

# THE AOG - PART 11

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY



31 August 2021

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## 1 Diversity as a Key Value

At WUAS, we are very proud of the diverse composition of our student and staff body with international diversity being at 100+ nationalities across levels of the organisation.

WUAS embraces internationalisation, diversity and ethics as key values. All three are central to WUAS's mission "to promote excellence in teaching and learning international business and management, as well as to create the best environment for students and staff, where internationalisation, diversity and ethics are setting the premises for successfully applied-research-informed global learning". Through embracing diversity as a key value, WUAS recognises the need for inclusivity. Its outlook is global, and it aims to be one of the most international and diverse higher education institutions in the Netherlands.

WUAS strives to foster an inclusive and supportive environment that is characterised by mutual respect, trust, understanding and fairness, establishing a true culture of belonging, our "WUAS Family". WUAS firmly believes that bringing diverse backgrounds together and enabling individuals to unleash their potential not only is a social responsibility but also strengthens quality, drives innovation and organisation success. We firmly believe in fair opportunities, which also means that some may need more help than others.

Thus, WUAS stands against any kind of discrimination or harassment on the grounds of skin colour, nationality, ethnic origin, marital or civil partnership status, disability, religion, belief, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression (LGBTQ+), sex, type of employment and socio-economic status (non-exhaustive). WUAS also stands against more subtle forms of discrimination that may manifest itself in any given situation. It aims to provide an environment based on respect and dignity, free of harassment and discrimination and holds its staff members to those standards.

Diversity and inclusion are everyone's responsibility at WUAS. We expect our staff to support and promote a culture of belonging in their actions and decision-making. Non-compliance with this policy and the principles laid out will lead to appropriate disciplinary actions.

The scope of this policy is organisation-wide and spans key areas and related policies and practices:

- Students
- Programmes
- Research
- Staff

### 1.1 WUAS Students

WUAS prides itself for its international and diverse student body.

To maintain its diverse student body and further develop it on the principles of diversity and inclusion, WUAS follows several guidelines:

- WUAS makes use of a variety of communication channels to reach potential and current students.
- WUAS promotes its programmes around the world, using inclusive and culturally sensitive language.

- WUAS makes an effort to form diverse recruitment and selection committees in order to reduce the effect of unconscious bias and blind spots.
- When selecting students, WUAS does not discriminate based on skin colour, nationality, ethnic origin, marital or civil partnership status, disability, religion, belief, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression (LGBTQ+), sex, or socio-economic status (non-exhaustive).
- WUAS designs barriers of entry which do not put potential applicants at a disadvantage based on skin colour, nationality, ethnic origin, marital or civil partnership status, disability, religion, belief, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression (LGBTQ+), sex, or socio-economic status (non-exhaustive).
- WUAS offers scholarships to students who would otherwise be unable to attend, aiming to enhance accessibility.
- WUAS strives to offer a support system that enhances inclusivity and diversity.
- WUAS encourages students to voice their opinions, particularly with regard to inclusivity and diversity, promoting diverse perspectives.
- WUAS strives to provide a "home away from home" atmosphere, to provide a sense of belonging for students that are far away from home.
- WUAS makes a reasonable effort to accommodate students with varying physical or religious (non-exhaustive) requirements.

WUAS may occasionally reevaluate if certain groups of potential students need to be prioritised with regards to recruiting, in order to maintain diversity within the student body.

Students are expected to support and maintain an inclusive environment at WUAS based on dignity and mutual respect, helping to uphold a culture of belonging throughout WUAS. Responsibilities of students are detailed in the EEG.

## **1.2 WUAS Programmes**

As a key value, diversity guides education delivery at WUAS. Shaping our organisational culture based on diversity as a key value includes guidelines for incorporating and promoting diversity and inclusion in our programmes:

- WUAS's curriculum takes diversity and inclusivity into critical consideration in content and methods.
- International and intercultural content are key aspects of WUAS's programmes.
- Teachers are trained in the area of inclusive pedagogy.
- The programmes focus on diverse perspectives and open-mindedness, aiming to encourage discussions and confront unconscious bias.
- WUAS strives to promote active citizenship, e.g. through projects, seminars and cases.
- Teaching materials should be inclusive and free from discriminatory language and images, unless being used as examples of discrimination.

### **1.3 WUAS Research**

As written in WUAS Staff Research Guidelines (Part 8) WUAS key values are embedded in all research activities and faculty and students are encouraged to engage in research projects that embody and promote our core values of internationalisation, diversity and ethics.

WUAS is committed to expanding the opportunities for staff to participate in funded research projects and become scholarly active, thereby positively impacting the quality of the organisation and education delivery. The researchers form a varied group from different cultures, with different places of residence, language, gender, religion and socio-economic background. Research proposals by underrepresented groups, such as women, are actively promoted.

WUAS involves diversity in a three-fold approach:

- Diversity in researcher groups
- Diversity in research design
- Diversity in research methodology

### **1.4 WUAS Staff**

WUAS commits to offering fair opportunities and actively promoting diversity among staff. We firmly believe that diversity and a culture of belonging strengthen our organisation and drive innovation. Moreover, we feel that it is important that students see themselves reflected in staff.

Our diversity and inclusion policy impacts all aspects of engagement at WUAS, and influences our efforts related to recruitment and selection, benefits, development, training, etc. Fair opportunity lies at the heart of our efforts and we aim to mitigate systemic barriers by tailoring our practices to stimulate diversity and inclusion further.

Hiring, as well as development can have significant impact on diversity and inclusion at WUAS. Practices to safeguard diversity and inclusion in those processes are outlined in the General Staff Handbook (Part 3), Faculty Handbook (Part 4) and Professional and Support Staff Handbook (Part 5).

Maintaining and promoting diversity and inclusion are the responsibilities of everyone at WUAS. As such, we expect all staff to:

- Treat everyone with respect and dignity.
- Create an environment that is inclusive and does not tolerate harassment or discrimination.
- Confront bias, conscious and unconscious.
- Actively promote inclusiveness, diversity, and equity through their actions, language and decision-making. See a comprehensive guide on using gender-neutral language in Appendix 1.8.1. below.
- Stand against and report misconduct.

This applies to interactions with staff, students, as well as externals.

Leaders and managers, in addition to following the same guidelines as all staff, are expected to lead by example, by actively displaying WUAS's commitment to diversity and its stand against discrimination. In practice, they should:

- Apply principles of diversity, equity and inclusiveness when hiring and evaluating employees.
- Foster an inclusive atmosphere within their teams.
- Make a reasonable effort to accommodate employees with varying physical or religious (non-exhaustive) requirements.
- Foster an environment in which targets of harassment and discrimination feel safe to speak up.
- Foster an environment in which diversity-related problems are discussed and addressed in good faith.

### **1.5 Disability and Accessibility**

Offering equal opportunities to people, both staff and students, with disabilities warrants additional guidelines:

- WUAS strives to actively promote awareness about disability in the organisation.
- WUAS makes an effort to make their facilities as barrier-free as possible, for both employees and students.
- If a WUAS staff member or student becomes disabled, WUAS makes a reasonable effort to accommodate them in such a way as to allow them to continue their studies or maintain their position or switch to an alternative position fitting their experience and capabilities.
- WUAS encourages staff and students with functional impairments to weigh in whenever they believe that their suggestions would improve their situation at WUAS.

### **1.6 Monitoring and Future Plans**

To support our diversity and inclusion policy, we aim to further develop and improve our reporting and monitoring of diversity and inclusion aspects. We monitor and report aspects such as country of origin, nationality, migration background, gender and age for students in combination with success rates, total staff and different staff groups, such as faculty, professional staff, management, and strive to enhance this further by considering pay scales, advisory bodies, as well as additional diversity aspects, such as religion, sexual orientation and socio-economic background.

This can be achieved by asking students and staff to provide information regarding their nationality, migration background (country of origin), age, gender identity, socio-economic background and sexual orientation (non-exhaustive). Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that any such data collection will be anonymous. Providing information that is not strictly necessary for employment or assignment checks, is voluntary and not complying with the request to share information will not have adverse effects for any staff member.

The employee satisfaction survey and student surveys include sections focusing on providing insight in the perception of the working/learning environment in relation to inclusiveness, safety, non-discrimination and accessibility.

### ***1.7 Reporting Misconduct***

Articles in this policy concerning behaviour of staff and students are covered in the Code of Ethical Behaviour (Part 10) and/or the Student Code of Behaviour. Reporting of misconduct is outlined in the complaints procedure (Part 16).

## **1.8 Appendix**

### **1.8.1 Gender-inclusive Language and Surveys**

WUAS students, faculty and staff are expected to communicate and work in a gender-inclusive manner. This, among other things, means making use of gender-inclusive language and developing gender-inclusive surveys.

Gender-inclusive language should be used consistently, both in internal and external communication. If you are not sure, you can make use of the following guidelines:

Use gender-neutral pronouns such as 'they', 'them', 'their' or 'themselves' instead of gendered pronouns, such as 'he', 'she', 'his', 'hers', 'himself', 'herself', at least until you know someone's pronouns. For example, when referring to a specific person whose gender has not been confirmed to you (note: you cannot assume someone's gender based on their name or their appearance), instead of "she is running a little late" or "he is running a little late", use "they are running a little late". Similarly, do not use titles, such as 'Mr', 'Mrs', 'Miss', 'Ms', 'Sir', unless you know the correct pronouns. Instead, consider addressing a person by their full name (e.g. instead of "Mr Massey" use "Howard Massey"), or academic/professional title (e.g. "Professor Massey"). Also follow these guidelines when addressing someone at the beginning of a letter or an e-mail. In the case of letters or e-mails, if you do not know someone's (full) name and/or title, use 'Good morning' (or 'Good afternoon') or, if the situation allows it, 'To whom it may concern'.

If this feels unintuitive, note that the singular 'they' has a long history in the English language.

When not referring to a specific person or when referring to a group of people, always use gender-neutral pronouns rather than gendered pronouns or the generic masculine. For example, instead of 'each respondent was asked whether he wished to attend' or 'each respondent was asked whether he or she wished to attend', write 'respondents were asked whether they wished to attend'.

You can sometimes avoid pronouns completely through restructuring your sentence. Instead of 'the visitor should be given enough time to familiarise himself (or herself) with the venue', write 'enough time should be allowed for the visitor to become familiar with the venue'.

Use gender-neutral alternatives to masculine or feminine-sounding words. Usually, masculine or feminine-sounding words have gender-neutral alternatives. For example, instead of 'the manpower required', use 'the workforce required'.

#### **Gender-inclusive Surveys**

Surveys should be developed in a gender-inclusive manner. Make use of the following guidelines to do so:

- Use gender questions consciously.
- If the genders of respondents are not actually relevant, leave the question out.
- Include a non-binary gender option: if the genders of respondents are relevant, always offer three options: male, female, non-binary.

If you need more help, reach out to [communication@wittenborg.eu](mailto:communication@wittenborg.eu).