to their identity and advocate for a more inclusive and equitable campus environment. Additionally, they provide feedback on DEI issues and report incidents of discrimination, bias, or harassment to appropriate university authorities, they take advantage of opportunities to learn about different cultures, identities, and perspectives through coursework, events, and interactions, and they participate in DEI-related programs, workshops, and events to enhance understanding and contribute to a more inclusive campus community.

DEI Committee

The DEI Committee monitors the implementation of DEI initiatives and assesses their effectiveness, providing regular updates to university leadership and the broader community. It collects and analyzes data related to diversity, equity, and inclusion to identify areas for improvement and measure progress, makes recommendations for policy changes, new initiatives, and resource allocation to support DEI goals, and identifies and promotes best practices in DEI from within the university and other institutions. The DEI Committee also facilitates communication and engagement with students, faculty, staff, and external stakeholders to gather input and foster collaboration on DEI initiatives and develops and coordinates DEI education and training programs for the university community.

All Members of the University Community

The members of the university community commit to ongoing self-education on issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and they treat all individuals with respect and dignity, actively contributing to an inclusive and welcoming environment. The members also report incidents of discrimination, harassment, or bias to appropriate university authorities, using established procedures, provide support to individuals who experience discrimination or harassment and help guide them to appropriate resources and reporting channels, and they actively participate in DEI-related events, programs, and initiatives, contributing to the collective effort to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion at the University of Limassol.

PILLARS OF ACTION

The UoL Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion operates through five interconnected pillars of action, each designed to address critical aspects of DEI while contributing to the university's financial sustainability.

1. Research & Inclusive Curriculum focuses on integrating diverse perspectives into academic programs and fostering a curriculum that reflects the richness of human experiences.

2. Through Implementation of Internal Policies & Advocacy, we aim to develop and enforce equitable policies that promote a safe and supportive environment for all university members, addressing issues such as discrimination and harassment.
3. The Provision of Educational Programs & Awareness involves offering training and workshops that enhance understanding of DEI issues, equipping our community with the knowledge and skills necessary to foster inclusivity.
4. Through Provision of Consulting & Support Services, we provide guidance to departments and external organizations, helping them develop effective DEI strategies that align with their goals.
5. Lastly, Social Intervention, Community Engagement & Partnerships emphasizes collaboration with local communities and organizations to address social injustices and promote equity, reinforcing our commitment to social responsibility.

By integrating these pillars into our operations, we strive to create a comprehensive approach that not only advances our DEI mission but also enhances the university's overall impact and financial viability.

1. Research and an inclusive Curriculum

The Research & Inclusive Curriculum pillar aims to embed diversity, equity, and inclusion into the heart of the university's academic programs. By promoting interdisciplinary research that prioritizes diverse perspectives and voices, we strive to cultivate a rich learning environment that reflects the complexities of our global society. This pillar focuses on developing curricula that are inclusive and representative, ensuring that all students see themselves reflected in their studies. Through collaborative efforts with faculty, we will implement teaching practices that accommodate diverse learning styles and backgrounds, enhancing the educational experience for everyone. Additionally, this pillar supports the creation of research opportunities that address social justice issues, allowing students and faculty to engage meaningfully with their communities while contributing to the body of knowledge in DEI fields.

2. Implementation of Internal Policies & Advocacy

The Implementation of Internal Policies & Advocacy pillar is dedicated to establishing a framework of policies that promote equity and inclusion throughout the university. We recognize that effective advocacy is essential for creating lasting change, and this pillar focuses on developing and enforcing clear policies that address discrimination, harassment, and bias within our community. Through collaboration with university leadership, we will ensure that DEI principles are integrated into hiring, promotion, and evaluation processes. This pillar also includes advocacy efforts aimed at raising awareness of DEI issues within the institution, fostering a culture of accountability and transparency. By empowering individuals to speak up and report incidents of inequity, we seek to create a safe and supportive environment where everyone feels valued and respected.

3. Provision of Educational Programs & Awareness

The Provision of Educational Programs & Awareness pillar seeks to enhance understanding and engagement around diversity, equity, and inclusion through comprehensive training and awareness initiatives. We will develop and offer a range of educational programs, workshops, and seminars designed to raise awareness of DEI issues, challenge biases, and promote cultural competence among students, faculty, and staff. By incorporating interactive learning experiences, we aim to foster open dialogue and critical thinking about the complexities of identity, privilege, and systemic inequality. This pillar also focuses on creating resources and materials that support ongoing learning and reflection, ensuring that DEI remains a central focus in the university community. Ultimately, our

goal is to empower individuals to become advocates for inclusion and equity in their personal and professional lives.

4. Provision of Consulting & Support Services

The Provision of Consulting & Support Services pillar emphasizes our commitment to providing resources and expertise to support departments, organizations, and external partners in developing their own DEI strategies. By offering consulting services, we aim to guide stakeholders in identifying their unique challenges and opportunities related to diversity and inclusion. This pillar includes the creation of tailored workshops and training sessions that address specific needs and promote best practices in DEI implementation. Additionally, we will establish a network of support services that connect individuals with resources for personal and professional development in the realm of diversity and inclusion. Through collaboration and knowledge sharing, we aspire to enhance the capacity of our university and its partners to foster inclusive environments and drive meaningful change.

5. Social Intervention, Community Engagement & Partnerships

The Social Intervention, Community Engagement & Partnerships pillar is dedicated to building strong connections with local communities and organizations to address social injustices and promote equity. By engaging in collaborative projects and initiatives, we aim to amplify the voices of underrepresented groups and create pathways for positive change both on and off campus. This pillar focuses on fostering partnerships that allow us to leverage resources and expertise to tackle pressing social issues, such as economic inequality, discrimination, and access to education. Through community outreach programs, volunteer opportunities, and participatory research, we encourage students and faculty to engage with diverse communities, fostering a sense of social responsibility and commitment to justice. By aligning our DEI efforts with the needs of the wider community, we strive to create a sustainable impact that extends beyond the university and contributes to a more equitable society.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The implementation strategy for the UoL Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is designed to ensure that our DEI initiatives are effectively integrated into the university's operations and culture. This strategy includes the establishment of a dedicated DEI task force composed of representatives from various departments, faculty, staff, and student groups to oversee the execution of our policy objectives. We will develop a detailed action plan with clear timelines, specific responsibilities, and measurable outcomes for each of the five pillars of action. Regular training sessions will be conducted to equip stakeholders with the skills and knowledge needed to implement DEI practices within their respective areas. We will also foster ongoing communication and feedback mechanisms to engage the university community in the process, ensuring that their voices are heard and their insights valued. Additionally, progress will be monitored through qualitative and quantitative assessments, allowing us to identify areas for improvement and adapt our approach as needed. By employing this comprehensive implementation strategy, we aim to create a dynamic and responsive DEI framework that promotes lasting change and sustainability throughout the university.

FUNDING AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

The success of the UoL Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion relies on strategic funding and resource allocation to support our DEI initiatives and ensure their sustainability. We will actively seek

diverse funding sources, including grants, partnerships with local organizations, and revenue-generating programs aligned with our DEI goals. By integrating profit-driven actions within our pillars, such as offering consulting services, educational workshops, and community engagement initiatives, we aim to create a self-sustaining model that generates financial support for our programs. A transparent budgeting process will be established, outlining how resources are allocated to each pillar, ensuring that investments align with our priorities and strategic objectives. Additionally, we will regularly assess the effectiveness of our funding strategies and seek opportunities for reallocation to areas of greatest need, maximizing our impact. By fostering a culture of fiscal responsibility and strategic investment, we will enhance the Center's capacity to drive meaningful change and advance our mission of promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion across the university and beyond.

COMMUNICATION PLAN

An effective communication plan is essential for fostering engagement and awareness of the UoL Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion's initiatives and objectives. Our strategy will encompass a multi-faceted approach to ensure that DEI principles are integrated into the university's communication channels. We will develop a dedicated section on the university website to provide easy access to resources, updates, and information about DEI programs and events. Regular newsletters and announcements will keep the university community informed about ongoing initiatives, success stories, and opportunities for participation. Additionally, we will utilize social media platforms to reach a broader audience, encouraging dialogue and collaboration around DEI topics. Engagement with student organizations, faculty committees, and community partners will be prioritized to ensure that diverse voices are represented, and that feedback is actively solicited and incorporated into our efforts. By maintaining open lines of communication and promoting transparency, we aim to cultivate a culture of inclusion, encouraging all members of the university community to take part in our collective mission to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion across all facets of university life.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the UoL Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion stands firm in its commitment to fostering an environment that celebrates diversity, promotes equity, and cultivates inclusion throughout the university community and beyond. By implementing a comprehensive DEI policy grounded in our five pillars of action, Research & Inclusive Curriculum, Implementation of Internal Policies & Advocacy, Provision of Educational Programs & Awareness, Provision of Consulting & Support Services, and Social Intervention, Community Engagement & Partnerships, we aim to drive meaningful change that enhances the educational experience for all individuals. Our strategic approach, combined with a robust funding and communication plan, ensures that our initiatives are sustainable, impactful, and aligned with the university's broader mission. As we embark on this journey, we invite all members of the university community to join us in creating a culture of belonging and respect, where every individual is empowered to thrive, contribute, and advocate for a more just and equitable society. Together, we can pave the way for a future that not only acknowledges but celebrates the richness of our diverse experiences and perspectives.

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