

Diversity Guideline

Preamble

In what kind of world do we want to live, work and learn together? How do we create an environment that enables everyone to study, do research and work effectively? How can we recognise whether we can be ourselves and flourish in our daily environment, feel safe and be respected? If not, who can we turn to for support?

The University of Passau creates a high-quality learning and working environment through attractive study programmes, excellent research, research-based knowledge transfer and cooperation. To achieve this, it must adapt to demographic realities, remain internationally competitive and enhance the future prospects of its members. The University has placed a focus on the future-oriented key topics of Europe and global change, digitalisation and sustainability. The University Executive regards diversity as essential for excellent teaching, research and study in these areas over the long term. To uphold this commitment, the University of Passau engages in a professional, collaborative and transparent process to address the questions posed above.

Visible sensitivity and a positive approach to diversity are essential for fostering individual talents and designing inclusive educational structures at the University of Passau. The present Guideline is the result of a University-wide dialogue that reflects the University's self-image with respect to diversity.

This Guideline also sets the University's diversity goals and measures as well as participation spaces, which are equally open to all of its members and offer opportunities for action and forums for participation. The needs, experiences, limitations and problems, as well as the strengths, abilities and achievements of all University members, deserve greater visibility. All University members are treated with respect and without prejudice. Opportunities for their support, protection and advancement must be created and utilised. Achieving this requires a shared commitment to a sustainable, credible and accessible implementation, alongside a structured evaluation process.

For the University, diversity means recognising the varied backgrounds of all students and staff and empowering them to contribute to this diversity. The University adopts a multidimensional approach: Individuals can be characterised by their numerous differences as well as their

membership of different groups. Since they can be characterised along multiple different dimensions simultaneously, such as gender identity, ethnic and cultural origin, skin colour, religion and world view, sexual orientation, disability, age, social status, occupation, etc., this not only establishes differences between individuals but also similarities; when several of these dimensions act together, various mechanisms of oppression can arise (intersectionality). These affiliations, rooted in societal power relations, influence a person's resources and access to them – including at the University. The aim of appreciative and inclusive behaviour, whilst paying regard to the interaction of different dimensions, is to recognise and reduce discrimination and to enable equal access to the University (see Art. 2(5) BayHIG).

The University of Passau endeavours to create, strengthen and continuously expand its own sustainable structures to compensate for disadvantages and ensure diversity-friendly regulations.

Managing Diversity

Understanding and fostering diversity requires openness, safety, respect and equity. The University provides a reliable framework that nurtures individual development and creates opportunities for co-determination and participation. At the same time, it promotes vibrant spaces for constructive dialogue on campus, which are continually adapted and developed through joint reflection.

Openness is essential for an appreciative, critical approach to diversity of opinion, for creating opportunities for participation, for embracing feedback from within and outside the University and for recognising and removing barriers – whether physical, technological, linguistic, media-related or psychological.

Safety is reflected in the continuity and reliability of the educational and working conditions as well as the spaces for participation. Furthermore, it encompasses protection and support given when boundaries are crossed and in cases of discrimination, as well as services that prevent discrimination and facilitate intervention. The University provides structural support through contact points that guarantee that individual concerns are dealt with in a protected manner.

Respect is an expression of positive recognition of differences as potential strengths, and is expressed in an inclusive, integrative and diversity-sensitive campus culture.

Equity means creating the necessary conditions to allow all University members to fully develop their potential with regard to successful study and career development.

University-wide Implementation

All members of the University share the responsibility for promoting an inclusive and diversity-sensitive culture. Structures and processes must be designed to support this goal. Continuous transformation and adaptation are crucial to ensure that diversity is not only considered to be the normal state of affairs but also seen as an integral part of the University community over the long term. Consequently, implementation is a cross-cutting responsibility that is shared across all areas.

Aims

Diversity is a potential and a resource for the profile and (academic) growth of the University. In order to leverage these, the University focuses on a sustainable and intersectional approach with regard to the support, guidance, advice, counselling, advancement and training given to all its members. The University pursues and implements the aims and measures of the Guideline holistically.

To this end, the present Guideline sets out the following aims:

(2) Strengthening Antidiscrimination	(2) Increasing Visibility and Acceptance	(2) Reducing Structural Discrimination

I Promoting Cultural Change

(1) Establishing Diversity as a Cross-cutting Responsibility

Diversity is anchored in the University Development Plan as a cross-cutting responsibility of the University of Passau. The interpretation of diversity in this Guideline remains adaptable, ensuring alignment with societal realities.

(2) Strengthening Antidiscrimination

The University of Passau is committed to fostering non-discriminatory interactions among its members. It expands its information and advice services on the subject of antidiscrimination and ensures availability of contact points to facilitate a transparent approach to addressing discrimination, harassment and violence.

(3) Maintaining an Open Dialogue on Diversity-appropriate Language

The University of Passau cultivates the discourse on diversity-appropriate language, recognising its importance as a cornerstone of inclusion that, in view of demographic trends, is relevant for student and staff recruitment, the removal of barriers, successful internationalisation and gender-sensitive practices. In particular, the University supports the realisation of a campus that is at least bilingual. Furthermore, the implementation of the Ordinance on Accessible Information Technology (BITV 2.0) makes information and processes more accessible and usable for people with disabilities.

II Creating Common Spaces for Participation

(1) Enhancing Participation and Inclusion

The effective realisation of participation and inclusion of its members is the benchmark by which the University of Passau measures successful diversity. Equal opportunities for participation in academic content, campus life and formal University structures, the representative groups and the processes affecting them are central priorities. To this end, the University of Passau is developing inclusive frameworks for a diversity-sensitive living and working space.

(2) Increasing Visibility and Acceptance

The University of Passau strengthens opportunities for its members to actively participate. It also fosters acceptance and security for the diverse life paths and aspirations of its members.

(3) Furthering Interconnections and Dialogue

The University of Passau deepens its campus-wide engagement with diversity through internal exchange formats. Open, diversity-oriented dialogues among all University members facilitate interdisciplinary and intercultural interactions across all status

groups. Knowledge transfer formats for the University's partners in science, business and society are also conducive for this communication.

III Safeguarding Diversity for the Long Term Through Governance Structures

(1) Developing Entrenchment in University Structures

Building on the University Development Plan, the University of Passau defines and anchors responsibility for diversity sustainably at the management level. Clear operational responsibilities and transparent decision-making processes are strengthened. With its voluntary commitments to the Diversity Charter, German Universities Open To The World – Against Racism and Chauvinism, and its efforts to create a family-friendly university, the University aims to establish a long-term diversity strategy and ensure a sustainable and renewable process for shaping and evaluating diversity. Regular dialogue and action formats ensure that all status groups are involved and heard in this process.

(2) Reducing Structural Discrimination

The University of Passau raises awareness of structural discrimination in order to prevent prejudice and eliminate disadvantages in the long term and to further develop non-discriminatory study and working conditions. It prioritises preventative measures as well as dealing with incidences of discrimination. Training programmes further empower University members in this effort.

(3) Establishing a Continuous Reflection and Evaluation Process

The University of Passau regularly and continuously evaluates its own diversity-related structures, strategies, practices and measures using defined indicators.

IV Culture of Diversity at the University of Passau

The University of Passau recognises its social responsibility in its role as an employer as well as an educational and research institution. Being a space for social and academic participation itself, it can visibly shape its culture of diversity.

These aims as a whole form the basis for the five strategy areas below. Measures are assigned to each of the interlinked strategy areas. These measures require and encourage cooperation between different institutions within the University. Strategy areas and measures alike are supplemented and further developed over time.

Strategy Areas and Measures

Strategy Area 1: Mission Statement and Communication

The *Mission Statement And Communication* strategy area develops a general basis for the further development of the University's diversity strategy based on the following measures:

- The present Guideline is communicated and further developed as part of the University culture.
- The communication strategy in the area of diversity is geared towards promoting participation. It supports the academic debate on diversity-appropriate language.
- Based on this Diversity Guideline and the measures in the various strategy areas, indicators are developed to evaluate the effectiveness of previous measures and identify additional needs.
- The Diversity Advisory Board will offer recommendations on the implementation of measures to the relevant University officers and organisational units (VP Diversity, Women's Representative, Executive Support Unit for Diversity and Gender Equality).
- The diversity strategy is further developed through regular open exchange formats in which all University members can participate.

Strategy Area 2: Services, Advice and Counselling

The strategy area *Services, Advice and Counselling* further develops the contact points of the University of Passau in the area of service and counselling in cooperation with the Student Services Association for Lower Bavaria and Upper Palatinate. Its focus is on the structure, visibility and communication of the contact points within the University as well as a transparent advice structure.

- An overview of the University's contact points is maintained for internal use to make communication flows and referral processes more transparent and efficient. This overview is also made publicly available on the University website, where it is presented in an intuitively comprehensible way and categorised for clarity and accessibility.
- A physical infopoint (i.e. helpdesk) will be established on the campus grounds. This will serve as a low-threshold contact point and will be accessible in person, by telephone and e-mail.
- The University continues to enhance its range of advice services in cooperation with the Student Services Association.

- In order to introduce greater clarity and transparency when dealing with incidences of discrimination, harassment and violence, procedures are drawn up for the contact points based on model cases.
- Regular meetings are held to strengthen links between contact points and establish supervision options.
- For the areas of discrimination, harassment and violence, a reporting platform will be established on which users can access a range of low-threshold advice and counselling services and report incidents; the users have the option of remaining anonymous.
- Diversity-related advice services, particularly on disabilities, chronic illnesses, care work, socio-economic issues and for international staff and students, will be broadened.
- In order to support event and course organisers, a guide for managing disruptive incidents in events and courses is being developed. This will be made available to all teaching staff and organisers and displayed as an information card in the course and event rooms of the University.
- Staff and students are informed, supported and trained in diversity-sensitive practices.
- Short-term childcare facilities are available for parents and guardians.

Strategy Area 3: Study and Teaching

The *Study and Teaching* strategy area aims to create an open, diversity-sensitive and future-oriented teaching and learning environment that takes into account the needs and potential of as many students and teaching staff as possible. The aim is to enhance equity for students and make a significant contribution to improving the quality of teaching and learning processes at the University. The measures listed below focus on diversity-sensitive and accessible teaching and assessment, diversity-sensitive degree programme structures and a continuing, group-oriented development of teaching and learning environments.

- Diversity as a cultural dimension is addressed in the competency-oriented design at the levels of degree programme development, module development and implementation in teaching. Dealing with a diverse, heterogeneous student body is a topic area in the teaching strategy to be developed by 2025 (operationalisation of the mission statement for teaching).
- The University offers a higher-education didactical training programme for diversity-sensitive teaching and assessment. The advice services for teaching staff are being expanded to include intervision and supervision. The University strengthens further

training and supervision opportunities for academic support staff in the areas of study and teaching, particularly in the University's advice and service facilities.

- An online resource for diversity-sensitive and accessible teaching, examinations and advice is being created, which will be continuously expanded with content such as best practices and sample templates.
- Specific course offerings for international students (such as language and bridge courses) and advice services for international students will be continued and expanded. Their needs are regularly assessed, especially in view of the potentially growing numbers of international students at the University.
- A University-wide standardised procedure for granting academic adjustments and exam access arrangements to students with disabilities or chronic illnesses is being developed and will address the areas of support, application process, approval process, implementation and monitoring. These frameworks will be taken up and operationalised on a per-faculty basis.
- The procedures for the acceptance for credit of skills and competences acquired within and outside of higher education institutions will undergo a diversity-sensitive review.
- The existing mentoring programmes for students and academics will be continued and permanently established.
- Admission requirements are regularly checked for selection bias. When admission requirements are first drawn up during the degree programme development phase, care is taken to ensure that these are minimally socio-economically selective and non-discriminatory.
- Where possible, examination planning takes into account the time and space requirements of a diverse student body. A clear regulation of marking times allows students to reliably plan their degree programme. The repetition cycle of examinations should not exceed one semester.
- Courses are planned in a way that is sensitive to the time and space requirements of students and lecturers and takes into account a variety of life factors (caregiving responsibilities, accessibility, religious observances/holidays, etc.).
- When designing degree programmes, care is taken to ensure planning reliability and studiability; modules spanning several semesters and/or that are highly subdivided at the course level should be avoided.
- The *Studying-as-a-Parent Award* will be continued and an award for diversity-sensitive teaching or successful teaching projects with a focus on diversity introduced.

- The option of part-time study is to be introduced for existing degree programmes.
- Structured diversity monitoring takes into account diversity-related issues by means of established surveys (teaching evaluation, incoming student surveys and graduation surveys). Together with the results of other diversity-specific student surveys conducted at longer intervals, they form the basis for the formulation, evaluation and monitoring of specific measures for the University's future development.
- The University is developing a holistic and sustainable concept for campus health.

Strategy Area 4: Research and Knowledge Transfer

The *Research and Knowledge Transfer* strategy area aims to strengthen diversity-sensitive aspects of research at the University and render them more visible. This is in line with the increasing requirement for research proposals to make clear references to diversity aspects and to organise access to research participation in a diversity-sensitive manner. To achieve this, the following measures are being pursued:

- The University uses the annual German Diversity Day to showcase research findings and creates opportunities for participation for University members through public event formats.
- In order to demonstrate to students the relevance of diversity-sensitive research in a practical way, research exchange formats are offered that influence the diversity dimensions for planning, method selection and research practice. This reinforces the importance of diversity in research right from the start of the degree programme.
- In order to better link up researchers in the field of diversity, participation spaces are created that invite interdisciplinary exchange and discourse on diversity-related topics (e.g. research workshops).
- Knowledge transfer formats for the dissemination of diversity-related research findings to civil society (in Passau) are being developed and further expanded.

Strategy Area 5: Diversity-appropriate Infrastructure

The *Diversity-appropriate Infrastructure* strategy area focuses on the development, further expansion and long-term maintenance of the University's building, IT and technical structures. These are in line with the principles of the Family-Friendly University and reinforce accessibility on campus. The following measures are focused on this:

- The University is creating additional childcare places for the children of its staff and

students by establishing a forest kindergarten.

- The University of Passau's family-friendly infrastructure will be expanded to create a space for children and parents/guardians at the University, for example through special parent-child spaces.
- The University of Passau provides information on the basics of accessibility at the University on its website and provides assistance and training for University members in the area of media accessibility.
- Accessibility needs on campus are regularly surveyed and, based on this, a list of priorities and a concept for the removal of barriers in all structural areas is drawn up.
- Diversity-sensitive campus design is addressed in all building projects, including with regard to building access and the accessibility of campus premises.
- The University of Passau will pay particular attention to aspects of diversity-friendly studying and working when formulating future room utilisation concepts.
- The University has quiet rooms and diaper-changing rooms at various locations throughout the campus. These rooms are being further expanded.

Outlook

Lived diversity is the result of a process involving awareness-building, acceptance and an affirmation of plurality and heterogeneity. This process can contribute to the long-term development of societies, their structures, organisations and the people who live in them. Our work for lived diversity is, therefore, crucial for the development of our University as an internationally visible, academic driving force and for the sustainable development of society at large.

Our lived experience changes over time, and so do concepts, structures and conventions, as well as people's demands and expectations of our University. By embracing diversity as a dynamic, self-renewing process that is open to critical feedback from all our members and subject to continuous reflection and evaluation, we are laying the groundwork for successful long-term inclusion – and to build, now and in the future, a university community that is not only welcoming, but where everybody feels a sense of belonging.

Appendix

Underlying legal texts and requirements for the Diversity Guideline

[Bavarian Higher Education Innovation Act \(BayHIG\) 2022](#)

[General Equal Treatment Act \(AGG\) 2006](#)

[Accessible Information Technology Ordinance \(BITV 2.0\) 2011](#)

[German Research Foundation \(DFG\): Research-Oriented Equity and Diversity Standards 2022](#)

[Horizon Europe – European Framework Programme for Research and Innovation](#)

[University Development Plan \(UEP\) 2023–26](#)

[Higher Education Accord \(HSV\) 2023–27](#)

[Family in the University Charter](#)

[Diversity Charter](#)

[German Universities Open To The World – Against Racism and Chauvinism](#)

[National Code of Conduct for German Universities Regarding International Students](#)

Last reviewed: 2024-08-19