

ECIU GENDER EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PLAN

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after approval by the ECIU Board



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ECIU

INTRODUCTION

As a consortium of innovative universities, we believe that equality and diversity are a driving force for innovation. ECIU strongly believes that more attention needs to be paid to addressing existing inequality and lack of diversity, access and inclusion to enable us to tackle the challenges of today and tomorrow. Consequently, the ECIU Board requested a Gender Equality and Diversity plan to be developed.

Moreover, the European Education Area sets priority to disconnect educational attainment from one's gender, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, (dis)ability, age or sexual orientation,¹ and puts the inclusion of students in a perspective of lifelong learning, thus inviting people to enhance their skills and competencies continuously.

ORGANISATION

The Board members and Vice-Presidents that are part of the bodies within ECIU that take key decisions are appointed by ECIU member universities, and therefore subject to institutional policies and recruitment processes. Students and staff (administrative staff, teachers, and researchers) belong to individual member universities and therefore fall under the responsibility, procedures, management, and guidelines of their home university.

ECIU can develop and monitor the topics of gender equality, diversity, equal access and inclusiveness in several fields of activities within education, research, and innovation, as well as start developing measures to sustain progress. The biggest project of the ECIU is since 2019 its European University, the ECIU University, that is creating a completely new educational model on a European scale, including a research dimension in ECIU's SMART-ER Virtual Research Institute, which is a framework for joint research. The organisational structure of ECIU and the educational, research and innovation offer are developed constantly. Therefore, this plan is an organic document.

New joint projects in which the majority of ECIU partners will be involved are expected. The work concerning diversity and inclusion of students and staff in the activities and communities of ECIU University will be intensified from the year 2023 onward. As soon as the ECIU programme offer will be open to students and staff that do not belong to an ECIU member institution, this plan needs to be adjusted and reviewed at least once a year.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en

VALUES

As stated in its 2030 Vision, ECIU aims to develop an **open system of innovation**, and hence of **accessibility and inclusivity** – which means that no department or group is left out and that everybody feels welcome and included. Furthermore, ECIU aims to make **diversity** – embracing and taking into account differences between individuals and groups – and **equality** – providing equal access to resources, opportunities and participation (incl. decision-making) – the priority of ECIU’s top management and the priority in all ECIU activities. **Gender equality, inclusion and diversity** must be integrated in the organisation of ECIU, in the processes in research, innovation and education, and in the day-to-day work of everybody involved in ECIU.

AMBITIONS

ECIU has a strategy of inclusion applying to students (2021) that supports the ECIU vision of an open and inclusive collaboration between and among societal parties, researchers, and students for the provision of European answers to current and future societal challenges. The biggest endeavour of the ECIU organisation is the development of its European University: the ECIU University. In the ECIUn+ proposal (2022), it says that ECIU University is driven – amongst other things – by paying attention to diversity, inclusion, and gender equality. The flexible learning pathways of ECIU University, as well as the widely varied educational offer with its challenges, micro-modules, summer schools, and an online PhD programme that vary in duration, length and mode [on campus, online, blended, hybrid, with mobility or internationalisation@home] are all powerful tools to achieve this goal. Starting in 2023, ECIU University offers mobility opportunities (physical, online, hybrid and internationalisation@home) that are inclusive, accessible, balanced across the network, and supported with dedicated resources. Moreover, ECIU University will provide a unique, flexible, inclusive, and excellent user experience to all users within the ECIU University community. User support and services will be designed accordingly, and resources will be dedicated to fostering equality, inclusion and diversity.

The ECIU SMART-ER Project contributes to the research pillar of the ECIU University. SMART-ER is aimed at the inclusion of all participants equality in all activities and on the organisational level. In order to sustain diversity, participants will be trained to reap the benefits of diverse points of view and perspectives. A positive climate will be created, engaging the expertise of each member in the research teams and bodies, creating non-hierarchical structures, recruiting a critical mass of any social demographic to the team, and diversifying research.

OBJECTIVES IN SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT AREAS

1. The ECIU organisation, including recruitment:

- ECIU will develop a policy for Inclusive Language for ECIU (on its website, in social media, and in oral communications) and in its data collection systems;
- ECIU will develop and implement a inclusive recruitment policy for central ECIU positions;
- ECIU will develop and implement a diversity policy for events, conferences, meetings, and trainings;
- ECIU will develop and implement guidelines for flexible working arrangements for ECIU staff (these flexible working conditions, however, will be accompanied by restricting work-related communications and meetings after office hours);
- ECIU will include the need for diversity in its dissemination activities to raise awareness of these issues that are of great significance to society in general.

2. Activity level

- ECIU will develop and implement an equality, inclusiveness and diversity policy in ECIU decision-making bodies and management positions in research projects that fall under ECIU;
- ECIU will integrate the inclusivity in training sessions, blended mobility programmes and citizen science pilots in its research projects;
- ECIU will initiate joint trainings and workshops for raising awareness, discussing challenging situations and preventive actions, e.g. in co-ordination with its existing Leadership Development Programme:
 - To learn about tools for fostering equality and diversity across Europe;
 - To raise awareness for stereotypes in language and images across Europe;
 - To learn how to manage and work in teams with high diversity.
- ECIU will develop and offer a broad set of challenges, micro-modules, and summer schools to offer flexible education, making education more inclusive to a diverse group of students with diverse learning needs and limitations, e.g. lifelong learners and/or students who do not intend to get a full degree;
- ECIU will develop and implement inclusive, accessible, and sufficiently supported mobility opportunities, balanced across the network;
- ECIU will develop and implement unique, flexible, inclusive, and excellent user support for the ECIU University community and its activities, sufficiently supported by resources to foster equality and diversity;
- ECIU will coordinate equality and diversity training courses available to all colleagues and learners that are involved in ECIU.

ACTION PLAN, DATA COLLECTION AND MONITORING

Identifying problems, tracking progress on improvement, and acting upon qualitative and quantitative data concerning the topics of equality, diversity, and inclusion is crucial to advance everyone's situation in these areas. ECIU will collect data to monitor equality, inclusion, and diversity in ECIU actions. According to art. 9 of GDPR², the subject of personal data will be asked for explicit permission to process these data. ECIU will publish annual progress reports on its website to monitor the progress of enhancing inclusivity and diversity on an organisational level, in education and research.

Area	Action	Rationale	Monitor	Responsible	Timeline
Leadership	Taking gender into account in the ECIU leadership programme attendance	To encourage the development of leadership among genders	Spreading participants to ensure diversity (through registration forms)	Universities in their recruitment	Starting from the next recruitment in 2023
Leadership	Integrate gender equality and diversity topics into the ECIU leadership development programme	To actively develop awareness among staff, discuss good practise across Europe	Assessment of the content of the ECIU Leadership Development Programme	ECIU HR coordinator and Secretary General	Starting from the 2023 programme
Policy	Policy on Gender Inclusive Language for ECIU	Inclusive and non-discriminatory language in ECIU communication applied to any type of communication, whether oral or written, formal or informal, or addressed to an internal or external audience to foster a true sense of belonging to ECIU for everybody from all backgrounds.	Check ECIU website, social media, documents and recruitment page with inclusive language tools and for digital accessibility for those with visual impairments.	Policy to be developed by ECIU Secretary General and the Communication lead	Until September 2023
Policy	Equal recruitment policy for central ECIU positions and ECIU's commitment to gender quality included in job specifications	Ensure equal opportunities for ECIU positions	Check diversity among job applicants and candidate pool, and recruitment team	ECIU Secretary General	Policy until May 2023
Policy	Guidelines for flexible working arrangements	Broaden the availability of flexible working	Assessment of the individual working conditions and needs	ECIU Secretary General	Until May 2023
Policy	Diversity policy for events, conferences, meetings and trainings.	Ensure accessibility and appropriate diversity in ECIU outreach activities.	Ensuring diversity among applicants/speakers/ participants. Data collection through participation forms.	ECIU Secretary General	Until September 2023
Policy	Inclusive policy in ECIU decision-making bodies and leadership positions in ECIU University projects.	Ensure appropriate inclusivity in projects.	Ensuring diversity in leading positions.	Project Manager projects	Tbd

² Art. 9 GDPR - Processing of special categories of personal data [CL2016R0679EN0000020.0001.3bi_cp_1.1 \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj/00013bi_cp_1.1)

Area	Action	Rationale	Monitor	Responsible	Timeline
Teaching and Learning	Develop and offer a broad set of challenges, micro-modules, and summer schools to offer flexible education.	To make education more inclusive to a diverse group of students with diverse learning needs and limitations, e.g., lifelong students and/or students not aiming for a full degree.	Ensuring diversity among students taking part in challenges, micro-modules. Diversity of teachers active in challenges and micro-modules. Data collection via DxP ³ . Surveys to get feedback on equality and inclusivity after participation in an educational activity.	Educational Portfolio Coordinator, Educational lead User service Lead	Tbd (part of ECIUn+)
Teaching and Learning	Integrate gender equality and diversity into training courses for teachers and students.	Actively develop awareness of gender and diversity among teachers and students across ECIU.	Teachers and students trained. Monitoring of needs and demands for further education.	Capacity Work Package	Tbd
Research	Inclusive policy in ECIU decision-making bodies and leadership positions in research projects.	Ensure appropriate inclusivity in research projects.	Ensuring diversity in leading positions.	Project Manager research projects	Tbd
Research	Integration of the diversity dimension in training sessions and seminars, citizen-science pilots and seed-blended mobility programmes for researchers.	To promote diversity in the training activities and programmes for researchers.	Ensuring diversity among in the participation. Data collection through application forms.	Project Manager research projects	Tbd
Mobility	Develop and implement inclusive, accessible, and sufficiently supported mobility opportunities, balanced across the network	To enable all students, researchers, staff in the universities and outside, to have an international experience.	Ensuring diversity among students, researchers, staff and stakeholders interested in a mobility offering. Data collection via DxP, Surveys to get feedback on equality and inclusivity (participating and not-participating)	Mobility Coordinator	Tbd (part of ECIUn+)
Support	Develop and implement unique, flexible, inclusive, and excellent user support for the ECIU University community	To have activities, sufficiently supported by tools and resources to foster equality and diversity	Ensuring diversity in the ECIU University community. Data collection via DxP. Surveys to get feedback on equality and inclusivity.	User Lead	Tbd (part of ECIUn+)
Dissemination	Disseminate relevant news of ECIU in the field of equal opportunities	Raise awareness and reflection on this issue of such significance to society	Track publications (reports, articles and social media) related to diversity	Communication Lead	Tbd
Data	Data collection systems to include „other“ in gender categories	Enable people who identify as other genders to feel included	Add functionality to the data collection system	IT Lead	As soon as possible

³ ECIU University has a digital ecosystem to bring together participants: the Digital eXperience Platform (DxP).

DEDICATED RESOURCES

The ECIU Board has the overall strategic responsibility for activities enhancing equality, diversity, and inclusion within ECIU. To realise the abovementioned ambitions, ECIU dedicates time in its Board Meetings to monitor the topic at the highest level and to create an allyship. ECIU already has a gender equality expert group in place, with representatives from all partner institutions to ensure institutional alignment.

On the central level, the ECIU Secretary General will co-ordinate data collection and ensure a follow-up by the ECIU Management. Some areas have dedicated central supportive capacity, e.g. mobility lead, user lead, project managers etc., who will act as contact persons for the Secretary General for implementing and monitoring the Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan. They will work together closely with the developers of the ECIU digital platform in collecting data. This will be a team effort in order to maximise the successful realisation and monitoring of our ambitions. Looking at the ambitions and the further development of ECIU University related to inclusive user support and mobility offerings, the appointment of an ECIU-wide Coordinator for Equal Opportunities is considered.

Sources

ECIU brings together fourteen universities from fourteen countries. The ECIU Gender Equality and Diversity Plan builds on the existing plans of the ECIU partner institutions and responds to European Union guidelines.

European Union guidelines

- [Implementation guidelines Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy](#)
- [Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans](#)

Gender Equality and Diversity Plans of partner institutions (English version is linked if available):

- [Aalborg University](#)
- [Autonomous University of Barcelona](#)
- [Dublin City University](#)
- [Hamburg University of Technology](#)
- [Groupe INSA: INSA Rouen](#)
- [Kaunas University of Technology](#)
- [Linköping University](#)
- [Lodz University of Technology](#)
- [Tampere University](#)
- [TEC de Monterrey](#)
- [University of Aveiro](#)
- [University of Stavanger](#)
- [University of Trento](#)
- [University of Twente](#)