

YUFE Diversity and Inclusivity Strategy

Recognising and fostering diversity for the benefit of the citizens and regions of Europe

The YUFE Diversity and Inclusivity Vision

YUFE's mission is to transform European higher education by establishing the leading model of a student-centred, open and inclusive European University.

Our diversity and inclusivity Vision is at the core of the YUFE identity. It is the foundation on which we are built; a tangible message and thread that runs through the heart and mind of our organisation.

Our diversity and inclusivity Vision is:

- For all YUFE institutions to become, and be recognised as, leaders in diversity and inclusivity
- For YUFE to be a place of positive and open discourse around diversity and inclusivity
- For all YUFE institutions to have inclusive systems, structures, policies and procedures
- For the diversity in society to be reflected at all levels of YUFE institutions
- For all YUFE staff and students¹ to be advocates for diversity and inclusivity and to inspire others to share the YUFE values

The YUFE Diversity and Inclusivity Strategy: Context

The context within which each YUFE institution operates may be different but all feel a collective responsibility to strengthen the values on which our Alliance is based, including social cohesion, democratic societies, diversity and inclusion. Each institution also faces various threats and challenges to these values and will strive to create dialogue and overcome those in a respectful way.

YUFE therefore recognises that embedding this Vision will be challenging and institutions will need to be resilient and prepared to address resistance to change. The Strategy reflects this and aims to bring our diversity and inclusivity vision to life and transform our institutions. It is a best practice model for each partner institution to aspire to adopting in its entirety over time, with the focus being on YUFE activities in the first instance.

It recognises that partner institutions are at different points on their journey to embed equality, diversity and inclusion and operate within different legislative (European, national and regional), political and cultural environments, and seeks to provide a framework for implementing local-level solutions that drive forward equality, diversity and inclusion and prepare each institution for being part of one European university.

¹ In the context of this Strategy, YUFE staff and students refers to **all** staff and students at YUFE institutions.

YUFE partner institutions are expected to be open and transparent about the extent to which diversity and inclusivity is currently embedded within their organisation, be more alert to recognising issues, challenge themselves to do better and support each other in taking forward individual actions that will help to deliver systemic, cultural change.

YUFE promotes a zero tolerance approach to any form of discrimination on the basis of, but not limited to, ethnic background, sex, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, socio-economic status, caring responsibilities, refugee status. YUFE also recognises that individuals have multiple aspects to their identity and this intersectionality has an impact on their experiences, opportunities, participation and outcomes.

The YUFE Diversity and Inclusivity Strategy: Objectives

1. **To build cultural intelligence and knowledge of diversity and inclusivity issues across all YUFE partner institutions by:**
 - a. Institutions working collaboratively and sharing knowledge and resources
 - b. Members of the work package 7 (Diversity and Inclusivity) taskforce working closely with staff and students in their institutions assigned to other work packages to provide input, advice and guidance on how to embed diversity and inclusivity in their areas of responsibility and to ensure that the YUFE Diversity and Inclusivity Vision is integral to the debate and decision-making across all YUFE work packages
 - c. Having a shared understanding of the diversity and inclusivity-related language used across YUFE

2. **To create structures and policies across the YUFE network that support delivery of systemic change by:**
 - a. Increasing the diversity of representation at every level of YUFE decision-making processes and governance
 - b. Ensuring each YUFE partner institution is equipped to prioritise consideration of equality, diversity, inclusion and anti-discrimination-related issues through, for example, embedding responsibility for this within new or existing individual roles, committees and functions
 - c. Supporting the development of inclusive policies, processes and procedures in YUFE partner organisations by providing peer-to-peer feedback on drafts, sharing existing documents and strategies for securing support for making changes

3. **To create a YUFE diversity and inclusivity profile by:**
 - a. Putting diversity and inclusivity at the heart of YUFE promotional material, events, programmes, processes and policies and the way in which every YUFE staff and student is expected to interact with each other and those beyond the confines of our higher education institutions
 - b. Making the YUFE commitment to diversity and inclusivity visible within all work packages, across all YUFE institutions, in all YUFE outputs and across the four YUFE focus areas: European identity and responsibilities in a global world; citizen's well-being; digital societies; sustainability
 - c. Establishing the YUFE identity across all partner institutions and integrating YUFE into existing equality, diversity and inclusion-related work, for example awareness-raising events and activities

4. **To create truly inclusive environments in which the lived experience of staff and students matches the YUFE values by:**
 - a. Setting out expected standards of behaviour and supporting staff and students to uphold those
 - b. Clearly articulating YUFE's commitment to creating environments that are free from discrimination
 - c. Better understanding the diversity profile of staff and students at YUFE institutions and taking steps to address identified under-representation

5. **To ensure all staff and students have an equal opportunity to participate and develop into role models and mentors by:**
 - a. Supporting staff and students to deepen their knowledge and understanding of diversity and inclusivity
 - b. Equipping staff and students to consider diversity and inclusivity routinely and as an integral part of everything they do
 - c. Encouraging YUFE leaders to build on the strength of differences in their teams through modelling inclusive leadership behaviours

The YUFE strategy has an accompanying action plan (to be developed) that sets out the first steps to delivering the YUFE Vision.

By the end of the pilot period (November 2022), we expect each partner institution to have implemented a range of changes, both structural and cultural, to increase the diversity of their staff and student populations, to improve representation and outcomes for staff and students from under-represented groups and to showcase their commitment to diversity and inclusion.