



CYPRUS AYDIN UNIVERSITY

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI) POLICY DIRECTIVE

PART ONE

Purpose, Scope, Basis and Definitions

1. Short Title

This directive shall be referred to as the “Cyprus Aydın University (CAU) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Directive.”

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this Directive:

- a) *University* refers to Cyprus Aydın University (CAU).
- b) *Rector* refers to the Rector of CAU.
- c) *Unit* refers to the relevant Faculty, Institute, School, or Vocational School within the University.
- d) *Diversity* means the bringing together of individuals from different backgrounds, cultures, ethnic origins, genders, sexual orientations, ages, beliefs, abilities, and experiences.
- e) *Equity* refers to ensuring that every individual, regardless of differences, has fair access to education, resources, and opportunities.
- f) *Inclusion* means not only acknowledging diversity but also embracing it, and creating an environment in which everyone is respected, feels valued, and is encouraged to participate.
- g) *Discrimination* refers to unequal treatment of an individual on the basis of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, language, disability, age, socioeconomic status, or any other protected characteristic.
- h) *Participation* means the University’s collaboration with all stakeholders to promote policies, processes, and cultures that reflect its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- i) *Accountability and Transparency* refer to the continuous monitoring and improvement of the University’s diversity, equity, and inclusion policies based on the quality assurance cycle (Plan – Do – Check – Act), and ensuring that these policies, processes, and practices are visible and accessible to all stakeholders.
- j) *Sustainability* refers to the development of sustainable policies that aim to create a fair, equitable, understanding, safe, creative, and synergistic environment and culture in which all members of the University community—regardless of religion, language, race, color, gender, age, nationality, gender identity or expression, marital status, citizenship, disability, or any other legally protected status—can reach their full potential.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this Directive is to affirm Cyprus Aydın University’s commitment to promoting diversity, ensuring equitable practices, and creating an inclusive working,

learning, and productive environment for all students, academic and administrative staff, and members and stakeholders of the University.

Through this approach, the University aims to build an institutional structure in which every individual is valued for their identity, culture, perspective, and experience, and is protected against discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion.

4. Scope

This Directive applies to all academic and administrative staff, students, stakeholders, and business partners of CAU.

These policies apply to all areas representing the University, including on-campus settings, online platforms, University events, and any context in which the University is represented.

PART TWO

Protected Characteristics and Core Principles

5. Protected Characteristics

The following characteristics are guaranteed protection against discrimination under this Policy:

1. Gender
2. Gender identity and gender expression
3. Sexual orientation
4. Race, color, culture, and ethnic origin
5. Language
6. Religion, belief, or worldview
7. Disability status
8. Age
9. Socioeconomic status
10. Marital status and family responsibilities
11. Citizenship or immigration/refugee status
12. Political opinion or affiliation
13. Digital inequality status

6. Core Principles

In line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), applicable national legislation, and international human rights standards, Cyprus Aydın University adopts the following core principles:

1. Diversity and Excellence:

Academic and administrative processes are designed by considering the diverse perspectives, identities, experiences, and characteristics of all University stakeholders.

Diversity is viewed as a source of enrichment, and excellence is upheld as a guiding principle in all areas.

2. Equity and Justice:

All students, academic, and administrative staff have equal rights. No individual shall be discriminated against based on gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, religion, language, age, socioeconomic status, refugee status, or any similar characteristic. Equal opportunity on campus goes beyond offering “the same means” it entails developing inclusive language, accessible spaces, and structures that ensure equal participation for everyone.

3. Inclusion and Participation:

The University actively promotes the admission and participation of groups underrepresented in higher education (such as women in STEM fields, ethnic minorities, low-income or immigrant students, etc.). True participation means not only being invited but also having a voice in decision-making processes.

4. Gender Equality:

Increasing the representation of women and individuals vulnerable to gender-based discrimination in academic and administrative positions, leadership roles, and educational activities is a strategic priority. A zero-tolerance policy applies to gender-based discrimination, unequal opportunities, harassment, and violence.

5. Disability-Friendly Campus:

The University focuses on developing accessible infrastructure to ensure the full participation of individuals with disabilities or special needs. Guided by universal design principles and accessibility standards, environments are designed to facilitate free and comfortable movement across the campus.

6. Student Rights:

Equal opportunities are guaranteed in all stages of student life, including admission, registration, learning, assessment, support services, participation in community life, and graduation.

7. Staff Rights:

Fairness and equality are ensured in recruitment, promotion, remuneration, professional development, and working conditions for academic and administrative personnel. Transparency is maintained in performance evaluations, and discrimination, mobbing, or exclusionary practices are not tolerated.

8. Diversity of Thought and Academic Freedom:

Diversity of thought and academic freedom are protected rights that cannot be limited under the pretext of harassment, threat, or discrimination. Academic content is expected to reflect multiple perspectives and allow the respectful expression of differing opinions.

9. Zero Tolerance:

All forms of discrimination, harassment, bullying, exclusionary conduct, and victimization are strictly prohibited and subject to disciplinary sanctions.

10. Individual and Institutional Responsibility:

Every member of the University community is responsible for refraining from behaviors

that may lead to discrimination or harassment. The University not only endorses these principles but also implements them through education, reporting, and enforcement mechanisms.

11. Complaint, Protection, and Data Privacy / Evidence-Based Decision-Making:

Reporting of policy violations is encouraged. Whistleblowers are guaranteed confidentiality and protection against retaliation. Complaints are handled fairly, sensitively, promptly, and confidentially.

12. Accessible Communication and Inclusive Language:

All internal and external communication employs clear, comprehensible, unbiased, and non-sexist language. Visual and audio materials are made accessible and represent diverse identities and experiences inclusively.

13. Social Contribution and Multiculturalism:

The University collaborates with local and international stakeholders (such as NGOs, public institutions, municipalities, and bicomunal initiatives) to extend diversity and inclusion beyond the campus. In this way, the University contributes to strengthening multiculturalism and social responsibility.

PART THREE

Reporting and Protection Mechanism, Investigation and Disciplinary Procedure

7. Reporting and Protection Mechanism

1. All suspicions or incidents of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, mobbing, exclusionary conduct, or victimization within the University may be reported through a secure, confidential, and accessible reporting system.
2. Reports may be submitted in written form, online, in person, or through anonymous channels. This mechanism is open to students, academic and administrative staff, suppliers, and all stakeholders associated with the University.
3. The identities of individuals submitting reports are protected under strict confidentiality; information is processed solely by the authorities authorized to conduct investigations.
4. Individuals who file reports shall not be subject to retaliation, pressure, discrimination, or loss of rights under any circumstances. This protection extends to students, academic and administrative staff, and all external parties connected to the University. Allegations of retaliation are subject to independent investigation.
5. An independent committee appointed by the Rectorate is responsible for receiving, reviewing, and finalizing reports.
6. The verification and conclusion of reports fall under the responsibility of the Rectorate and/or the Board of Trustees.

8. Investigation and Disciplinary Procedure

1. All complaints concerning practices or behaviors that violate the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion are examined promptly, fairly, impartially, and confidentially by the appointed Committee.
2. Upon receipt, each complaint is formally recorded. An initial assessment is then carried out to determine the seriousness, scope, and parties involved. Where necessary, temporary protective measures may be implemented to ensure the safety of all parties and the integrity of the process.
3. Following the preliminary review, a detailed investigation is conducted by the Committee. Statements from parties and witnesses are collected, documents and digital records are examined, and evidence is gathered. Equal opportunity to present views is provided to all parties, and confidentiality is maintained throughout the process.
4. Upon completion of the investigation, the Committee determines the nature of the violation and reports its findings to the Rectorate. Depending on the severity of the violation, various sanctions may be applied: For students: warning, reprimand, temporary suspension, restriction from campus events, revocation of scholarships or privileges, or dismissal from the University. For staff: warning, reprimand, temporary suspension, removal from academic/administrative duties, or termination of employment. For third parties: termination of cooperation agreements or restriction of access to the campus.

9. Notification and Appeal

1. All decisions are communicated to the parties in writing with justification. Parties have the right to appeal decisions within three (3) working days following notification. Appeals must be submitted to the Rectorate and will be reviewed promptly, fairly, and impartially. The outcome of the appeal is final, and no further administrative remedies exist within the University.

10. Record-Keeping and Reporting

1. All investigation and disciplinary processes are documented in line with the principle of transparency. Personal data are protected in accordance with confidentiality regulations. Summary data (e.g., number of cases, resolution rates) are included in the annual report submitted to the Rectorate. The report may also be made public when deemed appropriate.

11. Monitoring and Review

1. The University regularly monitors the implementation of all Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies. This monitoring covers not only the prevention of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, mobbing, and bullying, but also the promotion of equal opportunity, representation balance, accessibility, inclusive language use, training and awareness programs, participation mechanisms, and stakeholder collaboration.
2. The effectiveness of the Policy is evaluated periodically, and updates or improvements are made as necessary.
3. Feedback from students, academic and administrative staff, business partners, and other stakeholders is integrated into this evaluation process.

12. Training and Awareness

1. The University organizes regular training and awareness programs to ensure that all academic and administrative staff, as well as students, understand the principles and practices of DEI. These programs cover topics such as diversity, equity, inclusion, inclusive language, bias awareness, and accessibility. They are integrated into orientation sessions, in-service training, seminars, and online resources.
2. The University may also organize joint activities involving external stakeholders such as the business community, civil society organizations, and public institutions.
3. The content of these training programs is designed to reflect national legislation, international standards, academic ethics, and good governance principles.

PART FOUR

Miscellaneous Provisions

13. Cases Not Covered by the Directive

In cases not explicitly addressed in this Directive, the relevant regulations and provisions of Cyprus Aydın University (CAU), as well as the decisions of the Board of Trustees, the Senate, or the relevant Executive Board, shall apply.

14. Entry into Force

This Directive shall enter into force on the date of its approval by the Senate of Cyprus Aydın University.

15. Execution of the Directive

The provisions of this Directive shall be executed by the Rector of Cyprus Aydın University.