Deliverable 9.1

INGENIUM Action Plan for Equity and Inclusion

Work Package 9 – INGENIUM for Non-Discriminatory and Socially Engaged Higher Education

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Description of the deliverable (3-5 lines)	The INGENIUM Action Plan for Equity and Inclusion is a strategy that tackles barriers to inclusion in higher education, and proposes a number of recommendations and concrete actions to fight discrimination and make the INGENIUM universities more open, accessible and inclusive for all students and staff, irrespective of their gender, age, disability, nationality, culture, religion or socio-economic status.
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15/05/2024	2	Ligia Livanu (URN)	Final draft

Definitions & Acronyms

Definition/Acronym	
CEDAW	United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
EEA	European Education Area
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer
PD	Professional Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SES	Socio-economic Status
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

SUMMARY

In the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), inclusion, equity, and diversity are fundamental principles that underpin the mission of providing accessible and quality education for all.

Inclusion ensures that all learners, regardless of background or ability, feel valued and respected within educational settings. Equity emphasises fairness, striving to eliminate barriers that may hinder certain groups from accessing quality education. Diversity celebrates the richness of human experience, recognising the unique perspectives and talents each person brings to the learning community.

Within the European Education Area, these principles guide policies and practices aimed at creating inclusive learning environments, where differences are embraced and leveraged for collective growth.

The INGENIUM Action Plan for Equity and Inclusion outlines various forms of discrimination and barriers faced in higher education institutions. It covers gender, disability, age, race, religion, ethnicity, culture, and socio-economic status.

Each section defines the issue, discusses challenges, and provides guidelines, recommendations, and suggested actions for INGENIUM universities. Additionally, it addresses professional development, community engagement, representation, and inclusive curriculum.

Our strategy aims to:

- promote inclusion and equity within INGENIUM alliance;
- raise awareness about different discrimination forms and barriers to inclusion in higher education;
- make recommendations to address specific challenges related to gender, disability, age, race, culture, ethnicity, socio-economic status;
- make recommendations to encourage professional development and community engagement;
- suggest concrete actions to break down certain barriers and create equal study/work/mobility opportunities for all students and staff.

Having an inclusion and equity action plan is essential for ensuring that all partner universities actively promote fairness, diversity, and belonging. Such a plan provides a roadmap for identifying and addressing systemic barriers that may hinder the full participation of all members of the alliance community.

By implementing concrete measures to foster inclusivity, INGENIUM universities can create environments where every student, faculty member, and staff member feels valued, respected, and supported in reaching their full potential.

DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY

The INGENIUM strategy for Inclusion, Equity and Diversity is a five-chapter document addressing the most prevalent issues related to discrimination, inclusion, and community engagement within the alliance.

The first section tackles gender identity and expression, the second one deals with disability and age, the third chapter focuses on discrimination related to race, culture, religion, ethnicity, while the fourth one addresses the problem of access to international mobility for all students, (in particular students facing socio-economic difficulties).

The final chapter emphasises the need for EDI training targeting university students and staff together with the importance of community engagement and professional development.

All five sections have the same structure (following the pattern of the template used to collect information from all ten partner universities). The headings include definitions, challenges/barriers, recommendations, suggested actions.

The work methodology involved the creation of five subgroups – within the EDI group of the WP 9 – whose members met every month to discuss issues relevant for the Inclusion and Equity strategy.

It is important to note that the contents of the INGENIUM Inclusion and Equity Plan reflect both the discussions and conclusions of the EDI experts across the alliance (members of the 9.1 group), and the voice of the INGENIUM students, who provided valuable input on these issues during the 10 Days of INGENIUM events.

Apart from challenges, recommendations and concrete actions, our strategy includes an important collection of best practices provided by the INGENIUM partners, and the Inclusion and Equity Charter that will set standards, guide our actions, create accountability and drive change.

1. GENDER DISCRIMINATION

1.1. Definitions

Gender is often defined as a social construct of norms, behaviours and roles that varies between societies and over time. Gender is often categorized as male, female or nonbinary.

Gender identity refers to "each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth including the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms (1). The term "gender-diverse" is used to refer to persons whose gender identity, including their gender expression, is at odds with what is perceived as being the gender norm in a particular context at a particular point in time, including those who do not place themselves in the male/female binary.

Gender expression is how a person presents gender outwardly, through behaviour, clothing, voice or other perceived characteristics. Society identifies these cues as masculine or feminine, although what is considered masculine or feminine changes over time and varies by culture.

Sex refers to a person's biological status and is typically assigned at birth, usually on the basis of external anatomy. Sex is typically categorized as male, female or intersex.

Woman (cis): Female human being; a person assigned a female sex at birth, or a person who defines herself as a woman (1). In the text that follows the term "woman" or "women" refers to cis women, unless specified otherwise.

Man (cis): Male human being; a person assigned a male sex at birth, or a person who defines himself as a man (2). In the text that follows the term "man" or "men" refers to cis men, unless specified otherwise.

Cisgender, or simply **cis**, is an adjective that describes a person whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Transgender, or simply **trans,** is an adjective used to describe someone whose gender identity differs from the sex assigned at birth. A transgender man, for example, is someone who was listed as female at birth but whose gender identity is male. For transgender people, gender identity differs in varying degrees from the sex assigned at birth.

Nonbinary is a term that can be used by people who do not describe themselves or their genders as fitting into the categories of man or woman. A range of terms are used to refer to these experiences; nonbinary and genderqueer are among the terms that are sometimes used.

Agender is an adjective that can describe a person who does not identify as any gender.

Sexual orientation: Each person's capacity for profound emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender, the same gender or more than one gender (3). Sexual orientation is separate from gender identity (4).

1.2. Gender in a global context

1.2.1. The European Context

The work with gender equality has a long history and the *United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)* from 1979, highlights the establishing of legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination. CEDAW has been a framework for many international and regional organisation like the European Commission.

The European Commission's 'Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025' presents policy objectives and actions to make significant progress by 2025 towards a gender-equal Europe.

> The goal is a Union where women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are free to pursue their chosen path in life, have equal opportunities to thrive, and can equally participate in and lead our European society.

> The key objectives are ending gender-based violence; challenging gender stereotypes; closing gender gaps in the labour market; achieving equal participation across different sectors of the economy; addressing the gender pay and pension gaps; closing the gender care gap and achieving gender balance in decision-making and in politics. (5)

Both CEDAW and the European Commission's 'Gender Equality Strategy' highlight the importance of public authorities and institutions as well as organisations or enterprises to fulfil the obligations that have been undertaken in United Nations conventions and policies as well as the European Commission's strategies and policies.

The concept of gender and gender identities has also broadened to include a wider definition.

1.2.2. UN Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations created the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in 2015 and they are a part of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. The barriers to inclusion, that will be covered in the upcoming chapter, as well as the goal for working with gender and transgender equality are built upon the SDGs.

Gender is an important aspect of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and that is why it is mentioned in many of the goals (see also *Annex 2. UN Sustainable Development Goals* for all the relevant subgoals). Breaking down barriers for inclusion due to gendered identities supports the following UN Sustainable Development Goals (6):

- Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;
- Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;

- Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;
- Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all;
- Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.

1.2.3. The Goal of Gender Equality Strategy of INGENIUM

The goal is to create an INGENIUM European University wherein individuals of all gender identities, embracing their diverse spectrum, are free to pursue their chosen path in life, are granted equal opportunities to thrive, and have equitable access to education and research at all levels and can equally participate in leading our European society to achieve the goals outlined in Agenda 2030.

Intersectionality describes overlapping or interdependent systems of discrimination related to age, disabilities, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, sex, socioeconomic status, sexuality, etc (7).

The report and recommendations will be built on this use of an intersectional perspective:

- Religion/personal faith: Religious discrimination refers to a disadvantageous consideration or distinction of people on the basis of their religious affiliation, their personal belief (or non-belief), their faith-based appearance or behaviour or their assumed religious affiliation (Fact Sheet No.34 Religious Discrimination and Legal Protection in the European Union)
- Disability: It refers on specific discriminations against 'those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'.
- Age discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably, or not given the same opportunities as others in a similar situation, because he or she is considered to be too old or too young (8). Age discrimination can also impact people who are of reproductive age.
- Sexual orientation: Discrimination on the basis of sexual preference, usually directed towards non heterosexual people.
- Ethnicity/Race: Racial Discrimination is defined as 'any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life'. (Art. 1(1) of UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination)
- Socio-economic background: Socio-economic inequality is rooted in differences in social class, education and household income across groups of children, young people and families.

Fig. 1. Gender Identity - Intersectional Perspective
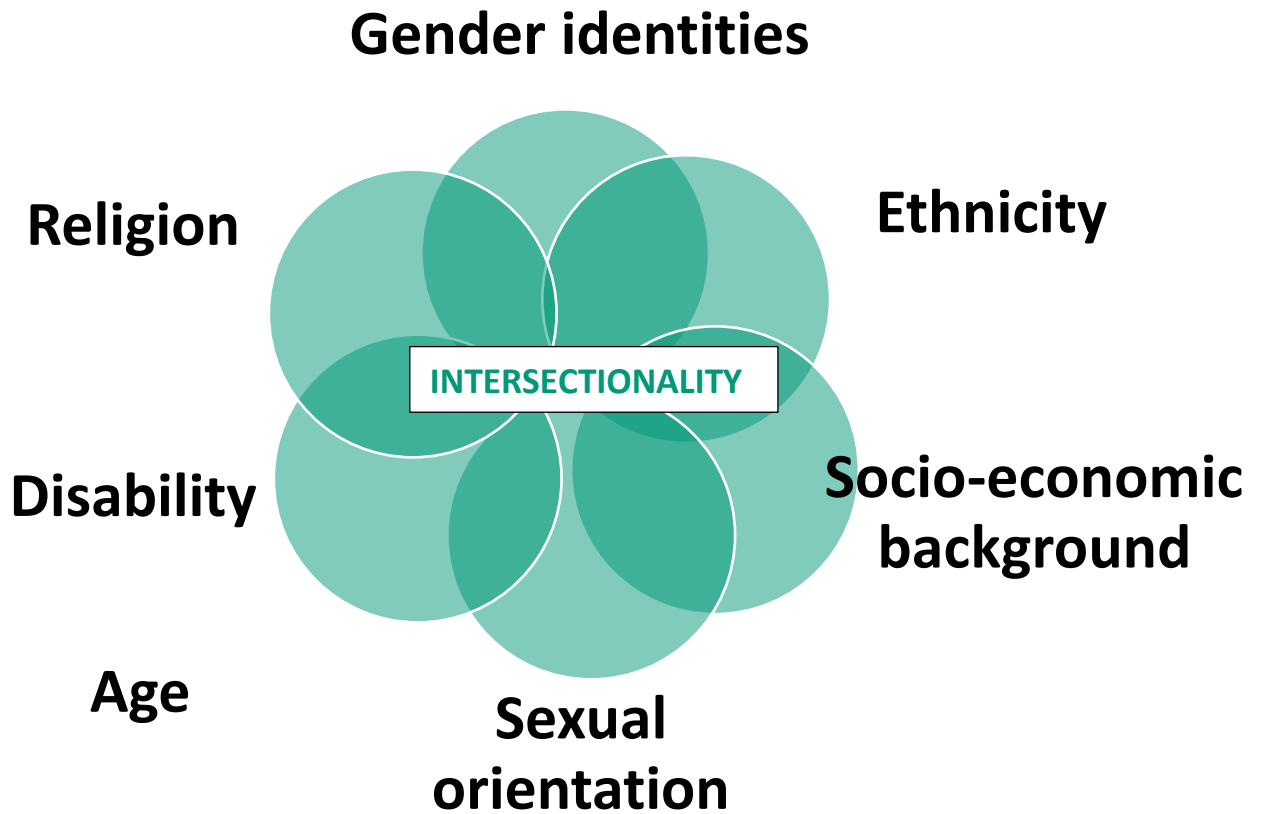
1.3. Challenges/Barriers

Gender is a ground of discrimination that can manifest in different ways from overt abuse such as sexual harassment to more subtle biases, such as women not being considered for higher positions at the same extent as their male peers. Gender stereotypes can influence workplace dynamics even without individuals consciously endorsing them. Transgender people face a lot the same discrimination as cisgendered people. However, it's crucial to recognise the unique challenges faced by transgender individuals in order to develop tailored strategies for transgender employees and students. Moreover, transgender people experience higher rates of harassment compared to other groups within the LGBTQ+ community.

International and European conventions, along with policies, have served as the starting point for identifying the barriers and challenges to inclusion for all genders. These challenges not only form the crux of the discussion but also serve as the foundation for the ensuing recommendations.

Gender discrimination

Any differentiation, exclusion, or limitation based on gender, with the intent or outcome of hindering or negating the acknowledgment, enjoyment, or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms by women, regardless of their marital status. Direct discrimination occurs when individuals are treated less favourably due to their gender identity (9). Indirect discrimination involves seemingly neutral provisions, criteria or practices that disproportionately disadvantage individuals of a particular gender (10). For example, a policy stipulating that only full-time workers will be promoted might put women at a disadvantage, especially since they are more inclined to work part-time due to family responsibilities (11).

Bullying/micro aggressions

Gender-related microaggressions represent a form of discrimination and sexism. These seemingly innocent transgressions, whether intentional or unintentional, manifest as comments or actions directed at individuals from marginalised groups, signalling disrespect and inequality. Some microaggressions have the effect of silencing women, leading them to question their abilities and self-worth, ultimately negatively impacting their mental health (12). Examples of microaggressions that women experience in the workplace include: being assigned a role or task solely based on their gender, having their competence questioned, getting interrupted by men during meetings, having men taking credits for their ideas, being told to dress/present themselves a certain way, being told they're too sensitive or accused of having no sense of humour (particularly when expressing anger over a sexist joke), and being excluded from office-related activities under the guise of being 'for the boy', among others (13).

Fighting stereotypes

Gender stereotypes are deeply ingrained in our culture and are a root cause of gender inequalities. These stereotypes can limit people's ability and aspirations to choose a field of study or training, or pursue a professional career. Research indicates that already during childhood, people begin associating specific jobs with particular genders. Thus, girls are more likely to be guided toward studies or vocational training in fields like education, health, welfare, and the humanities, while boys tend to gravitate toward science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). While numerous factors may influence these choices, it is crucial to address the impact of gender stereotypes. Gender inequalities in education are mirrored in the job market, influencing income and careers. Challenging stereotypes opens opportunities also for men to be more involved parents by encouraging men to take more paternal leave (14).

Acknowledging all gender (in language, practice, pictures)

Gender-discriminatory language stands in contrast to gender-sensitive language, encompassing words, phrases, or linguistic elements that reinforce stereotypes, demand or ignore either cis women or men or trans and non-binary people. In its most severe form, it neglects to treat genders equally in terms of value, dignity, integrity, and respect.

Gender-biased language, whether implicitly or explicitly, favours one gender over other and constitutes a type of gender-discriminatory language (15). Gender-neutral language offers a potential advantage by being more inclusive for individuals who don't identify strictly within the binary framework of one gender. The adoption of 'they' and the emergence of new gender-neutral pronouns, like 'zhe,' represent further strides in this direction (15).

Gender neutral communication concerns also visual representations. Communication becomes gender-discriminatory when the individuals in the images are exclusively portrayed in stereotypical roles (for example, females as homemakers and males as builders). (16)

Equal representation

In meetings, women tend to speak less, especially when they are in minority, accounting for only 25% of the speaking time. Both men and women more commonly interrupt women than they do other men (17). The proportion of women among doctoral graduates (48 %) in the EU-27 is nearly equal to that of men, and nearly 42 % of academic staff are women. However, women are still underrepresented among researchers in the business sector (20.9 %), among professors and senior-level staff in academia (26 %) and in decision making positions in higher education (24 %). Gender inequalities are also evident across scientific disciplines and across the EU Member States (18).

Equal payment

The perception of gender-based skill differences contribute to the overrepresentation of women in certain professions like care and pre-primary education, while men dominate fields like politics and STEM. This horizontal gender segregation contributes to the gender pay gap, since male-dominated fields typically offer higher salaries. Despite women being concentrated in a specific field, men will still have more opportunities for promotion, take more senior posts and earn higher salaries. Gender stereotypes linked to the perceived value of work contribute significantly to this issue. For instance, the field of computer programming, once predominantly pursued by modestly paid women, gained prestige and became lucrative when men became more involved in the profession (48).

Access to leading positions and recruitment

Gender stereotypes have an impact at work, with the effects of sexist expectations already observable during the application process. Women are more likely to deselect themselves if they don't meet 100% of the required criteria, whereas men are inclined to apply for a position even if they meet only 60% of the criteria. Rather than indicating lower confidence in women, subsequent research suggests this pattern is more likely a result of women being socialized to adhere strictly to rules and perceive selection criteria as definitive. Additionally, women are less likely to apply for positions that use adjectives associated with masculine stereotypes (19). Evaluators' unconscious bias also impacts the process, leading for example to lower selection ratings and compensation offers for women compared to men. Even when women are concentrated in a specific field, men will still have more opportunities for promotion, take more senior posts and earn higher salaries (19). Women have been found to receive less feedback than men and the feedback they do receive is often less constructive and more critical and vaguer.

Leadership – gender awareness

Efforts to promote gender balance in leadership and decision-making have been undertaken in numerous countries. Yet, data shows that women remain under-represented in academic and administrative leadership and decision-making positions in universities and research institutions across Europe. According to *European University Association, they* were only 14 % of female rectors or presidents in 46 countries in 2019 (20). Proactively addressing barriers to women's representation in leadership, including structural, institutional, and individual obstacles, is crucial. This involves setting targets to promote gender balance in leadership and decision-making, along with defining specific steps and assigning responsibilities to achieve these targets (21).

Academic housekeeping (meta-work/meta-tasks)

It is defined as the type of work tasks within university departments that are low-status, time-consuming, largely invisible, and that nevertheless need to be done. Women tend to carry out a disproportionate share of academic housekeeping tasks, which takes time away from research, is undervalued and is the invisible work. The unbalanced academic housekeeping may partially account for women's difficulties in advancing within academia, and therefore need to be taken seriously in research as well as in academic leadership (22).

Work-life balance

Even though about 77 % of men aged 20–49 are eligible for parental leave in the EU (a higher share than women), only about 10 % of men take advantage of this right. Women continue to shoulder the majority of caring responsibilities and often opt for flexible work arrangements to achieve a work–life balance (23). In contrast, men frequently use such arrangements to increase their work commitment. Upon becoming mothers, women face perceptions of decreased competence compared to both childless women and their own pre-motherhood status. Any instance of family formation, whether through marriage or having a child, typically leads to a financial penalty for women and earnings boost for men. The disproportionate responsibility women bear for care work, contributes significantly to the gender pay gap (23). Initiatives promoting greater combability between work and family helps achieve gender equality. Such measures promote equal sharing of caregiving responsibilities between men and women and facilitate women's seamless entry into or return to paid employment following a family-related leave (24).

Sexual harassment

This is a form of discrimination and violence predominantly experienced by women and perpetrated by men. About 45 to 55 per cent of women in EU-28 has experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15 in different situations (25). According to the European Institute for Gender Equality, a third of women who have faced sexual harassment in the EU, has experienced it in the workplace (26)

Gender based violence

Gender-based violence significantly impacts women, who might struggle with finishing their studies or working due to the physical control that their partners expose them to as well as

the psychological stress of being living in fear of the physical, psychological or sexual abuse they are facing. It may in the long run causes they to get lower grades or not being able to pass their exams as students. The social and economic costs for employees could be manifested both in the victim's productivity on the job and the time taken off work as a consequence of abuse/crime (27).

Discrimination and harassment targeting transgender individuals

According to research, many transgender individuals feel that they are discriminated when looking for a job and at their work (28). People belonging to the LGBTQ+ group can experience harassment in the form of offensive or threatening situations at work, on the street, on public transport, in a shop, on the internet or anywhere else, including offensive or threatening incidents of a sexual nature. Due to the existing threats, many students hide the fact that they are LGBT at school (28). Many can feel discriminated against when in contact with school or university staff and in many cases, the perpetrators are their peers (29). Transgender individuals can have a higher of number of psychological problems (depression, anxiety) due to physical and sexual attacks compared with the whole group of LGBTQ+ (29).

Communication and information

Many of the INGENIUM universities have a lot of information about their efforts towards inclusion and gender equality. However, there is a lack of awareness among employees and students regarding the existing policies and reporting systems.

1.4. Guidelines and Recommendations for INGENIUM Universities

The recommendations to INGENIUM Universities are based upon the Goal of Gender Equality Strategy of INGENIUM, the barriers addressed as well as the best practices and available support (see *Annex 1. Best Practices and Available Support*). Gender mainstreaming is a key strategy working with gender equality and it involves applying a gender equality perspective in each phase of the policy-making cycle as well as all areas within policies and processes such as procurement or budgeting (30). Gender mainstreaming is the main strategy for the recommendations.

1.4.1. Gender training

Targets groups: Directors/executives, teachers/researchers, employees and students

To be able to address all the different types of gender/transgender discriminations knowledge and awareness is the key concepts at all levels. Unconscious bias can affect decision-making and perpetuate exclusionary practices. Addressing unconscious bias requires ongoing education and training.

On a management level, gender training should be mandatory since directors and executives wield significant influence over the organisational structure through recruitments, appointments and nominations for various positions as well as how policies are constructed, carried out and monitored. Awareness of factors such as who is encouraged for different positions, how work ads are constructed, what types of qualifications are ranked higher, who

is being listened to, underrepresented groups, representations in different groups and so on are crucial for promoting gender equality.

Teachers require gender training to effectively integrate gender awareness into education, for example in the curriculum as well as in the classroom. From a research point of view, gender training is essential to raise awareness concerning representation in research groups, the promotion of certain of research ideas as well as when key positions are filled.

Employees need gender training to foster awareness and ensure equal treatment of students and colleagues, regardless of gender and transgender identity. Additionally, such training helps employees recognise and address challenges that colleagues and student might face.

Students should receive gender training as a part of their education. This initiative promotes equal treatment of peers, regardless of their gender or transgender identity, and also contributes to the advancement of a gender-inclusive labour market.

Physical and/or online training/courses

- Create awareness by offering both physical and online training or courses for employees and students. INGENIUM partners could collaborate to design online courses covering gender and transgender awareness.
- Using online courses and training materials mentioned in *Annex 2. Tools for working against discrimination*.
- Create a *Knowledge Bank for Equal Opportunities and Gender Equality*. It could utilise an online platform like Canvas, where various sections on legislation, information, research, policies, films, and tools are easily accessible for both employees and students.
- Recognising employees who have participated in gender and transgender training, for example as a qualifying factor when applying for new positions.

1.4.2. Policy making, routines and working groups

Targets groups: Directors/executives, employees (concerned parties/departments) and human resources

Policies play a central role in fostering gender and transgender equality, since official documents are the central guidelines university operations. Directors/executives and human resources need to establish Gender Equality Plans (GEPs), if not already in place. The GEP should encompass the following key components:

- **how** women are represented in decision-making at the top of the organisation, across academic/research departments and administrative functions;
- **what** types of barriers exist to ensure women are represented in decision-making and leadership positions, including structural, institutional and individual barriers;
- **what** targets could be set to promote gender balance in leadership and decision-making roles across the organisation;
- **which** steps can be taken, and by **whom**, to achieve these targets (31)

Directors, executives, employees, and human resources personnel should actively engage in establishing and implementing policies aimed at fostering inclusivity and equality within the workplace. This entails establishing working groups and networks dedicated to these objectives.

Procedures for addressing discrimination, harassment, and discriminatory treatment should be a mandatory part of the work for inclusion as well as working groups and special representatives focusing on gender issues.

Networks:

- Establish networks within the universities. For example, interest groups can be formed with students and teachers from study programmes with gender under-representation to work towards fostering a gender-equal culture within that specific field.
- Foster networks between universities comprising representatives from the different partners specialising in various forms of gender equality. This can include networks of directors/executives, of human resources professionals, and representatives from specific fields like engineering or IT.

Marketing and website (marketing department and human resources/employees like student health working with equal opportunity):

- Ensure gender-neutral marketing of educational programmes. Avoid selecting stereotypical images and expressions. Incorporate a gender equality perspective in the selection of images, education representatives, descriptive texts etc. Recruitment campaigns should focus on attracting underrepresented genders to programs with skewed gender distributions. Underrepresented genders should be considered when selecting images and drafting marketing content. (See also *Annex 2. Tools for working against discrimination*.)
- Develop a learning platform featuring a module about regulations, policies, contact persons as well as exercises and other materials to practically address gender equality and discrimination.

Employees:

- Ensure diverse representation on interview panels when interviewing a person for positions. See for example Women's Empowerment Principles. (*Annex 2. Tools for working against discrimination*).
- Highlight diversity clauses in all job advertisement.
- Create job advertisements that appeal to and attract the underrepresented gender, thereby promoting diversity and inclusion in the applicant pool.

1.4.3. Monitoring system and statistics

Targets groups: Leaders and human resources

Gender equality plans and similar initiatives must be evidence-based. Collecting statistics is crucial for assessing an organisation's gender equality status and identifying areas for improvement (32). Tools for investigating the status quo of gender equality include statistical analysis of sex-disaggregated data, qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups to gain a better understanding, a documentary analysis of national legal and policy documents, and a review of the organisation's strategic and operational documents (32). Additionally, establishing transparent reporting systems that prioritise discretion and confidentiality for those reporting is essential for employees and students alike.

Evaluations:

- All relevant statistics at the University is disaggregated by gender to identify potential discrepancies concerning salaries, health, positions etc. Specific actions can then be implemented based on this data.
- Regular surveys should assess students' wellbeing. This survey should cover, among other things, aspects of inclusiveness.
- Every second year, there should be a survey for all employees that covers topics such as sexual harassment, inclusiveness and wellbeing across partner universities.

Formal complaints and reporting system:

- Each university should establish formal complaint procedures for students who have experiences discrimination due to their gender identity.
- Each university should have different reporting systems, including for sexual harassment, in place.
  These systems should be clearly communicated to all employees and students and easily accessible, for example through an online platform.
- Human resources departments at the partner universities should establish networks and hold regular meetings to align their complaint systems as closely as possible, taking national legislation into account. This ensures consistent treatment and support for all students and employees, regardless of the university they are currently studying or working at.
- A centralised contact point for all universities should be established, allowing different INGENIUM-partners to seek guidance on inclusion-related inquiries.

1.4.4. Equal representation and work-life balance

Targets groups: Directors/executives, teachers/researchers, employees and students

Equal gender representation:

- All universities should strive for equal representation of each gender in all committees, management teams and similar bodies. Equal gender representation means at least 40% of each gender.
- Teams across all spheres of the universities should strive for equal representation, including management teams, research groups, teaching teams and student groups. This involves considering the underrepresented gender throughout processes such as advertising, job interviews, and gender-aware decision-making in all areas (e.g.,

speaking time in meetings, salaries, personal and professional development, qualified and qualifying tasks). For more information see *Annex 2. Tools for working against discrimination.*

- Equal gender representation should also be sought among student scholarship holders and in other selection processes across all partner universities. Equal gender representation means at least 40 % of one gender.

Equal pay:

- Salary data should be categorised by self-identified gender (woman, man, non-binary). Comparative analysis should be conducted within different departments/school/offices to identify any gender-based differences when other criteria are taken away like position, age, work experience and so on. Statistics should also be compared with typical female-dominated and male-dominated departments/school/offices as well as other gender-based inequalities.
- Each university should have a plan to address unequal salaries based on gender.

Work-life balance:

- All universities should develop a plan for promoting work-life balance.
- All universities should foster **equal parenting** by offering part-time work options, encouraging male employees to take paternity leave in accordance with national legislation in the country.
- All universities should provide opportunities for employees to work partially from home to facilitate a better work-life balance, especially for employees with young children.

1.5. Suggested Actions

Table 1. Gender Equality Action Plan

Recommendations	Suggested action within the INGENIUM Alliance	Time period
Gender training	Develop online courses/modules accessible to all students and employees; Each university should have an annual awareness week on gender equality, either individually or in collaboration with INGENIUM partners; Each university should offer training courses for employees concerning gender equality and EDI (Equality/Diversity/Inclusion);	2024-2026

	Organise online cafes/lunch sessions addressing gender related issues or/and challenges for employees; Develop a website/learning platform where the partner universities showcase available support and best practices with either links or uploaded documents. The platform should also be used for recommendations for films, books and other material related to gender equality; Promote recognition of key dates at all partner universities, including: The international Women's Day (8 March), EU's Equal Pay (15 November), International day against Gender Based Violence (25 November), Trans Day of Visibility (31 March), International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (17 May) (33) and Pride month. This could be done through a collaboration with WP 10.	
Policy making, routines and working groups	Establish a network for female scientists to foster collaboration and support; Establish a network for Human Resources professionals specialising in gender equality and inclusion; Establish a network for employees focusing on gender issues, providing a platform for mutual advice and support concerning gender related challenges in their organisations; Establish a LGBTQ+ network for employees as well as one for students; Establish mentorship programmes dedicated to advancing gender equality; Ensure all partner universities translate their policies and steering documents concerning gender, sexual harassment and publish them on their websites;	2024-2026

	Use social media to disseminate recommendations on gender-equality related films, books and other material.	
Monitoring system	Each university should collect gender-disaggregated statistics to identify potential discrepancies concerning areas such as salaries, health, positions; Each university should have different reporting systems, including for sexual harassment, in place.	2024-2026
Equal representation and work-life balance	All universities should strive for gender balance in all committees, management teams and similar bodies. Equal gender representation means at least 40% of each gender. All universities should develop a plan for promoting work-life balance among their students and employees.	2024-2026

2. DISABILITY AND AGE

2.1. Definitions

In the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), people with disabilities are defined as follows: 'Those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'.

CRPD calls for inclusive education systems at all levels and lifelong learning directed to e.g., the full development of human potential and access to general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education, and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others, including reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities.

The European Commission's 'Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030' highlights ensuring that all persons with disabilities have equal opportunities, and equal access to participate in society and economy as well as education.

UNESCO highlights the universal right to education for every child, youth, and adult. According to UNESCO, adult learning counts more than ever in the era of globalisation characterised by rapid change, integration, and technological advances. Learning empowers adults by giving them the knowledge and skills to better their lives. But it also benefits their families, communities, and societies. Education is a fundamental human right. The right to lifelong learning and education should be recognised.

Accessibility refers to the organisation and implementation of the physical, psychological, and social environment in such a way that everyone can function on an equitable ground with others. In an accessible higher education institution, facilities, electronic systems, learning environments, teaching methods, as well as the attitudes and culture enable the inclusion and participation of all students regardless of their life situation, personal characteristics, and individual needs. A person's individual need can stem from e.g., health, age, language, or cultural background.

In the United Nations Disability and Development Report (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2019): 'Disability and Development Report - Realising the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities') it was found that persons with disabilities encounter multiple barriers to education and there is an urgent need to improve their access to education, because educational disadvantage could lead to higher rates of social exclusion and poverty and therefore have long-term implications for the capacity to participate in the labour force.

The report listed several actions that should be implemented to tackle those barriers, including making schools and educational facilities accessible; providing training to teachers and other education specialists to gain knowledge and experience in inclusive education for persons with disabilities; and adopting a learner-centred pedagogy that acknowledges that

everyone has unique needs that can be accommodated through a continuum of teaching approaches.

2.2. Disability and Age-Related Discrimination and Stigmatisation

People with disabilities or other impairments face discrimination that can manifest itself in many forms. For example, a person in a wheelchair might be unable to enter a classroom, a hearing-impaired person cannot hear the conversation in a noisy class environment, or a visually impaired person cannot participate in the university admission test, because the test requires vision even if the chosen study career itself and the completion of the studies would otherwise be possible. The different forms of impairments or limitations that students may have include e.g., visual and hearing impairments, problems with reading and writing, anxiety, physical impairments, autism spectrum disorders, activity and attention disorders and mental health problems.

People with disabilities and other limitations are easily underestimated in hiring, studying and at the workplace. It is necessary to increase the understanding that a person who needs aids or other support to function is a valuable member of the higher education community, whose skills are an asset. No one should be discriminated against because of a disability, functional limitation, or health condition. In addition, it should be noted that everyone's health status is a private matter. Everyone can decide for themselves, what information regarding their health they disclose to others and what kind of support measures they wish for.

When it comes to age-related discrimination, in higher education institutions, discrimination can be directed at any age group. Young employees can be unjustifiably considered incompetent, and their opinions are ignored. On the other hand, older employees can be considered incapable of adopting and understanding new things, for example matters related to digital development. When it comes to students, older students, students with families, or students that work while studying can often be left out. Special attention must be paid to the non-discrimination of the elderly, young people, or recent graduates, and those of reproductive age. Age should never be a decisive criterion for admission to study, assessment of academic performance, recruitment, or career development.

Higher education institutions must ensure that, for example, mobility opportunities are offered equally to persons with disabilities and people of different ages.

2.3. Disability and Age in a Global Context: UN Sustainable Development Goals

Breaking down barriers to inclusion for persons with disabilities and persons of different ages supports several UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and help solve the global challenges defined in UN Agenda 2030:

UN SDG 4: Quality education

- Target 4.3: equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality education, including university
- Target 4.5: ensure equal access to all levels of education for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities
- Target 4.a: build education facilities that are disability sensitive and provide safe, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

UN SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth

- Target 8.5: employment and decent work for all including young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay

UN SDG 10: Reduce inequalities

- Target 10.2: promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status

2.4. Challenges/Barriers

INGENIUM members have jointly identified the following challenges or barriers to inclusion that exist in higher education institutions:

2.4.1. Disability

Definition and recognition of the disability
Not all higher education institutions have a clear definition of disability or have provided clear criteria for the granting of reasonable adjustments. In addition, cooperating higher education institutions do not necessarily automatically acknowledge disabilities that have been acknowledged in another higher education institution, thus the student has to apply for reasonable adjustments and support separately from each higher education institution and possibly sent several medical certificates to several places if they wish to participate in student mobility.

Lack of awareness
There can be a lack of understanding from staff and students on the implications of disabilities. Thus, for example the teachers do not necessarily know how to support the students in an appropriate way.

Lack of support measures
There can be a lack of support measures that should be provided to people with disabilities.

Students not disclosing their needs and challenges
Disclosure of the disability is an important topic for students with disabilities and should be encouraged. If there is no disclosure, appropriate support measures and adjustments cannot be made.

Lack of information
It is possible that there is a lack of awareness of available support measures for people with disabilities. This lack of awareness can lead to feelings of not being welcome or being an inconvenience. If the reasonable adjustments offered and special support systems are not known, people that would benefit from such measures do not necessarily disclose their disabilities or request the adjustments they are entitled to. There can also be a lack of available information regarding the accessibility of the higher education institution, available transportation options, housing and campus opportunities, and the best places to go socially. This information is especially vital in student mobility.

Lack of proper transition (from high-school to university)
High school teachers and administrators have little knowledge of the supports available at university. Facilities are different from those offered in high schools, which may create a gap for high school students and future students.

Lack of accessibility
There can be shortages in accessibility in higher education institutions. These shortages can be related to physical accessibility of facilities and buildings, digital accessibility or even the organisation culture. These kinds of issues should be remedied to advance inclusion.

Lack of resources
Higher education institutions may be faced with lack of resources. If higher education institutions do not have proper contact points, units, or designated persons to handle situations related to people with disabilities, the development work and provided services will be lacking. Dedicated resources make it possible to conduct performance assessments and follow-up to continue advancing towards establishing a supportive and friendly environment that guarantees the full inclusion of students requiring support.

Feeling of exclusion
Sometimes people with disabilities or other limitations are afraid that they will be left out in a higher education community. Free time events organised by different student groups are not necessarily accessible and asking to be included would make the student feel like an inconvenience. Accessibility should be taken into consideration in all activities.

2.4.2. Age

Challenges with work-life/study-life balance
Especially older students, that have not come to higher education institutions straight after secondary school may face problems with work-life or student-life balance. Combining family life with studies or work can be challenging. Also studying while working requires a lot from

students. Opportunities to do part-time, multi-modal or online studies make participating in higher education more flexible for all students. Yet, when offering different types of studies, higher education institutions need to be careful that all students have equal access to support and guidance services as well as necessary orientations.

Lack of enthusiasm for mobility activities
It is understandable that people with families and students that work while studying are less enthusiastic in participating in mobility activities. Nevertheless, this should never be assumed, and mobility activities should be advertised and offered to all regardless of their background.

Lack of necessary skills
Lack of skills with digital tools or lack of English skills can become a barrier for students. This concerns usually elderly people, but anyone can have problems with these skills.

Feeling of exclusion
The general idea is that higher education institution students are younger people without families and full-time jobs. Free time events organised at higher education institutions are related to partying and drinking and thus, older students, students with families and working students may feel left out.

2.5. Guidelines and Recommendations for the INGENIUM universities

The best practices and available support measures are based on practices and initiatives from INGENIUM universities and development ideas that have been jointly drafted by INGENIUM members.

2.5.1. Disability

Definition and recognition of the disability
Higher education institutions should automatically take over the recognition of disability status of incoming students with disabilities and provide the necessary reasonable adjustments and support services to accommodate the students' needs.

Lack of awareness
Awareness raising campaigns as well as education and training for staff and students is important to increase awareness.

Lack of support measures
Universities can provide students with additional mobility funding and other financial support. Support measures should come in various forms, such as digital accessibility measures (screen readers, sufficient contrast etc.), administrative assistance (registration procedures, course arrangements etc.), technical aids (braille transcriptions, specialised equipment, course recordings etc.), human assistance (tutors, note-takers, interpreters, mentors etc.), curriculum adaptations (e.g., oral instead of written examinations; additional

time for examinations and homework; use of technical aids; support for practical work (laboratories) by study assistants and/or technical aids etc.).

Support measures and reasonable adjustments should be provided throughout the studies from the admission process to graduation. The support measures should be personalised according to the students' needs.

Students not disclosing their needs and challenges
The universities should cultivate an environment where students are comfortable to disclose their disability/learning difference and/or significant health condition.

Lack of information
Universities should have contact persons or offices that can be contacted, when students and staff have questions related to disability and available support. These contact points should be communicated as comprehensively as possible.

Lack of proper transition (high-school, university)
Universities should try to ensure continuity between high school and university and availability of necessary information e.g., by organising days for senior high school teachers to exchange ideas, visiting high schools in multi-disciplinary teams (medical team + disability department) to discuss issues with the relevant departments, circulating information sheets on procedures to high schools, displaying the support system on university websites, and being visible at school open days for secondary school students. The university's disability services should also anticipate the specific needs of new arrivals.

Lack of accessibility
Universities can reserve admission slots for students with disabilities. Accessibility of educational material should be taken into account in addition to accessibility of facilities.

Lack of resources
Universities should allocate necessary resources to provide reasonable adjustments to students that require them.

Feeling of exclusion
Students and staff from different backgrounds and minority groups should be included in the working groups of the university. Participation and opportunities for influence improve student and staff wellbeing and give universities important information on the needs of different groups. Inclusive communications and language in recruiting can also give a feeling of being welcome.

2.5.2 Age

Challenges with work-life/study-life balance
Employers can offer possibilities for part-time retirement or other part-time work to balance e.g., parenting with work. Remote work and study opportunities as well as multimodal studies

and micro-courses can also help in work-life and study-life balancing. Universities can also provide support for families on-campus, such as breastfeeding or childcare facilities.

Lack of enthusiasm for mobility activities
Universities can offer flexible study options for remote mobility activities, during which students can complete courses in other universities without travel requirements. Universities should not take it for granted that older students do not want to take part in mobility activities and all mobility activities should be advertised to all students.

Lack of necessary skills
Transgenerational support can help with lack of skills. As younger students help older students, the older students can also act as role models to younger students, by being mentors. Valuing the expertise of seniors can be achieved by e.g., the systematic creation of "senior-junior partners"; and promoting cross-generational cultural activities. The abilities of seniors can be supported by e.g., promoting physical activity and bonding; developing adapted physical activities for 60+; or develop senior training courses.

Feeling of exclusion
Age should not be considered a handicap. Aging is a normal, universal biological process that everyone goes through. It is sometimes accompanied by physical and/or psychological difficulties, which can affect people's quality of life. A shift in the viewpoints of people can be achieved through training and awareness raising, which can lead to a better feeling of inclusion.

2.6. Suggested Actions

Table 2. Disability & Age Action Plan

Area	Suggested action within the INGENIUM Alliance	Time period
Each INGENIUM higher education institution should perform an accessibility assessment	At least the following aspects should be included in the assessment: **Admission process**: Admission tests should be designed in an accessible format, and the university should provide reasonable accommodations and resources as required by persons with disabilities. **Supportive resources and accessibility contact points:** The university should have an office, unit, or service (or a point of contact for information for students with disabilities) to	**2025-2026**

provide care and support to students with disabilities.

Culture and policies: The university should have specific guidelines or other inclusion plans to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities are taken into consideration.

Participation: The university should encourage student, including students with disabilities, to participate in the different governing bodies, university representation entities and student associations. The university and the student associations should organize accessible events and take into consideration the needs of students with disabilities for the development of university extension, cultural and leisure activities.

Learning and education: Learning and education modifications, including especially accessible material, provided support measures, available adjustments for studies and other support measures should be made available.

Physical accessibility including all buildings and spaces as well as transportation: Facilities should be physically and sensory accessible, easy-to-read formats are used in all campus facilities. Signage, signs and maps should be designed for all persons (plain language, infographics, and icons). Transportation to access the university campus should be accessible.

Digital accessibility: Websites, digital learning platforms and mobile apps should be accessible.

Non-discrimination: There should be protocols for the prevention of harassment and handling harassment cases in the university community. The university should provide awareness-raising activities and

	training regarding the inclusion of persons with disabilities at the university community. **Anticipating needs**: Preferably, facilities must be based on detailed analysis of people's needs and not respond to "disabilities" in general. Universities should aim to identify accommodation needs of students, staff and careers, and carry out annual surveys of inconveniences and suggestions for people with disabilities on campuses. Based on the identified needs, an action plan can be drafted. There are many **tools** that can be used to assess the accessibility of higher education institutions. Some suitable options to be applied in INGENIUM universities include: • **EUni4All-Network** Project's Self-evaluation Tool for Universities Working for Inclusion of Students with Disabilities available at: EUni4ALL-NETWORK - Participate • **European Disability Forum**: 10 Rules to Improve Web Accessibility: Web accessibility - European Disability Forum (edf-feph.org)	
Training and Awareness Raising on Disability and Age	To support the inclusion in the university, training and awareness raising actions should be conducted related to age, disability, and specific educational needs. These measures can include awareness raising days and campaigns for the entire university community on inclusion, as well as training, information, and other advice provided for faculty.	**Continuous**
Policy development	Draft non-discrimination and inclusion policies that take into consideration also discrimination related to disability and age. Ensure management commitment to the policies and communicate the policy throughout the organization. Launch surveys to make needs assessment (annually)	**2024-2025**

	Get students with disability involved in policy making	
Increasing personnel expertise	In order to increase personnel expertise in the field of inclusion, representation and accessibility, there are different options: offering short training courses, offering specific courses for different faculties and units, employing trained disability advisors, and including disability, accessibility and inclusion training in the continuing education plan for teachers.	**Continuous**
Developing a reporting system	Develop a reporting system, through which students and staff can report on discrimination. The reporting system should also allow people to make suggestions on how to improve the inclusiveness of the university. Make sure that the reporting system is available also in English for all students to use.	**2024-2025**
Nominating a contact person or unit	Nominate and communicate a specific contact person or unit that all staff and student members can contact if they have any questions or recommendations related to the matter.	**2024-2025**

3. RACE, RELIGION, ETHNICITY AND CULTURE

3.1. Definitions

Religious discrimination refers to a disadvantageous consideration or distinction of people based on their religious affiliation, their personal belief (or non-belief), their faith-based appearance or behaviour or their assumed religious affiliation (34).

On the other hand, racial discrimination is defined as any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life (35).

Cultural diversity or multiculturalism are defined as *the diversity of forms of culture in a society composed of groups of people from many different cultural backgrounds* (36).

In the context of this report, it is also important to define the concept of cultural sensitivity (37) which is related to:

 a) Being aware that cultural differences and similarities between people exist without assigning them a value –positive or negative, better, or worse, right, or wrong.

b) Being aware that cultural differences and similarities between people exist and influence values, learning and behaviour.

c) A set of skills that allows you to understand and learn about people whose cultural background is not the same as your own.

3.2. Challenges/Barriers

- Racism and discrimination are experienced by international staff and students, or by staff and students of different ethnic or cultural origin.
- Biases, stereotypes, and prejudices exist among both national and international students.
- Language requirements can act as a barrier when applying for courses or jobs or accessing services in a foreign country.
- Administrative and access to education barriers to achieving cultural diversity into specific countries and institutions.
- Additional administrative, bureaucratic and entry/ visa related challenges for students coming from outside of the Europe.
- A lack of cultural sensitivity at all levels, leadership and senior levels in the institutions which often transfer down to junior/clerical staff and students.
- Absence of anonymous recruitment practices which can act as a barrier to international staff or students trying to get employed in a foreign country.

3.3. Guidelines and Recommendations for the INGENIUM universities

INGENIUM partner universities are recommended to ongoingly challenge and not tolerate any type of racial, religious, or cultural discrimination, prejudice or stereotyping on their campuses and beyond, within their local, national and international communities.

INGENIUM partners must commit to providing equity of access and participation in life-long education regardless of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race (which includes skin colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins).

The Alliance partners are further guided to committing to fight racism into a intersectional manner by widening participation, increasing access and supporting positive educational outcomes for those who are currently underrepresented in Higher Education - this includes racial, ethnic and cultural minorities, Roma and Traveller minorities, students who experience socio-economic disadvantage, students who have a disability and all students from sections of society significantly underrepresented in the student body to date.

We suggest INGENIUM partners work together to create an environment where all university employees and students are entitled to enjoy a safe and positive experience at university, underpinned by mutual respect and trust where all staff and students can be their true selves and achieve their full potential. A commitment is also needed to advancing equity, equality of opportunity and to providing the highest quality academic and working environment where there is mutual respect and dignity, and all are treated in a fair manner that is free from racial discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.

Following a series of student activities and consultation session that took place in February 2024 at MTU, the following additional recommendations arose:

- Under the INGENIUM project it is recommended to provide opportunities for students to experience different cultural, religious settings and environments, which in turn leads to enhanced cultural sensitivity in education and society.
- Raising awareness of racial discrimination though all means and various university communication channels such as: social media, students' associations etc.
- The provision of race equality training at all levels for staff and students.
- Engaging and empowering INGENIUM students to become Equity and Inclusion Ambassadors.

INGENIUM partners are finally advised to take an active, practical and intersectional approach in eliminating racism on campuses and to embed race equality in all its activities and practices by:

- Promoting events and open communication;
- The provision of training, resources, and shared-learning opportunities;
- Implementation of anti-racism and anti-discrimination policies and procedures;
- Making reporting tools available to their staff and students;
- Committing to data gathering and research to inform future practices and improve existing ones.

These areas are expanded on into a set of practical suggested actions.

3.4 Suggested Actions

Table 3. Race, Religion, Ethnicity and Culture Action Plan

Area	Suggested action within the INGENIUM Alliance	Time period
Events and Communication	Compile an INGENIUM Equity and Inclusion Statement for all partner universities to commit to which includes a commitment to eliminate racial, religious and cultural discrimination Organise events to mark the International Student Day (17 Nov) – this could be a celebration of multiculturalism and diversity across the alliance. Conduct an annual student consultation session to discuss lived-experiences in an informal setting. This will make INGENIUM student feel heard and guide partners in directing efforts where needed. Help student associations create communication campaigns and awareness rising projects on topics related to cultural/racial discrimination (This could include the creation of a Diversity and Inclusion Ambassador campaign) Create an annual learning-focused event/workshop to celebrate various international days related to cultural diversity and racial discrimination (Zero Discrimination Day -1st March, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination- March 21st, Global Diversity Awareness Month -October) Make the INGENIUM Equity and Inclusion Action Plan including all suggested actions, guidelines, and recommendations publicly available at European Level – to benefit more EU institutions	2024-2026
Training, Resources and Shared Learning	Create a branded bank of Equity and Inclusion Resources (Vocabulary Glossary, History lessons, Toolkits) to be available to all INGENIUM Partners to access on the Repository.	

	Link in the course on Intercultural communication, proposed by the 9.3 group (and included in the strategy on multilingualism and interculturality) Create an Equity and Inclusion E-Learning Course that includes race equality elements and reward the learning /completion with an INGENIUM Equity and Inclusion Digital Badge. Create Inclusive and Intersectional INGENIUM Working Groups or Learning Communities that can meet and continue to share learnings and progress throughout the year. Within the final deliverable (Inclusion Policy Document and Action Plan for Equity and Inclusion), include a commitment for INGENIUM partners to resource all Equity and Inclusion efforts at institutional level.	2024-2026
Policy and Procedure	Include Anti-Racism related principles for all INGENIUM Partners INCLUDING Rectors/Presidents to commit to as part of the overall INGENIUM deliverable -Inclusion Policy Document Create an overall strategy or policy framework to tackle cultural and racial discrimination in an INGENIUM context.	
Reporting	Make an anonymous reporting online tool available for INGENIUM students to report incidents. This will help inform future actions.	
Research and Data Gathering	Assess and review progress on this topic in an INGENIUM context, at the end of the two years, by conducting a focus group with all WP 9.1 experts.	

4. SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

4.1. Definitions

According to the 'Communication on achieving the European Education Area', released by the European Commission in 2020 'Education is failing to reduce inequalities linked to socio-economic status, despite the fact that the highest performing education systems are those that put a premium on equity' (38).

Across Europe, the educational experiences of individuals follow social patterns. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are overrepresented among underachievers and early school leavers.

Socio-economic inequality - understood as differences in social class, education and household income across groups of children, young people and families (39) - is a strong barrier to the development and education of low socio-economic status young students.

Socio-economic status (SES) encompasses 'not just income but also educational attainment, financial security, and subjective perceptions of social status and social class. Socioeconomic status can encompass quality of life attributes as well as the opportunities and privileges afforded to people within society. Poverty, specifically, is not a single factor but rather is characterized by multiple physical and psychosocial stressors.' (40)

Research led by the American Psychological Association showed that SES affects overall human functioning, including our physical and mental health. Low SES and its correlates, such as lower educational achievement, poverty and poor health, ultimately affect our society.

4.2. Challenges/Barriers

Following the meetings, the discussions and reflections of the working group tackling socio-economic barriers in HEIs, a number of challenges have been identified across the alliance. Most of them concern low SES students struggling with:

- lack of financial and material support by parent (directly related to parental income or family relationships);
- food / housing insecurity;
- daily living costs;
- transport costs;
- financial difficulties for students with parental responsibilities (responsible for the care and wellbeing of a child);
- geographical distance (universities far away from mainland as it is the case of UoC and MTU);
- economic crisis (impacting Greece, and Greek students);
- price of accommodation for students and access to accommodation;
- difficulties encountered by students who have to work;
- access to international mobility;

- low achievement (expensive tutoring and entrance exam preparations, less time to prepare for good grades due to job constraints, longer distances etc.)
- lack of academic confidence;
- different economic situation for INGENIUM students;
- specific challenges for migrant and foreign-born students: different home language, lack of support from parents, the choice of their careers (for example, in Germany, 'engineer' is the obvious choice for first generation of migrants, a direct path for social climbing; in Sweden and Ireland many Indian students enrol on studies preparing them for IT related jobs. In general, migrant students make career choices leading to well paid jobs.);
- studies that require longer study hours - more difficult for students who need to work at the same time;
- difficulties encountered by students who have to work (missing classes, delays in project submission deadlines);
- feelings of inferiority and sometimes even exclusion from certain activities that involve additional expenses (camps, student parties, outings, etc.).

4.3. Guidelines and Recommendations for the INGENIUM universities

Given the mission of our alliance and the importance of internationalisation as a strategy to improve education, research, and communication, the recommendations we are suggesting in this section will focus on international mobilities, and the barriers that low SES students face when trying to go abroad.

International mobilities are vital for the success of our alliance and they should not be impeded by students' low socio-economic status.

Many of the challenges listed by the students participating in the INGENIUM Junior Schools pointed out the financial aspect of the international mobility: 'lack of funds, financial support (from family, university), insufficient Erasmus funds (for students coming from low-income countries), delayed payments.

To meet these challenges, we recommend three actions:

- Align the procedures. If a delayed payment is the problem, we should change the procedure so this doesn't happen anymore. If we cannot align the procedures, we should have a simple system of advanced payment. No INGENIUM student should be disadvantaged by procedures not working properly.

- Create an INGENIUM fund (at the university level or the alliance level) to help/ advance money for mobility purposes to students facing financial difficulties or to students from low-income countries going on mobility in more expensive countries. This could be established as an emergency fund.

- Create an Inclusive INGENIUM Post-Graduate Scholarship aimed at economically and/or socially disadvantaged final-year students currently studying at any of the

INGENIUM Alliance partners. This will offer them the opportunity to access post-graduate education at any of the INGENIUM Partner universities, while gaining international mobility experience. The scholarship could run every year or every few years depending on funding and resources available/secured. Or it could be internally funded by one INGENIUM partner every year. The application process could include a specific selection criteria and inclusive promotion across all INGENIUM partners.

We are an alliance of ten partners, from ten different countries, with different economic situations, and we need to find viable solutions to make international mobility accessible for all. The purpose is to see what we could do better, despite how government support is working, take initiative and establish good practice as an alliance.

4.4 Suggested Actions

Table 4. Low SES Action Plan

Area	Suggested action within the INGENIUM Alliance	Time period
International mobility	Align the grant payment procedures.	2024-2026
International mobility	Create an INGENIUM emergency fund.	2024 -2026
International mobility	Create an INGENIUM Post-Graduate Scholarship aimed at economically and/or socially disadvantaged final-year students.	2024 -2026

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5. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, REPRESENTATION AND INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM

5.1. Definitions

The Glossary of Education Reform (2013) defines professional development (PD) in the context of education as, 'a wide variety of specialized training, formal education, or advanced professional learning intended to help administrators, teachers, and other educators improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness'.(41)

In an INGENIUM context, we see professional development as having direct access to a wide variety of training (formal and informal), and resources for teachers, staff, and students to develop their understanding of diversity, equality, and inclusion. Another important desideratum of our alliance is to be open for all to contribute and to enrich through community engagement, being open to collaborate with the wider community, including underrepresented and marginalised groups to create a truly inclusive university.

The INGENIUM alliance aims to endorse equal representation at all academia and support staff levels, having a diverse student body and staff that reflects the demographics of the wider society. According to Schreiber-Shearer (42), diversity is about bringing together people from all paths of life. However, representation ensures that these diverse individuals, and their viewpoints, can be found or portrayed across all departments and seniority levels within the organization or university.

According to Cambridge Centre for Teaching and Learning (43), an inclusive curriculum is 'one that allows for diversity of content, material, ideas, and methods of assessment. It involves purposefully integrating perspectives that expand and enhance the canon, both within individual papers and across the whole course. It provides students with opportunities to engage with a variety of viewpoints and equips them for a global and diverse environment.' It is recommended for al universities to periodically review their curriculum to ensure that it includes diverse perspectives, voices, and experiences, incorporating materials from underrepresented groups, engaging with critical theories, and fostering interdisciplinary learning.

5.1.1. The European Policy Context

Following the principles and guidelines to strengthen the social dimension of higher education in the EHEA (Advisory Group on Social Dimension, 2020), 'the first principle wants to ensure that the social dimension becomes central to higher education strategies at system and institutional level, as well as at the EHEA and the EU level. The social dimension should interconnect the principles of accessibility, equity, diversity and inclusion into all laws, policies and practices concerning higher education such that access, participation, progress and

completion of higher education depend primarily on students' abilities, not on their personal characteristics or circumstances beyond their direct influence'. (44)

In this context universities need to elaborate and implement personalised actions to respond to an increased variety of student and staff body, including continuous professional training, counselling, and guidance in order to widen the access and participation of people in higher education system.

The social dimension of HEI also involves encouraging the involvement of the wider community in common actions and it should be 'embedded in core missions of higher education. Such engagement provides a holistic basis on which universities can address a broad range of societal needs, including those of vulnerable, disadvantaged, and underrepresented groups, while enriching their teaching, research, and other core functions.' (45)

The latest report from 2024 (45) offers indicators and descriptors for the principles of the social dimension in the European Higher Education Area that should be followed and implemented in the next period.

5.2. Challenges/Barriers

Following several meetings and discussions, the subgroup members identified several challenges that were listed in four categories according to the concepts defined above.

Challenges or barriers regarding professional development

- A lack of a common platform for trainings and resources accessible to all members of the university the community, including staff and students;
- The need of an institutional, official framework or charter that regulates in any way, the necessity, or the opportunity of the complementary training of the members of the academic and support staff community. This includes regulation and approval types, levels, and quality of training on diversity, equity, and inclusion in our universities;
- Lack of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) topics in career mentoring initiatives;
- Lack of internal research to identify the EDI training needs for each institution;
- Availability/willingness of staff and students to participate in EDI PD, which consequently illustrates the need to clarify the benefits of EDI for individuals and the organization;
- The need to recognise and reward informal and formal EDI learning by using certificates, digital badges, and other recognition systems;
- The need to create awareness concerning the existing tools and trainings among employees;
- The need to increase awareness about EDI among employees and students.

Challenges or barriers regarding community engagement

- The need to clearly identify the benefits associated with community engagement at organizational and individual level;
- The need to include the aspects of EDI in the courses, seminars, workshops, and professional mentoring to raise awareness of the need to include the larger community;

- The lack of engagement with EDI related to external organizations and bodies at a national and international level;

Challenges or barriers regarding equal representation

- Challenges associated with balanced representation in electorate/recruitment committees for academic tenure-not only in universities but also throughout state legislations. Sexism, discrimination, and gender bias is often a problem in these committees where often men candidates are often favoured against women and other mixed-gender candidates;
- Challenges associated with a balanced representation and construction at senior levels in our INGENIUM Institutions. For example, one member mentioned the disadvantageous present representation of women in formal and executive meetings, and the lack of people of colour or ethnic diversity in senior position;
- Systemic challenges associated with the lack of access to education or work in educational setting for minorities: people with disabilities, refugees, people with a low disposable income, queer people etc;
- Studies from INGENIUM partners show that there is overall high number of women working in supporting, administrative roles which is testament to the gendered double- standards existing in our society and institutions.

Challenges or barriers regarding inclusive curriculum in HEI

- An overall lack of classroom/curriculum content diversity including various perspectives, categories, voices, and experiences;
- The need to incorporate materials from underrepresented groups, engaging with critical theories, and fostering interdisciplinary learning and inclusive curriculum.

5.3. Guidelines and Recommendations for the INGENIUM universities

Partner Universities are recommended to contribute to the creation of an INGENIUM Inclusive University Charter that all partners agree to adhere to and to commit to.

Partner Universities should create a common platform of EDI related online trainings and resources that are known and accessible to all members of INGENIUM alliance.

It is recommended for all universities to periodically review their curriculum and their employment policies to ensure that it includes diverse perspectives, voices, and experiences, incorporating materials from underrepresented groups, engaging with critical theories, with representation from various cultures and backgrounds, and fostering interdisciplinary learning.

Funding needs to be allocated to support the implementation of the actions and initiatives, to ensure that all students and staff have access to a truly inclusive and diverse university experience.

Improving and expanding collaboration between students, teachers, and staff in every University but also with other universities and various community actors through open networks and common events.

A common system to recognise and reward informal and formal EDI learning by using certificates, digital badges, and other recognition systems.

It is further recommended to follow the recommendations from the Bologna Follow-up Group Working Group on Social Dimension 2021-2024. In this document the main objectives for the Working Group on Social Dimension for the period 2021-2024 are specified:

> • Developing a system of monitoring the implementation of the 'Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA.'
> • Defining indicators and benchmarks for the principles included in the Principles and Guidelines.
> • Developing tools for the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines.
> • Organising peer support activities for social dimension to support the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines among the EHEA members.
> • Organising a seminar on the social dimension at the end of the cycle in 2024 to discuss the progress made in developing social dimension policies in the EHEA members. (46)

5.4. Suggested Actions

Table 5. Professional Development and Community Engagement

Area	Suggested action within the INGENIUM Alliance	Time period
Professional Development	Create an Ingenium Alliance Reward System (An Inclusive University Badge or otherwise) to incentivise participation.	2024-2026
Community Engagement	Encouraging INGENIUM partnerships and collaboration with EDI related International and European Associations such as the UN and EU Diversity. Creating an INGENIUM virtual office or a mentoring program that would take all the dimensions of equality, diversity, and inclusion into consideration in EDI training across the partners.	
Equal Representation	Conduct Inclusive and Targeted INGENIUM Summer/Winter Schools. For example: STEM to empower girls to participate in these programmes.	
Inclusive Curriculum	Creating an INGENIUM Inclusive Curriculum working group to work on developing an inclusive toolkit or framework for partners.	

CONCLUSION

The comprehensive examination of various forms of discrimination within the context of gender, disability, age, race, religion, ethnicity, culture, and socio-economic status underscores the multifaceted challenges faced by individuals across diverse spectra within the European higher education landscape.

Through an exploration of definitions, global frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and specific strategies like the EU Gender Equality Strategy or the European Pillar of Social Rights, this document illuminates both the complexity of these issues and the potential pathways toward meaningful change.

The guidelines, recommendations, and suggested actions presented for each dimension of discrimination serve as valuable tools for the INGENIUM universities and beyond, offering concrete steps toward fostering inclusivity, equity, and social justice within higher education.

By embracing these insights and enacting proactive measures, our universities can strive towards creating environments that empower individuals of all backgrounds, facilitate professional development, foster community engagement, ensure diverse representation, and cultivate an inclusive curriculum, ultimately advancing the collective mission of education for all.

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Annex 1. Best Practices and Available Support

1. Gender Identity and Expression

The INGENIUM-partners have many different tools and available support. The programmes and policies should be seen as in inspiration for the other partners as part of collaborative learning within the INGENIUM-Alliance.

1.1. University of Rouen Normandy (URN)

Available support:

- Professional Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2023
  https://www.univ-rouen.fr/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Plan-%C3%A9galit%C3%A9-professionnelle-femmes-hommes.pdf
- URN Code of Conduct to Prevent Sexual Harassment
  https://communaute-universitaire.univ-rouen.fr/medias/fichier/charte-de-deontologie-de-l-urn-contre-le-hs_1545053464234-pdf
- URN Guide to Combatting Sexual Harassment
  https://communaute-universitaire.univ-rouen.fr/medias/fichier/guide-harcelement-bassedef_1545228627381-pdf

Examples of best practices:

- Annual Week of Activism against Gender-Based Violence
  https://www.univ-rouen.fr/agenda/semaine-de-lutte-contre-les-violences-sexistes-et-sexuelles/
- Janssen Award
  https://www.univ-rouen.fr/agenda/participez-au-prix-janssen-2023/#:~:text=15%20prix%20(dont%20un%20prix,l'association%20Femmes%20%26%20Sciences.
  The University of Rouen Normandy and Janssen France (Johnson & Johnson), in partnership with Science Action Normandie and the Femmes & Sciences association, are awarding every year the Prix Janssen. The aim of the award is to support committed and inspiring female students studying science (technology, engineering and mathematics) at the University of Rouen Normandie.
- Research on gender and administrative staff carriers at URN
  https://communaute-universitaire.univ-rouen.fr/genre-et-carrieres-des-personnels-biatss-a-l-urn-754069.kjsp?RH=1396358532641
  (an in-depth study to identify, describe and analyse career differences between male and female admin staff within the institution and to shed light on the processes that generate them).

1.2. University of Skövde (HS)

Available support

- Steering documents for harassment, discrimination and working environment https://www.his.se/en/about-us/facts-and-figures/quality-assurance-system/gender-equality/
- Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming at the University of Skövde 2023-2025 https://www.his.se/globalassets/styrdokument/arbetsmiljo-och-lika-villkor/action-plan-for-gender-mainstreaming-at-the-university-of-skovde-20232025-final.pdf
- Appointment Procedure at the University of Skövde https://www.his.se/globalassets/styrdokument/anstallning/appointment-procedure.pdf
- Handling procedure for discrimination, harassment and discriminatory treatment https://www.his.se/mot-hogskolan/sa-har-fungerar-hogskolan/styrdokument/
- Policies and steering documents concerning Equal Opportunities (in Swedish *Lika villkor*) that covers gender discrimination, sexual harassment, how the Coordination Group for Gender Mainstreaming is organised and as well as the Gender Equality Coordinators at the different schools https://www.his.se/mot-hogskolan/sa-har-fungerar-hogskolan/styrdokument/
- An internal website on Canvas called Equal Opportunities and Gender Equality (*Lika villkor och jämställdhet)* https://his.instructure.com/courses/4706 provides employees with information about Swedish laws related to discrimination, gender equality policy objectives, regulations, policies and contact persons. It includes definition of concepts, educational films, links to relevant websites like https://swedishgenderequalityagency.se/ or https://www.do.se/choose-language/english, exercises and tools to work with gender equality and other grounds for discrimination, as well as Power Point presentations. The website serves as a knowledge base for working with gender equality and EDI/inclusion for employees at the University.
- Coordination group of integration of gender equality with representatives from all school, departments and the student union.
- Coordination group of equal opportunities, accessibility and broadened recruitment with representatives from all school, departments and the student union.
- Representatives on each school that have a special mission/task to work specifically with integration of gender equality within their school on all levels.
- The University offers training for management and employees concerning equal opportunities/EDI/gender equality.
- Equal Opportunities/Gender equality are embedded in all parts of the organisation for example policies, marketing, management groups, curriculum, recruitment processes.
- On a regular basis are students wellbeing evaluated through a survey. This survey covers among other things, inclusiveness and gender equality.
- Every second year there are a survey for all employees that covers for example sexual harassment, inclusiveness and wellbeing at the University.

- Equal opportunity games are being carried out in various departments to identify risks in the area of equal treatment.
- An ongoing work of revising course content and implementation methods so that students can acquire education on equal terms in certain programs. Implementation of study assignments in certain programs that highlight different power factors such as gender, class, function, age, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality, their impact on the profession's attitude and treatment is also carried out.
- Marketing of education in gender-neutral way. Stereotypical image selection and expressions are avoided. The gender equality perspective in the selection of images, representatives for education, descriptive texts etc. Recruitment of underrepresented gender to education with skewed gender distribution has been the focus of the recruitment campaigns. Underrepresented group in terms of ethnicity has been considered in the selection of images and expressions in the marketing.
- Training of employees concerning inclusion and discrimination.
- Administrative tools to identify potential problems of discrimination.
- Active efforts towards gender equality integration and participation in a national seminar series.
- Gender-divided statistics are provided in most areas of the annual report for the university.
- In recruitment, when qualifications are equal, under represented gender are most likely to be hired.

Best practice

The University of Skövde experienced for many years problems with recruiting women to their gaming programme due to that the game industry is a very male-dominated one. As a way of trying to change this the University founded the DONNA network, which works for equality in the game development educations and the game industry. The goal with the Networks is a gaming culture and a game industry where women and men can participate and contribute on equal terms.

DONNA is an interest group that consists of students and teachers at the University of Skövde and the purpose is to increase the number of women who apply for game development educations and want to invest in a career in the industry. DONNA has become a success and since between 2011 to 2021 had the proportion of female game development students in Skövde increased from 10 to almost 30 percent. By increasing the number of female students, the game companies will have less difficulties in recruiting women to their positions. Key factors for the success to work out a well-thought-out strategy including recruitment, study environment, education. The following strategies were used:

- Started working with recruitment, study environment, education and networking.
- Exercises and seminars concerning gender with students
- Training of staff with gender experts
- Student Ambassadors and mentors
- Collaborations with studios

DONNA also began a collaboration with Doris Film, which resulted in the norm-breaking game "Alex and the Alchemist's Secret". In this project were the majority of the development team for the film consisted of women and there were women in all leading positions. The collaboration created a ripple effect and DONNA presented the project at various conferences and seminars. DONNA (and Doris) received a lot of publicity, which was positive for the educations and the University in general as well.

Over the years has DONNA built up a large network and DONNA DAY is usually arranged in connection with Sweden Game Conference. During the day both students and professionals in the game industry participate. As mention has the proportion of female game students has increased to almost 30 percent (from 10 percent) since DONNA started. It is also significantly higher than the national average of 19 percent and as many as 42 percent of all women who were admitted to a game development education in the autumn of 2020 study in Skövde. (https://www.his.se/en/news/2021/march/donna-is-working-to-get-more-women-into-the-game-industry/)

1.3. Munster Technological University (MTU)

Available support

- New Recruitment Policy to be implemented at MTU to include EDI training and bias training.
- Institutional and National Training Leadership Programmes targeted at advancing Women's leadership skills. E.g., AURORA Leadership programme and Elevate Leadership Programme.
- Gender Expression and Gender Identity Policy - This Policy and Procedure is being drafted at MTU to accommodate transgender and otherwise gender transitioning students who wish to amend their name or/and gender on their student records.
- A Hormonal Health Policy and Toolkit are currently being developed at MTU aiming to ensure that MTU provides supportive environments and an individualised approach for employees experiencing adverse hormonal-related symptoms whilst in work. It is intended to promote and create a fully inclusive organisational environment that is supportive of all employees regardless of their gender identity. This is due to approval and implementation in AY 23/24.
- The Speak Out Tool was launched at MTU in October 2021. Speak Out is an online anonymous reporting tool to disclose incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, discrimination, hate crime, coercive behaviour/control, stalking, sexual harassment etc. The tool is helping staff and students to find relevant supports and highlight formal reporting procedures, should you wish to use them.

Best practice

- In November 2021, MTU was awarded the Athena Swan Legacy Award (https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan-charter) to advance of EDI in higher education, encompassing representation, progression and success for all

staff and students. Athena Swan is a national programme that has evolved from gender equality in Higher Education over the years with the new Charter launched in October 2021 extending to take a more intersectional approach to gender equality with consideration of race & ethnicity, and specifically including our trans and non-binary staff and students. The Charter goes on to expressly include the need to create a safe & positive campus culture, ending sexual violence, bullying and harassment for the University community.

- In 2021, MTU has partnered with Men's Development Network and White Ribbon Ireland to become Ireland's first University to receive White Ribbon status by committing to ending gender-based violence among the university's community and beyond.
- Efforts to actively promote consent and tackle sexual violence and harassment were made through providing Active* Consent and consent training and workshops to MTU's staff and students, and through the work of the newly formed PROPEL (Promoting Consent & Preventing Sexual Violence) working group at MTU.

1.4. South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences (XAMK)

Available support

- Recruitment practices (mixed interview panels, diversity clause)
- Establishing clear goals and targets (continuous improvement)
- Flexible work arrangements
- Policies against violence and sexual harassment including a grievance system
- Training and education
- Remove harmful gender-based stereotypes in all material and communications

Best practice

- Equality and non-discrimination policy
  https://www.xamk.fi/en/equality-and-non-discrimination-policy/
- Ethical principles
  https://www.xamk.fi/en/ethical-principles/
  Safer Space Principles
  https://www.xamk.fi/en/about/safer-space-principles/
- Women's empowerment principles (WEPs)
  https://www.weps.org/company/south-eastern-finland-university-applied-sciences-ltd (that XAMK is a part of)

1.5. Karlsruhe University of Applied Sciences (HKA)

Available support

- According to the State Higher Education Act, the university has to take into account the diversity of its members and university staff and to guarantee equal opportunities for women and men. All university members should be able to participate equally in university life, regardless of sex, gender, origin and marital status. Based on this, HKA has established the Centre for Equal Opportunities (CfC) as the primary point of contact for addressing issues related to gender equality. The Equal Opportunities Officer, along with her team, supports the university in eliminating existing disadvantages for academically active women and female students. Their efforts include promoting family-friendly policies, supporting appointment committees, empowering female students, and fostering inclusivity across the university community, supported by the Fair Opportunity Commission (KfC).
- The Fair Opportunity Commission (KfC) advises the Senate and assists Equal Opportunity Officers. It tackles current equal opportunity issues, allocates funds for projects, and liaises with faculties and institutions. Commission members contribute to designing measures for equality, family-career balance, and raising awareness. They also help identify representatives for appointment committees.
- Special contact persons are available in case of sexual harassment (for staff and students).

Best practice

- Offers for female staff and students (see website of the Centre for Equal Opportunities https://www.h-ka.de/en/about-hka/organization-people/center-for-equal-opportunities/activities#c27525):
    - Coaching for female professors and executives
    - Network meeting for female professors
    - Self-confidence course for female staff and students
    - Finance workshop for female students

- Gender balance:
  The 'Traumberuf Professorin' (Professor - a dream job for women) mentoring and qualification program aims to encourage talented women to pursue a career in teaching and research at universities. It is aimed specifically at women from business and administration as well as (post-)doctoral students from various universities who are being considered for a subsequent appointment to a professorship at a university of applied sciences (HAW) and the Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University (DHBW). The participating mentees receive one-year mentoring from a professor at an HAW or DHBW, where they are shown the possibilities for an individual path to a professorship. (https://www.traumberuf-professorin.de/)

- Work-Life balance:
  A 'parent-child' room is available at HKA since January 2023. The room is equipped with two workstations, an integrated play corner, rest areas for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers, a changing table and a crib. It serves as a place to play, work and exchange ideas for all parents at the HKA - whether students, employees or professors.

- Studying with children:
  Online Guide for Students with Children - a joint project of the universities in Karlsruhe together with the Studierendenwerk Karlsruhe: https://www.sw-ka.de/en/kind/Kids-Box: mobile nursery on wheels (120 x 105 x 66cm), contains toys for babies and toddlers up to elementary school age), provides age-appropriate sleeping and changing facilities.

1.6. University of Crete (UoC)

Available support

- Gender Equality Committee:
  Production of material (codes, regulations, guides, posters/ leaflets)
- Gender Equality Plan:
  https://en.uoc.gr/files/items/7/7593/gender_equality_plan.pdf
- Code of Conduct for Gender Equality in Research
  https://eif.uoc.gr/images/Code_of_Conduct_Gender_Equal-Research.pdf
- Guide for the use of non-sexist language
- Guide for Dealing with Sexual Harassment at the University:
  https://eif.uoc.gr/images/Dealing_with_sexual_harassment_at_University.pdf
- Short informative texts on violence and harassment (definitions)
- leaflets posters for the dissemination of all actions https://eif.uoc.gr/index.php/el
- Updated Code of Ethics of the University including anti-discriminatory politics and gender-neutral language

Best practice

- Collaboration of UoC with the program 'Womentors', for the empowerment of women aged 18-35 years old www.womentors.gr
- Collaboration of Centre for the Study of Gender UoC with the Prefecture of Crete and local stakeholders for an action plan for promoting gender equality https://socialobservatory.crete.gov.gr/index.php?com=news&t=11 that included:
  - a summer school for STEM for young girls https://www.csd.uoc.gr/%7Ewistem2019/index.html
  - Conferences for gender-based violence with local stakeholders
  - Workshops and research for women's entrepreneurship in Crete
  - Gender equality workshops in secondary schools

- o Conferences for sexual harassment at work, gender-based violence et al.
- The Gender Equality Committee has established:
  - o Award for Gender-focused MA/PhD Theses
  - o extra-curriculum seminars and workshops addressed to Staff and Students:
    - on Gender equality in research and innovation
    - on LGBTQ+ inclusion
    - on dismantling gender stereotypes
- 2-month Workshop: training in writing research proposals for junior female researchers
- 2-month workshop: training in the use of Non-Sexist Language.
- One day-Conferences, lectures, Radio broadcast (awareness on gender issues).

1.7. University of Oviedo (UNIOVI)

Available support

- The University of Oviedo has an Equality Unit that is responsible for implementing and monitoring the II Equality Plan of the University of Oviedo, which includes specific cross-cutting measures to ensure a balanced representation of men and women in all areas of the institution.
- The Equality Unit also handles cases of harassment or emerging harassment dynamics through a Protocol for Harassment Prevention that has been continuously revised and updated. This protocol applies to the whole university community (students and staff) and is activated as soon as someone requests it. It covers all forms of harassment, including those based on gender, age, nationality or disability.
- The Equality Unit offers guidance and support to staff and students on their rights to work-life balance, shared responsibility, biological maternity and protection from gender-based violence. For this purpose, it provides up-to-date documentation and guides on these topics, which can be accessed on its website.
- Among these guides, there is one on the specific rights to work-life balance and shared responsibility during pregnancy and breastfeeding, which adapts to the reforms of the RD-Law 5/2023, and another one on the specific rights of victims of gender-based violence and sexual violence, which features a bookmark with a QR code that facilitates access to resources and contact numbers for victims of sexual violence. The document is available to the entire university community at [https://igualdad.uniovi.es/recursos/violenciagenero]
- The Equality Unit also organises awareness and violence prevention activities in the university community. For instance, as part of a grant linked to the Spanish State Pact against Violence, a study on violence in social media has been conducted, presented at the commemorative event of November 25, 2022.
- The University of Oviedo has breastfeeding rooms on all campuses, for the use of staff and students. Also, the University's prevention service can offer support and medical assistance in the relevant cases.

- For the better protection of the LGBTI community, the University has a specific protocol for changing the legal name to the name of choice, which allows both students and staff to align the identity that appears in the University's databases with the one they actually identify with.
- Moreover, the Equality Unit has developed and distributed a simple-to-use guide to inclusive language among the different services, schools and departments, which can be accessed openly by the entire university community at [https://igualdad.uniovi.es/recursos/lenguajeinclusivo] and which is often visited.

Best practice

Among the commendable practices implemented at the University of Oviedo to foster gender equality in education and through educational avenues, the following stand out:

- A thorough review of all commissions, tribunals, and selection or hiring bodies within each field of knowledge. This is done to ensure timely gender parity or, if not achievable, to explore corrective measures. The Personnel Service conducts this review, adhering to relevant guidelines, always advocating for parity and examining situations where achieving such parity may be challenging.
- The integration of gender balance criteria in the calls for the University of Oviedo's Multiannual Plan for Research and Human Resources (IPPIR) (2022-2023). This involves giving priority to teams and research groups led by women. The IPPIR includes specific objectives, such as promoting gender balance in research teams, incorporating criteria in calls to ensure an equitable participation of both women and men. In 2023, two calls have been initiated, and another is currently in progress. Specifically, in the Grants for Teams, Groups, and Research Institutes section, the criterion is outlined as follows: "an additional score of 5% of the total score obtained will be awarded to applications where the principal investigator is a woman."
- The development of a protocol for action in cases of pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum. The aim is to facilitate compatibility between these situations and the initiation or continuation of students' studies, along with access to differentiated evaluation. This recent protocol is designed to support pregnant students or those in postpartum, enabling them to pursue their studies without being adversely affected by their circumstances. Additionally, an approved instruction provides them access to differentiated evaluation if they are unable to attend the ordinary evaluation due to pregnancy, childbirth, or postpartum-related reasons.
- The proactive promotion of women's presence in decision-making processes and leadership roles within research groups. The Second Equality Plan includes specific measures for this purpose, such as the university's own grant plan for research groups, which prioritises groups led by women. Currently, in the rectoral team, men represent 50.94%, and women represent 49.06%, reflecting a remarkably close overall parity. Furthermore, it's noteworthy that the majority of University Institutes are under the direction of women. Specifically, of the eleven Institutes at the University of Oviedo, seven are led by women and four by men. Additionally, of the two Institutes most closely associated with STEM disciplines, one is led by a man and the other by a woman.

1.8. Gheorghe Asachi Technical University of Iasi (TUIASI)

Available support

- In 2022, the Technical University 'Gheorghe Asachi' from Iasi adopted the Strategy for Gender Equality and started the implementation of the Plan for gender equality for the period 2022-2025. (https://www.tuiasi.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Strategia-pentru-Egalitate-de-Gen-si-Planul-pentru-Egalitate-de-Gen.pdf)

Best practice

- After the adoption of the Strategy for Gender Equality, a Committee for Gender Equality was created at the University level, which includes a number of 11 Gender Equality Officers, one for each of the 11 Faculties, and a University Coordinator. As an example of good practice, the Committee has created a unique institutional email address - egalitatedegen@groups.tuiasi.ro - to which any member of the academic community can address proposals, ideas or notifications on gender equality issues.

1.9. Medical University – Sofia (MUS)

Available support

- Gender Equality Policy 2023–2027
  https://mu-sofia.bg/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Gender-Equality-Policy-2023-%E2%80%93-2027-MU-Sofia.pdf
  The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy of Medical University – Sofia sets out the university's goals for the period 2023-2027. These goals support the university's commitment to treat all faculty, students, lecturers, researchers, administrative staff and stakeholders fairly with dignity and respect.

- Equality and diversity issues are not considered the responsibility of specific experts within the University, but are intended to form part of an overall approach to equal opportunities that reflects the organizational culture of the University.

1.10. Gabriele d'Annunzio University of Chieti-Pescara (Ud'A)

Available Support and Best Practice

- Alias Career
  The Alias Career has been created to ensure for students at the University of Chieti-Pescara respect, dignity and privacy, including measures to protect anyone who needs

to use, within the University, a "selected" name that is different from his or her personal name.

Students enrolled in a bachelor's degree program, a master's degree program, a single-cycle master's degree program and any postgraduate program with the University of Chieti-Pescara may submit an application for the activation of an Alias Career.

The University then issues the e-mail account and the university badge with new personal details, which are valid exclusively for internal career actions such as:

-registration/booking of university examinations online through the university portal;
-taking examinations, including registration of the examination if the student passes the examination;
-access to the University premises such as lecture halls, libraries, study rooms, cafeteria, etc.

The Alias Career will in any case be inseparably associated with the original career, which is activated at the time of registration, and which refers to the applicant's personal identity.

- LGBTQ+ Counseling

LGBTQ+ students have many of the same mental health questions and concerns as non-LGBTQ+ students.

However, there is often the desire for LGBTQ+ students to ensure they are able to meet with a counsellor who is LGBTQ+ -friendly and knowledgeable about LGBTQ+ life.

All the counsellors at Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) are trained on LGBTQ+ topics and are supportive of LGBTQ+ students.

There are some health concerns that are specific to the LGBTQ+ community. For instance, students who are coming out and/or struggling with their identity may have specific mental health concerns, such as substance abuse, depression, and suicide.

Also, experiencing homophobia, discrimination, and victimization can increase stress and have a negative effect on one's mental health.

2. Disability and Age

2.1. University of Rouen Normandy (URN)

Available Support

- URN Disability Master Plan:
  https://www.univ-rouen.fr/agenda/adoption-du-schema-directeur-handicap-2020-par-luniversite/
- Espace Handicap (URN Support Unit for students with disabilities):
  https://formation-ve.univ-rouen.fr/presentation-de-l-espace-handicap-628188.kjsp
- Administrative assistance: registration procedures, accommodation requests, course arrangements, etc.
- Technical aids: Braille transcriptions, photocopies, loan of specialized equipment, course recordings, etc.
- Human assistance: tutors, note-takers, LSF or LPC interpreters, etc.
  LSF= Langue des Signes Française (French Sign Language)
  LPC = Langage Parlé Complété (Cued Speech)

Best Practice

- Back to school tutoring for the first-year students between August 25 and October 25 to discover the campus, the university library, the Disability Support Unit, and after that, the back-to-school meeting, the first classes and first work group sessions.
- Annual communication and information meetings for high-school students and their families.
- Teacher and staff training for digital accessibility.
- A digital referent for each faculty - ensures compliance with the digital accessibility charter for all digital documents produced by the university structure.

2.2. South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences (XAMK)

Available Support

Disability:

- Accessibility information about the campus for students and staff.
- Aiming to include students/staff from different backgrounds (disabilities, age groups) in the working groups of the university.
- Inclusive communications in recruiting (expressing that all people are welcome).
- Digital accessibility measures and accessibility training for teachers.
- Students can apply for individual arrangements for studies. They can get help for the application process from special education teachers.

- Xamk has an accessibility working group that is responsible for developing and assessing accessibility within the university. Xamk also has an accessibility contact person that can be contacted with any related questions.
- Xamk offers support also during the application process and the entrance exam.

Age:

- Xamk offers the possibility for part-time work and remote work.
- Xamk advocates life-long learning.
- Studies are flexible and students can choose full-time on campus studies, online studies as well as multimodal studies, combining the two.

2.3. Munster Technological University (MTU)

Available Support

- Our Access and Disability Service promotes access to MTU for groups who are under-represented in higher education.

  This includes students with disabilities/learning difference and/or significant ongoing health conditions; students who are experiencing social and economic barriers to access, mature students, travellers, minority groups and care experienced people.

- The University offers a range of support programmes to promote access:
    o Mature Student Orientation and Transition programme;
    o Financial guidance and support through the Student Assistance Fund;
    o 1916 Student Bursaries;
    o Traveller access support Star Pupil Traveller;
    o Access to Education Programme DARE (Disability Access Route to Education)
    o The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR).
    o Age: Age Friendly University Network

Best Practices

An accessibility toolkit has been developed at university level to support students to learn study at the best of their capacity. This toolkit includes supports and guidelines on using different systems that supports different learning abilities. It also includes a guide to core assistive and educational technologies that may be of benefit to students/staff while working and studying from home.

2.4. University of Skövde (HS)

Available Support

- Information campaigns concerning equality have been carried out towards students. The development of digital materials, recorded information films about equal opportunities, has been made.
- Student-supporting functions have lectured about equal opportunities in the university pedagogy courses for teachers.
- Equal opportunity games are being carried out in various departments to identify risks in the area of equal treatment.
- An ongoing work of revising course content and implementation methods so that students can acquire education on equal terms in certain programs. Implementation of study assignments in certain programs that highlight different power factors such as gender, class, function, age, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality, their impact on the profession's attitude and treatment is also carried out.
- Specific and general measures have also been taken to improve the physical environment for students, for example with improved AV equipment in several classrooms.
- The accessibility tool Ally has been implemented in the Canvas learning platform. The tool enables students to access information in an accessible format and helps teachers make information published accessible.
- Student Support that's supports students with disabilities for example: Dyslexia, ADHD or autism. Coordinators for students with disabilities have provided education and training for both staff and students.
- Study Support Centre that helps students with developing academic writing in Swedish and English. It's open for everyone but is especially helpful for international students as well as student that comes from a non -academic background.
- Mentors for students with disabilities. The mentors are other students that can help with planning and organising studies for the student with challenges
- Note-taking support for example that a student takes notes in the class for a student with challenges: https://student.his.se/en/service-and-support/student-support/studying-with-disabilities/job-description-note-taking-support/
- Adjustments in the examination situation and other study support measures https://student.his.se/en/service-and-support/student-support/studying-with-disabilities/pedagogical-support-measures/
- The national Erasmus+ office in Sweden has chosen to give top-ups (extra money) to students who have either children or a disability (like AHDH, Autism, dyslexia etc) if they study abroad within the Erasmus+ programme.
- Information, guidelines and material from the national agency Diskrimineringsombudsmannen: https://www.do.se/choose-language/english

Best Practice

- https://student.his.se/en/service-and-support/student-support/studying-with-disabilities/mentor/

2.5. University of Crete (UoC)

Available Support

Disability:
The UoC Student Counselling Centre provides support and information material of various forms of disability and is trying to satisfy the basic needs and requirement of people with disabilities such as:

- Access to university building facilities
- Access to educational materials (printed and electronic), to the blackboard and classroom projections, to written exams as well as to internet content
- The integration and facilitation of students with special educational needs
- Cooperation with various Bodies and Institutions with similar scientific objectives
- Supporting new students in their transitional period of adaptation to the new educational environment
- Information and cooperation with heads of departments, secretaries, teachers as well as academic advisors to deal with the needs that arise throughout their studies
- Strengthening their identity and their inclusion in the educational community of the Schools of the University of Crete
- Psychological and counselling support for any social and emotional issues that concern them, in an individual and group context.
- Support and empowerment of students with learning difficulties with personalized intervention programs, on an individual and group level.
  (https://skf.uoc.gr/index.php/el/service/stiriksi-amea in Greek)

Accessibility in UoC (Directorate of Technical Works)
- Specific infrastructure is: Ramps, elevators, lifts, doors, adapted toilets
- Accessible Classrooms for students with disabilities=125 (out of 126)
- Accessible Laboratories for students with disabilities=232 (out of 255)

Age:

- Technical support and education is provided for new technologies and digital platforms but is addressed to all academic personnel regardless of age.

Best Practice

Creation from the UoC Student Counseling Centre of the volunteer aid institution of 'Study Assistants': volunteer postgraduate or undergraduate students who systematically collaborate throughout an academic semester, with the student who has a special educational need, in order to meet his educational needs

2.6. Karlsruhe University of Applied Sciences (HKA)

Available Support

Disability:
- 5% of the study places are reserved for so-called cases of hardship. An exceptional hardship exists if individual circumstances (such as a disability) make it absolutely necessary for the student to begin his or her studies immediately. It is also possible to apply for a shortening of the waiting period.
- Compensation for disadvantages in course work or examinations due to illness or disability. Examples for such compensatory measures are oral instead of written examinations; additional time for examinations and homework; use of technical aids; support of practical work (laboratories) by study assistants and/or technical aids.
- Special financial support.
- Special rules for student loans (no age limit; hardship allowance; extension of maximum loan period; disability-related additional costs taken into account).
- Possibility to claim social assistance benefits (integration assistance, supplementary benefits for living expenses and medical aids from the health insurance fund.
- Special study abroad support (funding for preparatory trips for severely disabled students to Erasmus+ countries; funding of a travel companion) through the German Academic Exchange Service.
- Designated accessibility measures on campus and in the city.

Age:
- Special provision for partial retirement (in German, "Altersteilzeit") for severely disabled employees: Employees can opt for partial retirement from the age of 55. They have the choice between a part-time and a block model: either they work 50% of their previous working hours until retirement or they initially continue to work full-time and then retire earlier. During the partial retirement phase, the state tops up their pay to at least 83% of their last net salary.
- 'Sabbatical' model: Employees can be granted part-time employment on application. This paves the way for the savings and sabbatical year model. At the beginning, the number of hours per week they would like to work during the savings phase is determined. Depending on the number of hours, the salary is reduced during this phase. The reduced working hours can then be taken as a sabbatical for a consecutive period of up to one year with continued payment of salary. This can be used to ensure a smooth transition into retirement.

Best Practice

https://www.h-ka.de/en/study/guidance-counseling/students-with-special-needs

2.7. Medical University of Sofia (MUS)

Available Support

At MUS, about 58% of the teaching and 46% of the administrative staff are over 60 years of age, which indicates a strong tolerance of the working ecosystem towards older employees. The ratio between men and women is 47:53 in favour of women, especially among the teaching staff at MUS.

The concept of third gender challenges the conventional notions of a binary gender system that have existed in Bulgarian culture at all. The concept of third gender challenges the conventional notions of a binary gender system that have existed in Bulgarian culture at all. The working conditions at the MUS suggest the possibility of part-time work, but very few people take advantage, given the fact that an employee of the MUS often works under additional agreements and civil contracts to another department, unit or hospital/clinic/research centre.

The University provides minor financial assistance to all its administrative and teaching staff in the form of additional meal vouchers (twice a year) and a voucher for the purchase of work glasses with dioptres.

Best Practice

In 2020, the 'Students Helping Students - Accessible Education for Young People with Disabilities' project was implemented at the Ministry of Education and Culture, which aimed to identify specific problems related to the difficulties and obstacles for people with disabilities to pursue higher education in Bulgaria. This initiative is extremely important, as it is connected to the activities that ESN Bulgaria develops at the international level, which give a more inclusive and inclusive look to the Erasmus+ program.
Motivated volunteers from Medical University - Sofia were involved in the project, who helped in tracing the accessibility of the university. This will happen by means of a selected route around the campus, along which, together with the group of volunteers from MU-Sofia, I went, noting the accessibility of the university.

2.8. Gheorghe Asachi Technical University of Iasi (TUIASI)

Available Support

The Vice-Rectorate for Student Relations manages and assures all facilities provided by national legislation and basic funds to students with special situations (including disabilities).
In addition, the University Counseling Centre provides free counselling services and psycho-educational assistance to all students.
The large number of elderly students are role models for our younger students, being mentors and leadership figures.
All our staff members, regardless of age, have access to International Staff Mobilities through Erasmus + program, and also free access to micro-courses for lifelong learning in various areas/fields.

Best practice

- One of the modernised student dormitories has 8 rooms adapted for people with disabilities.
- Creating access ramps and accessible toilets.
- Digitisation of the student-administrative staff relationship, by moving a significant part of the administration-student interaction to the online environment, through postal services and electronic financial transactions, reducing the need for students to physically travel to secretaries or administrative offices. Institutional email accounts offer free wireless internet access to students and teaching and administrative staff through the national RoEduNet network and online software resources such as Microsoft Office 365 for Education.
- Increased personnel expertise in the field of inclusion, representation and accessibility through courses to develop skills needed in working with vulnerable people.

2.9. University of Oviedo (UNIOVI)

Available Support

At the University of Oviedo's Office for Assistance to Individuals with Specific Needs, we provide personalised, confidential, and individualised support to each user, catering to their unique needs. Our services include psychopedagogical guidance and comprehensive information on scholarships, specific resources, necessary adaptations, and more at the University of Oviedo. [Link to the Office's website: https://www.unioviedo.es/ONEO/]
During the admission process, we collaborate with the Department of Education to make adjustments and implement necessary adaptations in the University Entrance Examinations (EBAU). Additionally, we reserve 5% of admission slots for all official degrees at the University of Oviedo for individuals with specific needs.
Furthermore, students with a disability percentage equal to or greater than 33% are eligible for a fee exemption for official degrees.
Throughout a student's academic tenure, upon their request, we conduct a needs assessment resulting in a report of adaptations. This report outlines measures for faculty to consider,

addressing issues such as architectural accessibility, barrier removal, or facilitating the loan of support resources (computers, FM systems, etc.).

In the realm of digital accessibility, we provide training to faculty, and we're actively working on creating a digitally accessible space through the Virtual Campus.

Our support for students with disabilities and specific educational needs is constant and personalised throughout their studies.

Upon graduation, we offer information about scholarships and specialised services to assist in job searches, complementing the university's own services.

We conduct training and awareness actions related to disability and specific educational needs.

Best Practice

Information about our activities available at: http://www.unioviedo.es/ONEO/index.php/que-hacemos/

These include awareness days and campaigns for the entire university community on inclusion, as well as training, information, and advice for faculty. We also provide direct intervention with students having educational support needs, as their enrolment at the university increases each year, necessitating support for the proper development of their academic lives.

2.10. Gabriele d'Annunzio University of Chieti-Pescara (Ud'A)

Available Support

- Tutors:
  The tutoring service provides students with support and assistance in orientation, information and logistics in order to improve the conditions and quality of learning throughout their studies.

- Dedicated teaching materials:
  In order to facilitate and safeguard teaching continuity, the University provides certain categories of students with the possibility of using dedicated and/or customized teaching materials, such as specially made video lessons, short videos or multimedia material, as well as tutoring services.

- Compensatory tools and dispensatory measures:
  The University ensures that students with certified SLD have the dispensatory measures and compensatory tools both during the admission tests to the degree courses, both during exams and tests.

3. Race, Religion, Ethnicity, Cultural Discrimination

3.1. University of Rouen Normandy (URN)

Available Support and Best Practice

- URN has recently appointed anti-racism and antisemitism officers following the decision of the French Ministry of Education, in October 2023.

- Espace Monde is a friendly place where international students can find help with their studies and their integration into the University of Rouen Normandy. https://formation-ve.univ-rouen.fr/espace-monde-153130.kjsp

- Bienvenue en France (Welcome to France) is a label guaranteeing the quality of the welcome arrangements put in place by the University of Rouen Normandy for international students. This national label identifies establishments that offer services to help students study and find employment before and after their stay in France.

- For one month, the "Welcome to the University" event is welcoming students from the University of Rouen Normandy to all its campuses. Shows, exhibitions, concerts, lectures, visits, workshops... all month long, on all the University's campuses, but also outside its walls.

  https://www.univ-rouen.fr/septembre-2022-souvrir-au-monde/
  https://www.univ-rouen.fr/actualites/obtention-du-label-bienvenue-en-france-delivre-par-campus-france/
  https://www.univ-rouen.fr/septembre-2022-souvrir-au-monde/

3.2. University of Skövde (HS)

Available Support and Best Practice

- Policies are available for working with equal opportunities and coordination groups of equal opportunities, accessibility and broadened recruitment with representatives from all schools, departments and the student union.
- Availability and transparency of a handling procedure for discrimination, harassment and discriminatory treatment. For example: https://www.his.se/mot-hogskolan/sa-har-fungerar-hogskolan/styrdokument/
- At HIS, on a regular basis are students wellbeing evaluated through a survey. This survey covers among other things, inclusiveness.
- Every second year there are a survey for all employees that covers for example sexual harassment, inclusiveness and wellbeing at the HIS University
- Underrepresented group in terms of ethnicity has been considered in the selection of images and expressions in the marketing of education.

- Learning platform with a module about regulations, policies, contact persons as well as exercises and other material to work practical with gender equality and discrimination.
- Equal opportunity games are being carried out in various departments to identify risks in the area of equal treatment.
- At HIS, an ongoing work of revising course content and implementation methods so that students can acquire education on equal terms in certain programs. Implementation of study assignments in certain programs that highlight different power factors such as gender, class, function, age, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality, their impact on the profession's attitude and treatment is also carried out.
- At the end of each semester the international students will have an evaluation concerning how they have experienced the teaching environment.

3.3. Karlsruhe University of Applied Sciences (HKA)

Available Support and Best Practice

- HKA is committed and bound by law to the General Equal Treatment Act (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz – AGG), the central set of regulations in Germany for the implementation of four European anti-discrimination directives that have been issued since 2000. The aim of the law is to prevent or eliminate discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnic origin, gender, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual identity.
- There are no specific university regulations to prevent discrimination, and there are no systematic measures to promote cultural diversity or promote cultural sensitivity amongst the university staff. Members of the personnel department, however, can voluntarily participate in training programs to raise their awareness of the AGG rules and regulations.
- For students there is an extracurricular Certificate of International and Intercultural Competence (CIIC). The CIIC was developed in order to promote and acknowledge the international and intercultural profile of the students and accredit these competencies, for instance for job applications. It is available to all HKA students, including exchange students from abroad.
- To deal with perceived discrimination, for international students there is an Ombudsperson appointed by the senate to deal with specific issues that they face at HKA, and which would include dealing with complaints against teaching or administrative staff because of discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin, religion, etc. For all students as well as staff there are two anti-discrimination contact persons (one professor, one administrative staff member).

3.4. Munster Technological University (MTU)

Available Support and Best Practice

- At MTU, most anti-racism initiatives are nationally led. However, there are also some specific tied-in initiatives happening at university level.

- At national level, the HEA Anti-Racism Principles and the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty set out a number of responsibilities on the university to fight any type of racial and religious discrimination or hate.
- These duties translate at institutional level, through initiatives such as the creation of a Race Equality Network, the availability of various workshops and trainings that aim to educate everyone around race issues and the availability of an e-Learning Module "Let's Talk About Race" which is aimed to be part of an overall EDI Digital Badge.
- At MTU, Speak Out is an online anonymous reporting tool to disclose incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, discrimination, hate crime, coercive behaviour/control, stalking, assault, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape. The tool will help staff and students to find relevant supports and highlight formal reporting procedures, should you wish to use them. The anonymous report represents a means of collecting data that is used to inform on the ground initiatives.

3.5. South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Science (XAMK)

Available Support and Best Practice

- At Xamk, a survey is organized every two years for both staff and students. It is called Equality and non-discrimination questionnaire, and the goal is to gather information regarding the state of equality and equal treatment, as well as harassment and inappropriate behaviour in our university. These results support in recognizing existing strengths and possible subjects of improvement.
- Xamk has an Equality and Non-discrimination policy that addresses also religion, race, ethnicity and cultural discrimination. In addition, Xamk's ethical principles condemn discrimination. Ethical principles guide all staff and students in all Xamk activities.
- Xamk has added a diversity clause for job advertisements and is updating the recruitment guidelines to include a requirement of diversity among interviewers, if possible.

3.6. Gheorghe Asachi Technical University of Iasi (TUIASI)

Available Support and Best Practice

- The Vice-Rectorate for International Relations of "Gheorghe Asachi" Technical University of Iasi covers aspects of the international life of the university.
- The Erasmus+ – International Relations Office is willing to assist our foreign collaborators (students, academic and administrative staff, visitors) in accommodating to our university, city and country, by offering general information on daily life in Iasi. The time spent in Iasi will be a unique experience, when mixing academic duties with the city's bursting cultural life. We offer to international and Erasmus+ incoming students information and guidance about study and living in Iasi, such as preliminary examination and accommodation procedures, curricula and other useful information.
- http://www.international.tuiasi.ro/students/international-students/buddy-system

3.7. Gabriele d'Annunzio University of Chieti-Pescara (Ud'A)

Available Support and Best Practice

- University Corridors for Refugees

The University Corridors for Refugees (University Corridors for Refugees, UNICORE) project intends to promote and increase opportunities for refugee students - present in countries of first asylum - to obtain study visas and access scholarships in Italy, through ad hoc opportunities offered by universities and/or higher education organizations and thus be able to complete their studies.

Beneficiaries of the project are students, recognized refugees in the identified countries of asylum, who have completed the first three-year cycle of academic studies - within the five years preceding the closing of the UNICORE calls for applications - with a score of 3.0 (GPA) or higher and who are strongly motivated to continue their studies in Italy.

Purpose of the project, however, is not only to ensure their entry into Italy and provide them with a scholarship and other primary services (food, accommodation, etc.), but to accompany them on their path of study and social inclusion in Italy, in order to contribute to the consolidation of inclusive and welcoming societies.

4. Socio-Economic Background

4.1. University of Skövde (HS)

Available Support

From a national point of view Sweden has the following things:

- Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test (SweSAT), is a standardised test that can be used as a way to compete for a place in courses and programmes at Swedish universities. It gives people a chance who might not have hade high grades, to get a chance to the get a seat at the most popular programmes and courses.

- The Swedish Board of Student Finance (CSN) is the government agency that manages Swedish student finance, i.e., grants and loans for studies. CSN gives the opportunity to get extra loans if you have children or are studying abroad.

- The national Erasmus+ office in Sweden has chosen to give top-ups (extra money) to students who have either children or a disability (like AHDH, Autism, dyslexia etc) if they study abroad within the Erasmus-programme.

- A new Action plan for the work with broadened recruitment and expanded participation at the University of Skövde 2024-2025. For more information see: https://www.his.se/mot-hogskolan/sa-har-fungerar-hogskolan/styrdokument/

Best Practice

- Scholarships for international students. The students get the scholarship due to motivation rather than socio-economical background. The scholarships are distributed based on an equal level between genders, regions, and programs.

- Housing allowances can be applied for in Sweden by those with low incomes.

- Skövde Municipality offers career programs to recruit international talents to Skövde.

- Science Park Skövde and Drivhuset (connected to the university) provide free services to start-up businesses for students, primarily in the IT field.

4.2. University of Rouen Normandy (URN)

Available Support

University of Rouen Normandie has national and local supports available.

- CROUS Normandie (Centre Regional des Oeuvres Universitaires et Scolaires) https://www.crous-normandie.fr/
  The mission of the Regional University Centre is to improve living and studying conditions: grants, accommodation, catering, social support, campus life and student jobs.
- Student associations:
  AGORAé: a social grocery shop for students, and a place where students can meet, exchange ideas and share their experiences. The grocery was created by students and is managed by a student association.

- Student Life Office : BVE (Bureau de la Vie Etudiante)

Best Practice

- Occasional Support (validated by the URN social assistants):
  - exemption from university registration fees;
  - financial aid for: international mobility, traineeship in France, health issues, purchase of pedagogical material.
- Boutique Santé Sociale:
  - The shop run by student 'health relays', was set up to help and support students while they stabilise their situation, regain their financial independence and find employment. If there is a particular need that the Social Health Boutique cannot provide, the Social Health Commission is asked to examine the student's specific request.

4.3. Munster Technological University (MTU)

Available Support

- The Access and Disability Service promotes access to MTU for disadvantaged groups in higher education. This includes students who are experiencing social and economic barriers to access.
- The University offers a range of support programmes to promote access such as financial guidance and support through the Student Assistance Fund; 1916 Student Bursaries; Sanctuary Scholarships. (https://www.mtu.ie/access/sanctuary-scholarships/)

Best Practice

- During Covid, MTU opened a big shop where students could go and collect whatever they needed, for free. Sponsored by the Student Union, the initiative is still going, and it is very important for students who cannot afford food.
- Code Red initiative – free period products for all women – students and staff at MTU (first university in Ireland to do so). Code Red is an MTU Period Dignity project that tackles period poverty and taboo. The project provides free sanitary products in 60 locations across the University and is a collaborative project, involving staff, students, and local businesses.
- Sanctuary Scholarships – for refugees and displaced people. https://www.mtu.ie/access/sanctuary-scholarships/

4.4. Karlsruhe University of Applied Sciences (HKA)

Available Support

Generally, it is considered the responsibility of the Government, rather than individual education institutions, to address problems linked to socio-economic status that may impede the access to education.

- The German Federal Training Assistance Act (BAföG) is supposed to enable young persons to choose the training that suits their personal interests irrespective of their

families' financial means (see https://www.bmbf.de/bmbf/en/educa-tion/bafoeg/bafoeg_node.html).
The level of BAföG support depends on various factors. The maximum award per month for students in higher education is currently 934 euros. Generally speaking, the level of payments depends on the student's income and assets and the income of his or her parents. Non-Germans, too, are entitled to this support.

For students studying abroad, be it on exchange or to seek a degree, the "Auslands-BAföG" may support students who do not receive the national BAföG student loan/grant due to a higher expenditure (including possible tuition fees) for studying abroad. HKA is very generous in calculating the Erasmus grant top-up for students from non-academic backgrounds, providing it for the entire length of the stay abroad. Approx. 40% of HKA students on Erasmus+ mobilities currently benefit from this additional support of 250 EUR/month.

Best practice

At an institutional level, there are various counselling centres inside and outside the university that students can contact in emergency situations, including financial difficulties.

- The central point of contact at university level is the Central Student Advisory Service (Zentrale Studienberatung). For students from abroad, the Studierendenwerk Karlsruhe (Karlsruhe Student Services, an organization serving several public universities in the city) offers assistance especially to international students.

  The Studierendenwerk will also consider applications for emergency funds from any students, national or international, who find themselves in financial difficulties. Membership of the Studierendenwerk, which is mandatory for all students, also gives access, for instance, to subsidised meals in student canteens and also to special conditions for using public transport.

4.5. University of Crete (UoC)

Available Support

- A student consulting service with 7 employees in Heraklion and 5 in Rethymno is available for students who need psychological support, have learning disabilities, educational needs, or require mobility facilities.
- A Gender Equality Committee has been established and addressing all gender discrimination instances.
- A Students' Ombudsman is dealing with student grievances.
- A medical doctor is available for students and faculty once per week in both campuses.

Best Practice

- There is an agreement between the government and local and national transportation bodies and all students holding valid IDs pay reduced prices for local in-city transportation and transportation from the place of study to their permanent residence.

- Based on socio-economic criteria (parents' income) some students receive a state rent stipend.
- Based on socioeconomic criteria a small number of students (appr. 600) each year are granted housing in the University's Dormitories free of charge. There is a plan to increase the availability of housing (capacity=3000) at low cost.
- Based on socioeconomic criteria approximately 3,100 students are granted board free of charge.
- All students can eat at the University's cafeteria at prices significantly lower than in restaurants, cafeterias, and eateries in town (the cafeteria is operated by an entrepreneur).

4.6. Gheorghe Asachi Technical University (TUIASI)

Available Support

- The University, through the Vice-Rectorate for Student Relations, grants students from low-income families a series of facilities such as: free or tax reductions for accommodation on campus, cash social grants, free places in student camps.

Best Practice

- Social and academic support granted through free access to all activities of TUIASI Student Leagues and Associations (https://www.facebook.com/ligaeth.ro/posts/pfbid09Eg5CxfmS5XCKknCFV19hUL4LwdFFB6As-BqiXuDuxf37JL6YwCZe6DGVzW94AvTCl)
- ROSE educational project targets mainly the first-year undergraduate students from disadvantaged backgrounds. (https://netlab.tuiasi.ro/)

4.7 Gabriele d'Annunzio University of Chieti-Pescara (Ud'A)

Available Support and Best Practice

The University of Chieti-Pescara regularly provides various types of services and benefits to support the right to education for enrolled students: economic benefits including exemptions, discounts, and refunds; scholarships; extraordinary provisions; contributions for cultural and social initiatives promoted by students; scholarships for student collaborations (known as '150-hour scholarships'); management of scholarships funded by external organisations, and other facilitations.

The support activities for the right to education are carried out in coordination with the initiatives implemented by the regional university student support agency of Chieti (ADSU), whose scholarships consist of a monetary allowance and a meal allowance.

4.8. University of Oviedo (UNIOVI)

Available Support and Best Practice

The University of Oviedo has special actions for particularly vulnerable students taking official undergraduate and master's degree courses at the University of Oviedo. The aid covers the full amount of the tuition fees. The following cases are contemplated:

- Death of one of the main breadwinners of the family unit.
- Unemployment of any of the main breadwinners of the family unit.
- Serious illness or serious accident of any of the main breadwinners of the family unit.
- Addictive disorder, duly diagnosed, of any of the main breadwinners of the family unit.
- Legally recognized total permanent disability of any of the main breadwinners of the family unit.
- Victims of gender-based violence.
- Undergraduate and master's degree students included in the protocol of reception at the University of Oviedo for refugees.
- Other duly accredited causes and circumstances that have an impact on the family economic situation.

5. Professional Development, Community Engagement, Representation and Inclusive Curriculum

5.1. Professional development

Supports Available

- Through the services offered by their Career Offices, all INGENIUM partners offers career services such as opportunities, mentoring, education, and networking for their students.

- At UoC there are awards offered by Gender Equality Committee for graduation thesis papers regarding gender issues. Also, there are scholarships offered by the Gender Equality Committee to young graduate or post graduate students in order to gain research experience.

- At MTU there is a suite/catalogue of EDI related eLearning Courses available for all staff and students to access and an active EDI Learning Community that meets every month. EDI is also embedded in the organisational culture and structure through the presence of an EDI Committee to the University's Governing Body.

- University of Skövde offers training for management and employees concerning equal opportunities/EDI.

- At UNIOVI there are different training initiatives in the mentioned topics, both from the INIE (Institute for Educational Research and Innovation, responsible for the training of teaching and research staff) and the Chief Operating Office (responsible for the training of technical, management and administration and services staff). There is no organised complementary training for students.

- UNIOVI: links of interest:

    o INIE website: https://inie.uniovi.es/formacion
    o ONEO (Office of Attention to People with Specific Needs) website: https://www.unioviedo.es/ONEO/
    o Equality Unit: https://igualdad.uniovi.es/
    o Occupational Health and Safety Service: https://www.prevencion.uniovi.es/
    o Student Observatory - Eres UO: https://observatorioestudiantado.uniovi.es/

5.2. Community engagement

Supports Available

- Collaborating with local initiatives like *Womentors*, for the empowerment of young women in various fields: health, gender violence, career choices, balance of work-family life.

- Collaborating with various local community centres for underrepresented groups: Refugee centres, LGBTQ+ Support and volunteer organisations etc.

5.3. Equal representation

Supports Available

- At Xamk management and supervisors take equality, non-discrimination, and people's diversity into account in the planning of operations and decision-making. This is supported by appreciative interaction and an encouraging and participatory culture of feedback and initiative. To promote equality and non-discrimination and to increase interaction, the students' and staff's voices should be heard decision-making and students and staff belonging to different minorities are welcome to participate. At Xamk, Student Union Kaakko is an important partner in ensuring this. Among other things, the student union coordinates the selection of student representatives. Student representatives are members of the Board of South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences Ltd, various management groups, teams, and development forums. Also, staff members from different units are encouraged to participate in different working groups.

- At UoC there is an Equality Committee's workshop available for young women researchers on writing research proposals and creation of networks (https://www.eif.uoc.gr)

- Equal Opportunities are embedded in all parts of the organisation for example policies, marketing, curriculum, recruitment processes at University of Skövde.

5.4. Inclusive curriculum

Supports Available

- At Xamk, there is a responsibility orientation course offered to staff members, in which it is stated that representation and accessibility should be taken into consideration in education and educational materials. There is also training offered to support teachers with these aspects.

- MTU is a leader in embedding Universal Learning Design projects at the University. with guideline documents made available to everyone and providing frameworks and suggestions for teachers/lecturers on how UDL can be embedded in the curriculum via the module descriptor.

- MTU in collaboration with other Irish Universities has created an Inclusivity Toolkit and Principles EDIT- Embedding Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in the Curriculum of the Technological University Sector. The Toolkit designed as a practical guide to support the Technological University (TU) sector in implementing the EDIT Charter Principles

which outline guidelines on inclusive curriculum design, content skills and attributes, modes and methods of teaching, assessment and evaluation.

- At University of Skövde gender equality/equality is being integrated into the curricula, regular roles, management groups, and processes to phase out the Coordination group of integration of gender equality. An ongoing work of revising course content and implementation methods so that students can acquire education on equal terms in certain programs. Implementation of study assignments in certain programs that highlight different power factors such as gender, class, function, age, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality, their impact on the profession's attitude and treatment is also carried out.

The creation of EDI Learning Communities allows staff and students to come together to share valuable information regarding internal and external EDI related PD opportunities, while keeping up to date with other EDI initiatives, topics, and terminology.
Making EDI Toolkits and E-learning course catalogues available online and rewarding EDI knowledge at the completion of different EDI courses is an ongoing process as well as making EDI terminology dictionaries and glossaries available internally while keeping them up to date.
Participating in International & National Framework programmes that aim to enhance EDI training, community engagement and PD (like Athena Swan, Swedish Gender Equality Agency etc.) is a permanent goal of the alliance.
The curation of specific EDI courses and modules has already started with the INGENIUM module led by the University of Rouen - 'Become a Disability Ambassador'.
The alliance also develops targeted projects that are aimed to diversify the Curriculum for underrepresented groups such as LGBTQ+ communities, as, for example the Queering the Curriculum Project at MTU.
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Module Guides that provides suggestions for teachers/lecturers on how UDL can be embedded in the curriculum via the module descriptor at one specific University are available.

5.5. Oher Supports Available in a European Context

FESTA is an action-research project whose aim is to effect structural and cultural change in higher level education and research institutes to advance gender equality.

LERU, League of European Research Universities Research Paper The paper's key message is that EDI can be more effectively promoted at universities by making use of a comprehensive approach. Such an approach needs to be holistic and systemic in 1/ addressing inclusion and enhanced representation of all under-represented groups; 2/ aiming at the entire academic community of staff and students together; and 3/ making the content of both the research and the research-led curriculum more inclusive.

The Athena Swan Charter - The Athena Swan Charter is a framework which is used across the globe to support and transform gender equality within higher education (HE) and research. Established in 2005 to encourage and recognize commitment to advancing the careers of women in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine (STEMM)

employment, the Charter is now being used across the globe to address gender equality more broadly, and not just barriers to progression that affect women.

An inclusive curriculum design self-evaluation checklist. This provides prompts for reflection about the inclusivity of your practices in course design and review. (Advance HE ,2020 - EDI Professional Development STANDARDS- A self-evaluation scale. See Figure 1.)

A new framework for teachers' professional development, Author links open overlay panelRaziye Sancar a, Deniz Atal b, Deniz Deryakulu b - https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0742051X21000299

FESTA Handbook Gender-sensitive Design of Criteria and Recruitment, Appointment and Promotion Processes in Academia. - https://www.festa-europa.eu/public/handbooks-toolkits-and-reports-find-and-download

Equality, diversity, and inclusion at universities: the power of a systemic approach LERU position paper September 2019 - https://www.leru.org/publications/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-at-universities

Morgan H & Hougton A-M (2011) Inclusive curriculum design in higher education: considerations for effective practice across and within subjects, Higher Education Academy / Advance HE

Principles, Guidelines, and Indicators to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the European Higher Education Area Produced by the BFUG Working Group on Social Dimension.

Annex 2. Tools for working against discrimination

1.Tools for working against discrimination

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) has a number of tools for different purposes:

- **Gender Budgeting:** A step-by-step toolkit aims to assist managing authorities in the European Union to apply gender budgeting tools in the processes of the European Union Funds under shared management. (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-budgeting)
- **Gender Equality in Academia and Research – GEAR tool:** Is a tool that provides universities and research organisations with practical advice and tools through all stages of institutional change, from setting up a gender equality plan to evaluating its real impact. (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear)
- **Gender Equality Training:** A step-by-step guide is designed to boost the gender equality skills of public administration employees. (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-equality-training)
- **Gender Impact Assessment:** A step-by-step guide helps institutions identify where policies are causing or strengthening gender inequalities and how they can be effectively re-directed. (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-impact-assessment?language_content_entity=en)
- **Gender Institutional Transformation:** A step-by-step guide helps institutions transform, starting from their basic values and beliefs, to the rules and regulations that lead to more effective working outcomes. (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-institutional-transformation)
- **Gender-sensitive communication:** A toolkit that provides guidelines for the use of gender-sensitive language in writing. Gender-sensitive communication ensures that women and men – and those who do not conform to the binary gender system – are treated as persons of equal importance and dignity. (https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/toolkits-guides/gender-sensitive-communication)
- **Sexism at work: how can we stop it?** A handbook that provides guidance on how tackle unconscious bias and stop sexism in the workplace. (https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/toolkits-guides/sexism-at-work-handbook and https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/toolkits-guides/sexism-at-work-handbook/part-3-act/how-can-i-combat-sexism-ten-step-programme-managers?language_content_entity=en)
- **Work-life balance in the ICT sector:** A toolkit that outlines how organisations in the ICT sector can boost equal opportunities and gender equality to attract and retain female talent. (https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/toolkits-guides/work-life-balance)

There are more toolkits and guides to be found at: https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/toolkits-guides and https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/tools-methods

Free tools to use for inclusion and gender equality:

- The Women's Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool: Developed from UN Women's Empowerment Principles concerning how to analyse gender equality in organisations. WEPs GAT Tool (https://weps-gapanalysis.org/)
- **KdG University of Applied Sciences and Arts – Inclusive Organisations:** Tool boxes for working with inclusive management, inclusive hiring and inclusive teamwork. https://inclusieveorganisaties.be/en/
- **Intercultural document** – INGENIUM Policy on Multilingualism and Intercultural Understanding (https://ingenium-university.eu/a-multilingual-and-intercultural-alliance/)
- **#EndGenderStereotypes – career choices:** The European Union's campaign about changing gender stereotypes in practice. There examples on EU-funded projects tackling gender stereotypes: (https://end-gender-stereotypes.campaign.europa.eu/career-choices_en)
- **#EndGenderStereotypes – decision-making:** The European Union's campaign about changing gender stereotypes in practice. There examples on EU-funded projects tackling gender stereotypes: (https://end-gender-stereotypes.campaign.europa.eu/decision-making_en)
- **#EndGenderStereotypes – work-life balance:** The European Union's campaign about changing gender stereotypes in practice. There examples on EU-funded projects tackling gender stereotypes: (https://end-gender-stereotypes.campaign.europa.eu/work-life-balance_en)

2. References to EU legislation

- Gender equality strategy https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en 2023-09-07

- gender_equality_strategy_factsheet_en.pdf https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2020-03/gender_equality_strategy_factsheet_en.pdf 2023-09-07

- CEDAW 29th Session 30 June to 25 July 2003 CEDAW The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm 2023-09-06

- Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (European Commission). *She Figures 2021. Gender in Research and Innovation Statistics and Indicators.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2022. She figures 2021 - Publications Office of the EU (europa.eu) https://op.europa.eu/en/web/eu-law-and-publications/publication-detail/-/publication/67d5a207-4da1-11ec-91ac-01aa75ed71a1 2024-02-19

- European Commission. *European Education Area Strategic Framework Working Group on Equality and Values in Education and Training Issue Paper: Tackling different forms of discrimination in and through education and training*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2023 \\staffnas1\StaffHome\staffnas1\StaffHome\onek\Documents\INGENIUM\INGENIUM - WP9\tackling different forms of discrimination in and-NC0423702ENN.pdf 2024-02-29

3. UN Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations created 17 world development goals called the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in 2015 and they are a part of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. The barriers to inclusion are built upon the SDGs.

3.1. Gender identity and SDGs

Breaking down barriers for inclusion due to gender and transgender supports the following UN Sustainable Development Goals (47).

- **Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**
    - 3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes
- **Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**
    - 4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
    - 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
    - 4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
    - 4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
    - 4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
- **Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**
    - 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere

- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- 5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
- 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
- 5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
- 5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels
- **Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**
  - 8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
- **Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries**
  - 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status
  - 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard

3.2. Disability and age and SDGs

Breaking down barriers to inclusion for persons with disabilities and persons of different ages supports several UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and help solve the global challenges defined in UN Agenda 2030:

- **UN SDG 4: Quality education**

  - Target 4.3: equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality education, including university
  - Target 4.5: ensure equal access to all levels of education for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities
  - Target 4.a: build education facilities that are disability sensitive and provide safe, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

- **UN SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth**

- Target 8.5: employment and decent work for all including young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay

- **UN SDG 10: Reduce inequalities**

  - Target 10.2: promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

Annex 3. Contact Points

University	Country	Contact
University of Oviedo (UNIOVI)	Spain	ONE (Office of Attention to People with Specific Needs): oneo@uniovi.es International Office: inter.incoming@uniovi.es
Panepistimio Kritis (UoC)	Greece	International Office: peraki@uoc.gr
Hochschule Karlsruhe (HKA)	Germany	International Office: joachim.lembach@h-ka.de
Kaakkois-Suomen Ammattikorkeakoulu Oy (XAMK)	Finland	Equality and non-discrimination contact person : hvaku01@xamk.fi
Università degli Studi Grabriele d'Annunzio di Chieti-Pescara (Ud'A)	Italy	International Office: incoming@unich.it
Medical University of Sofia (MUS)	Bulgaria	International Office: m.kasnakova@mu-sofia.bg
Hogskolan i Skovde (HS) (University of Skovde)	Sweden	Employees: personal.hr@his.se (Equal Opportunities - employees and management) Students: likavillkorstudent@his.se (Equal Opportunities - students) Students with disabilities: riktatstod@his.se International Office: international@his.se
Munster Technological University (MTU)	Ireland	EDI Office: EDI@mtu.ie Access Office: accesscork@mtu.ie

Université de Rouen Normandie (URN)	France	Espace Monde : espacemonde@univ-rouen.fr Student Life Office: bve@univ-rouen.fr Centre for lifelong learning: formation.continue@univ-rouen.fr vae@univ-rouen.fr Espace Handicap: handicap@univ-rouen.fr
Universitatea Tehnica Gheorghe Asachi din Iasi (TUIASI)	Romania	International Relations Office: international@tuiasi.ro CCOC TUIASI: Mihaela.Cojan@staff.tuiasi.ro

Annex 4. Matrix to be used by partners to list and to monitor the progress of their key institutional priorities related to the deliverable.

Institutional transformation objectives	*Please list the institutional transformation objective that you seek to attain.* *Select between 3/5 institutional objectives*
Barriers faced to achieve those objectives at the institutional level	*Please list and explain the barriers that you currently face to achieve your institutional objectives.*
Potential Actions to be taken at the institutional level	*List the actions that you plan to take within your institution.*
Actions to be taken at other levels	*List potential actions concerning other actors, such as regional or national governments.*
Responsible(s) within the instituion	*Explain who from the institution will be involved in the actions. Include the main responsible and other involved actors.*
Expected timeline and key milestones	*Please define an expected timeline and establish milestones if possible,*

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