



University
of Basel

Strategic Position.

Equal Opportunity, Diversity & Inclusion 2022-2030

This Strategic Position was ratified by the Diversity Commission on 6 December 2021, and approved by the President's Board on 18 January 2022.

Introduction

Diversity makes a major contribution to the excellence of our university. By taking account of and supporting equal opportunities or, more precisely, diversity in all its dimensions, we create an attractive culture of teaching and learning, in addition to an innovative work environment. Talent therefore arrives, stays, and is motivated to perform at its best.

This document offers a summary of the concepts and objectives outlined in the university's various strategic and legal frameworks. It serves as the basis for Diversity & Inclusion Management over the coming years. The accompanying action plan defines the measures derived from this document for a shorter time period. It also describes individual responsibilities and offices in terms of transparent governance. All measures and objectives comply with the University of Basel's established "Plan-Do-Check-Act" principle. Equal opportunities monitoring with quantifiable key indicators offers the basis for establishing individual positions and action planning.

Conduct and Objective

The University of Basel pursues the objective of being a family-friendly, equality-oriented, non-discriminatory, accessible university.

Students, researchers and staff at the University of Basel have varied interests and bring with them a variety of experiences. Not all of them grew up in an academic environment or have the same level of physical and mental health. Not all of them identify as a woman or a man. Some have caring responsibilities alongside their studies and job; others don't. Many have lived in Switzerland their whole lives, some have migrated here in the course of their lives, or have come to the region to work at the University of Basel.

The baseline for a respectful culture of work and learning is understanding these various realities. Because only then can dialog take place on equal terms, with open and respectful communication. This will empower everyone to participate in their work and studies to the best of their ability.

The main points outlined in this document are taken from the university's strategic framework. They are informed by previous experience in this area and are not intended to be definitive. Diversity & Inclusion Management must undergo continuous development and respond dynamically to changing circumstances. It relies on an agile integration of current discourse and open discussion of needs and expectations. By taking into account the effects of synergies, concepts are developed that identify potential improvements in terms of equal opportunity and the inclusion of underrepresented or discriminated groups and attaining fairness. In the university context, alongside gender, the focus is on the social and cultural dimensions of diversity, which includes ancestry, socioeconomic status, gender identity, religion, disability or chronic illness, age, and especially parenthood and family.

Based on existing strategic papers, the following Diversity & Inclusion Management objectives have been established for the next five years:

1. To employ more women
2. To adopt a family-friendly approach
3. To protect personal integrity
4. To strengthen intercultural skills
5. To promote diverse careers

6. To facilitate accessible study
7. To create an inclusive university

These objectives are expanded upon below.

1. To employ more women

The equal opportunity of women and men is an overarching objective in the area of Diversity & Inclusion Management at the University of Basel. Women are still underrepresented in leading academic roles in many subject areas. Therefore the university is taking concrete measures to increase the proportion of women at all academic levels, particularly at the level of professor.

A promising starting point is recruitment. Here, positive effects can be achieved quickly and sustainably. This refers, among other things, to appointment processes, in which equal opportunity is given special attention. In addition, individual proposals are created at a variety of career stages to consolidate recruitment success on a sustainable basis. As a first step, a mentoring network will be set up for female assistant professors.

2. To adopt a family-friendly approach

The University of Basel wants to distinguish itself as a family-friendly university. Tolerance and respect for the personal context of students, researchers, and staff form the foundation of a top-performing, internationally attractive teaching and research institution. The University of Basel creates the conditions needed to provide all of its members with a work and study environment sensitive to their stage of life. This applies in particular to the integration of childcare or the care of vulnerable family members into activities at the University of Basel. This is ensured through targeted measures which are evaluated and expanded upon on an ongoing basis.

A strategic focus for coming years is improving the situation for PhD students and postdocs: the university wants to attract, retain, and foster the best young talent while taking into account their varied family circumstances.

3. To protect personal integrity

The University of Basel is committed to a respectful culture of collaboration, in which the personal integrity of students and staff is respected and protected. The establishment of the coordination office, the definition of processes and the creation of the accompanying guidance documents provide a firm foundation. In the coming years, the aim is to publicize this framework through targeted campaigns. A respectful culture of work and study will be achieved with the help of preventative measures such as trainings and organizational development processes. The main objective is to protect all members of the university from discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying.

If boundaries are overstepped despite these preventative measures, appropriate action will be taken in consultation with the persons concerned. Awareness of the intersection between violations of personal integrity and the misuse of power must also be raised. Respect for the personal boundaries of others is placed in the foreground: only then can a respectful culture of collaboration become a reality.

4. To strengthen intercultural skills

The increasingly global nature of the university and economic systems requires a corresponding increase in the intercultural skills of all participants. This means engaging with the dialog between one's own world view and one's own way of thinking and behaving, and the novel and culturally unfamiliar. Intercultural skills are multilayered and comprise knowledge, skills/behaviors and professional competences which are mutually influential. The strategic objective is to support all of these levels through relevant training opportunities to facilitate appropriate, effective action in an intercultural context. The University of Basel offers a beneficial socio-political context for this by actively supporting diversity and inclusion in all areas.

5. To promote diverse careers

The University of Basel aims to offer diverse career paths in study, teaching, research, management and administration. Besides individual, tried-and-tested funding programs, further research will be done on which measures can be meaningfully implemented at an institutional level. In particular the perspective of inclusive human resources management, sensitive to different phases of life, will be strengthened.

Management figures form an important anchor point for implementation: They must be convinced of the benefits and objectives of embodied principles of Diversity & Inclusion, set a good example in practice, and empower their staff to embody this culture. To achieve this, they will be offered relevant support in exercising their managerial responsibilities.

An example from degree programs is existing social selectivity. The objective as an institution is to ensure that students' success is as independent of their socio-economic background as possible.

6. To facilitate accessible study

Since 2012, the StoB (Students Without Barriers) service point has been assisting faculties and subject areas in offering proactive, targeted support to people with disabilities, defining standards and developing best practices in relation to compensation for disadvantages. In the coming years, in cooperation with faculties, processes and structures for accessible teaching will receive additional support, including at subject/lecturer level, and the opportunities offered by technological innovations for enhancing participation will be utilized.

7. To create an inclusive university

An inclusive, diversity-aware culture is the basis for innovation and high-level learning, teaching research, management and administration. Fairness and equal opportunity are supported by fostering diversity skills among all members of the university and an inclusive approach at an institutional level.

In Diversity & Inclusion Management, measures for designing accessibility- and diversity-informed processes in academic practice and administration are developed, implemented and evaluated. The groundwork laid in terms of equal opportunities for women and men is consolidated. At the same time, in the context of diversity and its various dimensions, current developments suggest specific areas for expansion. On the subject of gender identity, there are uncertainties around how best to approach the needs expressed. Through targeted information and a culture of dialog beyond polarized opinions, tensions will be reduced. With pragmatic, goal-oriented measures within this area, specific needs will be respected, without causing distress to other interest groups.

Implementation

As a cross-cutting issue, the promotion of equality, equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion is a management task at all levels. The University of Basel sets verifiable objectives and sets out relevant measures in an action plan.