
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy of Politehnica University Timișoara

CHAPTER I. General Provisions

Art. 1.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy of Politehnica University Timișoara
(hereinafter referred to as UPT) is based on the following legal and regulatory framework:

- General national legislation;
- Specific applicable national legislation:
 - Law No. 199/2023 – Higher Education Law, with subsequent amendments and additions;
 - Law No. 202/2002 on equal opportunities and treatment between women and men, with subsequent amendments and additions;
 - Government Ordinance No. 137/2000 on the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination (republished), with subsequent amendments and additions;
- International anti-discrimination legislation:
 - Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950);
 - Revised European Social Charter;
 - Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;
 - Directive 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin;
 - Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation;
 - Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast);
 - Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC;
 - Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union;
 - European Parliament Resolution of 10 June 2021 on promoting gender equality in education and careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM);
 - Other applicable resolutions of the European Parliament;
- The UPT Charter and Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct;
- UPT's internal regulations.

Art. 2.

Terms used in this document and reference to the fundamental values of the European

Union:

Discrimination: any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on the criteria provided by the applicable legislation.

The criteria established by Romanian legislation regarding discrimination are: "race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, social category, beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, non-contagious chronic illness, HIV infection, belonging to a disadvantaged group, as well as any other criterion that has the purpose or effect of restricting or eliminating the recognition, use, or exercise, on an equal basis, of human rights and fundamental freedoms or rights recognized by law in the political, economic, social, and cultural fields or in any other areas of public life"¹.

Forms of discrimination: direct, indirect, and multiple discrimination; harassment; victimization; incitement or instruction to discriminate.

Diversity: refers to the broad spectrum of differences among individuals, with each person belonging, in a certain context, to a minority. Diversity encompasses all types of human differences, including age, ethnicity, religion, culture or language, as well as varying (dis)abilities, sexual orientations and/or gender identities, social backgrounds, economic situations, health conditions, or regions of origin.

Equity: an ethical and legal principle underlying the regulation of social relations in the spirit of justice, equality, and fairness, promoting collaboration and mutual respect.

Inclusion: the recognition of the status and rights of all members of society, who must be given the opportunity to actively participate and benefit from equal treatment.

Diversity and inclusion are among the fundamental values of the European Union, representing cross-cutting priorities and guiding principles in its programs.

Inclusive education is a European pillar of social rights, as defined in documents adopted by the European Council, the European Parliament, and the European Commission: "The first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights states that: 'Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and successfully manage transitions in the labour market.'"Promoting equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship is one of the strategic objectives of EU cooperation in the field of education and training. The 2015 Joint Report of the Commission and the Council on the implementation of the ET 2020 strategy identified "**inclusive education, equality, equity, non-discrimination, and the promotion of civic competences**" as **priority areas for European cooperation** in education and training.²

The university community of Politehnica University Timișoara (UPT) is composed, according to the UPT Charter, of students, doctoral students, trainees, teaching and research staff, auxiliary teaching staff, and administrative personnel. The university community also includes individuals who have been granted the status of university community members by decision of the University Senate, as well as distinguished individuals who have been awarded honorary titles by UPT, such as Doctor Honoris Causa, Professor Emeritus, or other honorary distinctions.

¹ The National Council for Combating Discrimination - <https://www.cncd.ro/>

² The European Commission <https://education.ec.europa.eu/ro/focus-topics/improving-quality/inclusive-education>

Public interest: The interest that involves UPT's obligation to guarantee and respect the rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests of citizens, as guaranteed by the Constitution, national legislation, and international treaties to which Romania is a party, in accordance with the principles of efficiency, effectiveness, and economy in the use of resources.

Art. 3.

The strategy applies to all members of the UPT university community, as well as to other individuals who interact with them within UPT projects, events, and premises.

The target groups include both students and university employees, as well as students/employees from other institutions participating in UPT activities or taking place on UPT premises. At the same time, the strategy encourages increased attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion in our relationships with other organizations, with candidates for study programs or employment/promotion, with alumni, and with the communities served.

Art. 4.

As a public institution, UPT represents and reflects the diversity of the local community as well as the university's cultural diversity. UPT aims to establish, achieve, and maintain high standards of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

As a higher education institution, UPT seeks to attract students and staff with high potential, regardless of their group affiliation, to provide them with excellent study and working conditions, and to support them in professional excellence.

The university's commitment is realized through the creation of spaces, opportunities, and support mechanisms for members of the UPT university community who belong to vulnerable groups exposed to forms of discrimination. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are integrated into UPT's approach both in educational and research activities, as well as in additional activities, including the allocation of investments and initiatives.

This document underpins UPT's organizational approach, adapted to legal requirements and responding to the real needs of today's society and the European university environment.

CHAPTER II. Strategic Approach

Art. 5.

General Context. In Romanian society, diversity, equity, and inclusion have become priorities, as evidenced by the increased interest at both individual and organizational levels, as well as by the existing national anti-discrimination legislation. Organizational inclusion represents an important criterion of differentiation in today's educational environment.

Art. 6.

The purpose of the strategy is to promote and integrate the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion into all activities of UPT, at the organizational, educational, and research

levels. The strategy is implemented through the involvement of all organizational entities, with diversity, equity, and inclusion constituting strategic priorities.

UPT institutionally supports the right of every individual to express their ideas, values, identity, and to belong with dignity to any minority. UPT assumes the mission to actively contribute to creating an inclusive university environment.

CHAPTER III. Strategic Principles

Art. 7.

The *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy (DEI)* is based on the following strategic principles: Respect, Openness, Excellence, and Sustainability.

Respect – it will be manifested towards every person from the perspective of diversity. Efforts will be made to correctly understand each minority, to combat individual and/or organizational stereotypes and prejudices, in order to manage and enhance inclusion.

Respect leads to adjustments in behaviors and attitudes towards different groups and/or individuals, aiming for a coherent approach regarding equal opportunities as well as the absence of any form of discrimination.

Openness - refers to accessibility, inclusion, and fair treatment of any minority group or individual. To engage diverse communities, inclusive leadership will be supported, which shapes behaviors through self-awareness, curiosity, courage, vulnerability, and empathy. These qualities are essential for leaders' ability to create an environment where all participants feel respected, valued, and encouraged to contribute.

Excellence – Excellence in fulfilling the university's mission is encouraged and supported. In a diverse organizational culture, genuine inclusion can bring added creativity and directly contribute to improved outcomes.

An environment that fosters excellence requires clear codes of conduct, non-discriminatory organizational processes, and individual accountability.

Sustainability – UPT assumes the role of leader in the transition toward a sustainable future, promoting social and organizational sustainability. The goal is to create safe and accessible spaces, openness, respect, and dignity for everyone. UPT's activities will be adapted to meet the real needs of today's and tomorrow's society.

CHAPTER IV. Strategic Objectives

Art. 8.

The purpose of the organizational approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion is to create a work environment free from any form of discrimination.

The strategic objectives are:

- I. **Supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion** both within the UPT university community and in collaborations with the university's partners, in order to maximize creativity and innovation, as well as to create an inclusive environment in all types of activities.
- II. **Developing an inclusive organizational culture** that encourages every individual to reach their potential and contribute to shared success.
- III. **The aspiration to become a leader in promoting inclusion within the university environment**, both nationally and internationally.

CHAPTER V. Strategic Perspectives

Art. 9.

It is considered appropriate to approach the above objectives from the following strategic perspectives:

1. **Addressability** – Based on decision-making processes and leadership at all levels, this strategy targets every participant involved in activities carried out within UPT.
2. **Internal processes and adequate training at all levels, both organizational and individual** – Adapting these by implementing the inclusion component across all activity areas within UPT. Continuous training will include a diversity management component, supported by an information dissemination system regarding concrete inclusive approaches within the university and its various projects.
3. **Development of an Action Plan and Activities** – with the following objectives: a) learning and developing inclusive approaches integrated into all organizational processes; b) ensuring a direct and effective communication channel for the swift resolution of any potentially discriminatory situations; c) allocating the necessary resources to support the implementation of the action plan and activities.
4. **Periodic evaluation of the plan's status**, according to agreed criteria and performance indicators, to ensure organizational inclusion.

Art. 10.

Inclusive Leadership – Defining the concept of inclusive leadership in this context underpins the approaches in the action plan and activities of the *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy*. At the organizational level, inclusive leadership is based on the following components:

1. **Knowledge** – Understanding different minorities and questioning one's own personal or organizational stereotypes and prejudices represents the first step in creating a non-discriminatory environment. By becoming aware of and addressing their own limitations, and by acting with an open mindset, leaders help transform the organization toward greater inclusion and diversity.
2. **Curiosity** – An open mind is essential for effectively leading a team. Differences in ideas and experience can stimulate innovation and performance. Truly inclusive leaders continuously strive to understand the identities and cultural differences of their teams.

3. Courage – In a world polarized on various issues, inclusive leadership means taking responsibility for creating a fair, diverse, and respectful environment, even when doing so involves discomfort or opposition. Engaging in this process of shifting mindsets and promoting inclusive approaches is an act of courage.

4. Cultural intelligence – To be effective leaders in intercultural interactions, it is important both to understand the specifics of each minority and to recognize the existence of microcultures within UPT. This requires ongoing efforts to identify the real needs of these groups.

5. Ownership – Leaders champion inclusion by aligning with both personal and organizational values, and this commitment contributes significantly to enhanced organizational performance.

6. Collaboration – Leaders inspire trust, contribute to team development, and leverage the perspectives of diverse minorities. They also understand that people are more willing to collaborate and contribute when they feel safe and valued.

Art. 11.

Safe Spaces and Accessibility – In all activities carried out, a fully inclusive approach is proposed, in which every participant feels safe and their personhood is fully respected. UPT does not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or other inappropriate behavior that may affect the dignity or safety of an equitable, respect-based work environment.

Regardless of location or type of activity conducted under the UPT aegis, inclusion is a core component of the organizational culture.

Accessibility entails a committed effort to adapt UPT's spaces and internal processes to meet all specific needs. Details on priorities and the accessibility plan will be outlined in the *Action Plan and Activities*.

Art. 12.

Action Plan and Activities – Developing an Action Plan and Activities is a priority and will be promptly implemented at all levels of competence within UPT.

The development process will include the following stages:

Defining inclusion strategy evaluation indicators. These will measure the current status, outcomes, and progress, track clear and measurable objectives, foster accountability, and ensure transparency across all processes. The indicators serve to monitor and quantify diversity, equity, and measurable inclusion efforts within the organization.

Setting specific short, medium, and long term objectives. Based on an initial organizational diagnosis, concrete objectives will be established to guide the implementation of the indicators and the Action Plan and Activities.

Designing interventions. A follow-up document will be created to detail the specific interventions provided for in the Action Plan and Activities.

Establishing a timeline and conducting periodic evaluations. The Action Plan and Activities will include a defined implementation schedule and a process for periodic evaluation to monitor progress and the effectiveness of the measures applied.

Art. 13.

At the institutional level, UPT supports initiatives and/or projects at the faculty, department, or other organizational-structure level addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion. It should be noted that an existing document, *the UPT Internationalization Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2023–2028)*, prepared by the *Department of International Relations*,³ already covers these themes. All such documents and activities will be aligned with UPT’s strategic vision on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The present *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy*, together with all its subsequent activities, will be coordinated with *UPT’s Strategic Plan for the period 2024–2029*.

Following this Strategy, the implementing regulations will be developed and integrated into the *Action Plan and Activities* described above, rather than issued as a separate document.

Art. 14.

In implementing the DEI strategy, UPT will take into account existing best practices at the European level, while ensuring strategic alignment with institutional priorities and adapting to the real needs of vulnerable groups exposed to discrimination in society.

Art. 15.

The Action Plan and Activities will serve as the foundation for developing an inclusive organization, reflecting the values of diversity and inclusion in all UPT activities.

CHAPTER VI. Implementation

Art. 16.

The definition of stages, allocated resources, and the implementation schedule will be carried out after the approval of this strategy.

Art. 17.

The implementation schedule will be continuously updated, adapting to the context and the evolution of the indicators defined in the Action Plan and Activities.

Art. 18.

³ UPT Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for Internationalization (2023–2028)
https://international.upt.ro/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Strategie_diversitate_incluziune_240206.pdf

The implementation process is designed as a standalone project that supports strategic organizational development through measures applicable in the short, medium, and long term.

CHAPTER VII. Final Provisions

Art. 19.

This document is supplemented by the applicable legislation, procedures, and internal regulations. In the event of any discrepancy between the provisions of this document and the legal requirements, the latter shall prevail.

Art. 20.

Periodically, and whenever necessary, the document may be amended, supplemented, or revised, and any changes must be approved in accordance with UPT's internal procedures.

Art. 21.

This document was approved during the UPT Senate meeting held on February 13, 2025.