

FilmEU D2.10 Inclusivity Plan

WP 2 Institutional and Staff Capacitation - 26 October 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

FILMEU – The European University for Film and Media Arts, (Project: 101004047, EPP-EUR-UNIV-2020 — European Universities, EPLUS2020 Action Grant), brings together four European Higher Education Institutions: Lusófona University from Lisbon, Portugal; BFM/TLU – Baltic Film and Media School, Tallinn University from Tallinn, Estonia; LUCA School of Arts from Brussels, Belgium; and Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art Design and Technology, from Dublin, Ireland. Together, these institutions collaborate around the common objective of promoting high-level education, innovation and research activities in the multidisciplinary field of Film and Media Arts and, through this collaboration, consolidate the central role of Europe as a world leader in the creative fields and promote the relevance of culture and aesthetical values for our societal well-being.

Diversity and inclusion policies in European higher education are essential pillars in maintaining the region's reputation for academic excellence, fostering innovation, and promoting social cohesion. European universities, historically praised for their academic competence, have an increasing responsibility in today's interconnected world to lead by example in cultivating inclusive environments. These policies, when effectively implemented, ensure that every student and faculty member, regardless of their background, has equal access to opportunities, resources, and support. They also guarantee that the rich tapestry of cultures, languages, and experiences that Europe boasts is actively integrated into academic life. This not only elevates the depth and breadth of discourse and research but also prepares students to engage effectively in an increasingly diverse international workforce and society.

European institutions of higher education, with their rich histories and geographical positioning, naturally attract a mosaic of students and faculty from various cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. This diversity brings a plethora of perspectives, ideas, and experiences into the academic arena, promoting critical thinking, creativity, and a broader understanding of global issues. When universities utilise these diverse viewpoints, they position themselves at the forefront of pioneering research, comprehensive education, and impactful societal engagement, reflecting the multifaceted realities and challenges of the 21st century.

An inclusive environment in European universities not only enriches the academic experience but also reinforces the foundational European values of unity, equality, and respect for human rights. Inclusivity ensures that every individual, regardless of their background, has an equal opportunity to thrive, contribute, and benefit from the academic ecosystem. It challenges entrenched biases, combats discrimination, and fosters a sense of belonging among students and staff. As Europe contends with complex challenges such as migration, socio-economic disparities, and cultural integration, universities that champion diversity and inclusion become beacons of hope, modelling how diverse communities can coexist, collaborate, and innovate together for a brighter, unified future.

Interculturality in higher education plays a pivotal role in shaping worldwide competent, empathetic, and adaptable individuals. In an increasingly intertwined world, higher education institutions serve as crossroads for students from diverse cultural, ethnic, and social backgrounds. By promoting intercultural exchanges and understanding, institutions not only foster a richer learning environment, but they also equip students with essential skills to navigate complex international challenges, collaborate across cultural divides, and thrive in multicultural settings. Embracing interculturality ensures that the academic community remains inclusive, innovative, and responsive to the dynamic tapestry of global perspectives, preparing students for a world where cultural agility is invaluable.

Formulating policies to safeguard interculturality in higher education is essential to create a holistic and inclusive academic environment. As universities become increasingly transnational, they also become susceptible to potential cultural misunderstandings, biases, and inequities. Robust policies ensure that the richness of diverse cultures, perspectives, and histories is not only respected but actively celebrated and integrated into the academic fabric. These policies serve as a bastion against cultural homogenization and provide a framework for resolving conflicts and fostering mutual respect. In addition, they signal a proactive commitment to creating a habitat where every student, teacher and higher education staff regardless of their cultural background, feels valued, understood, and empowered to contribute their unique insights, further enhancing the quality and depth of academic discourse and research.

The role of higher education institutions as agents of social change has become ever more pronounced. Policies promoting diversity and inclusion within these institutions send a strong, unequivocal message about the values that the continent upholds. They serve to combat prejudices, dismantle systemic barriers, and shape

public opinion on the importance of unity in diversity. Universities that prioritise these policies not only enrich their academic environment but also contribute significantly to the broader project of fostering a just, tolerant, and harmonious European society, laying the foundation for a prosperous and inclusive future.

At FilmEU we understand that we will need to regularly fine-tune our diversity and inclusion policies to be certain that our duty of care is extended to all. Regularly updating diversity and inclusion policies in universities is vital to ensuring that educational institutions remain synchronised to the ever-evolving societal landscape and the unique challenges faced by underrepresented or marginalised groups. As societal awareness grows and cultural dynamics shift, what was once considered inclusive can become outdated or even inadvertently exclusionary. By continually revising these policies, universities demonstrate a proactive commitment to fostering a truly inclusive environment. This not only enhances the academic and social experiences for all students, faculty, and staff but also ensures that the institution remains a beacon of progress, understanding, and adaptability in a changing world. Through such regular updates, universities can address emerging issues promptly, maintain relevance, and strengthen their role as leaders in societal advancement and cohesion.

2. DECLARATION OF FILMEU COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Given that each institution is unique, our organisation's culture, strategic vision, and values should be encapsulated in our definition of diversity and inclusion, rather than merely replicating another company's DE&I statement. We acknowledge the singular experiences, perspectives, and identities of everyone, striving to foster an environment where all feel valued, supported, and empowered to deliver their best work. While diversity and inclusion are closely linked, they each possess distinct connotations.

Diversity pertains to the myriad human differences present in a specific setting, spanning dimensions such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion, socioeconomic background, and cultural values. Truly embracing diversity involves recognising and valuing these distinctions, with the understanding that they add depth and vitality to a group or organisation.

Inclusion, conversely, focuses on cultivating an environment where every individual feels valued, respected, and empowered to engage fully. More than just representation, inclusion emphasises the active participation of people from varied backgrounds, ensuring they flourish and realise their utmost potential. It's not just about acknowledging diversity, but also about implementing practices that guarantee equal access and opportunity. Thus, inclusion means proactively dismantling barriers and biases, fostering a sense of belonging, and enabling everyone to contribute their distinct viewpoints and skills.

We conceptualise inclusion as the creation of an environment where everyone is treated with respect, dignity, and fairness. In an educational context, it means offering quality education to a diverse range of students within mainstream classrooms, moving away from segregation based on abilities. The ethos extends to academic and administrative staff, cultivating a culture of acceptance where differences are acknowledged and celebrated, and where every individual is met with empathy and kindness.

The underpinnings of this definition include accessibility, making all spaces and resources universally available; equity, ensuring equal opportunities for success; and a commitment to non-discrimination against any characteristic. It emphasises a deep respect for diversity, active participation from all backgrounds, and a strong cultural competence that recognises various traditions. Training and awareness form a crucial component, enlightening entities about the significance of diversity and strategies for inclusive practices. Finally, representation in decision-making and a commitment to workplace inclusion are pivotal, ensuring that employees from all backgrounds are valued, can leverage their unique insights, and remain free from prejudice or bias.

2.1 What does inclusivity mean to FilmEU?

For FilmEU, inclusivity means treating everyone with equal consideration, irrespective of their identity, background, or beliefs. Within higher education, it's about ensuring equal opportunities for learning and work, extending courtesy to all. This ethos begins the moment someone applies for a job or training with us and is intrinsic to our alliance's culture. We proudly regard FilmEU as an inclusive space due to the equitable treatment and opportunities extended to all members.

Our team comprises individuals from diverse backgrounds, all collaborating to reach their full potential. We're devoted to cultivating an environment where everyone feels confident expressing their identity, and mutual respect is of utmost importance. Practical steps towards increased accessibility include improving provisions for those with disabilities and catering to diverse dietary needs. The UDL (Universal Design for Learning) Guidelines are utilised across educational levels to combat systemic barriers and promote fair learning outcomes.

FilmEU recognises the journey to inclusivity requires concerted effort, and we are proactive in this commitment. Our approach includes setting clear inclusivity objectives, holding regular feedback sessions on workplace diversity, and celebrating various religious holidays. We promote understanding across cultures and ensure every member is seen as an individual, not just part of a group. In the face of challenges, we are committed to addressing them head-on, learning from them, and ensuring fairness in our response. Ultimately, we believe that an inclusive workplace brings myriad benefits, from happier staff and talent attraction to enhanced productivity and a diverse talent pool.

3. DEFINITION OF POLICY SCOPE

FilmEU diversity and inclusion policy applies to all members of the Alliance community, including students, faculties, teaching and non-teaching staff, administration and visitors. It aims to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and dignity and that all individuals have equal opportunities to participate in academic, social, and cultural activities on our Campus. The policy aims to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and promotes equity, social justice and inclusion.

The main aims of FilmEU diversity and inclusion policy are:

*To create an inclusive environment that values diversity and promotes equity, social justice, and mutual respect among all members of the university community.

*To ensure that all members of the Alliance community have equal opportunities to participate in academic, social, and cultural activities, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or other protected characteristic.

*To promote understanding and appreciation of diverse perspectives and cultures, and to encourage dialogue and open communication among members of the Alliance community.

*To recruit and retain a diverse student body, faculty, and teaching and non-teaching staff, and to provide support and resources to help them succeed.

*To eliminate discrimination, harassment, and bias in all aspects of Academic life, and to provide a safe and welcoming environment for all members of the Alliance community.

*The diversity and inclusion policy of the Alliance aims to create a more inclusive and equitable community that celebrates diversity, promotes social justice, and prepares students to live and work in a diverse and global society.

3.1 Diversity and inclusion policy at FilmEU

1. Aims at developing a comprehensive policy that clearly outlines the Alliance's commitment to diversity and inclusion, and includes specific goals, strategies, and metrics for achieving them.

2. Intends to provide regular training and education to all members of the Alliance community on topics such as unconscious bias, cultural competency, and inclusive language.

3. Establishes a diversity and inclusion office or committee that is responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy, and for providing support and resources to students, faculty, and teaching and non-teaching staff.

4. Recruits and retains a diverse student body, faculty, and staff by actively seeking out candidates from underrepresented groups, and by providing support and resources to help them succeed.

5. Fosters a culture of inclusion by promoting open communication, respectful dialogue, and a willingness to learn from diverse perspectives and experiences.

6. Monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the policy on a regular basis

and make adjustments as needed to ensure that goals are being met in a continuous improvement perspective.

7. Collaborates with other universities, community organisations, and businesses to share best practices and promote diversity and inclusion on a broader scale.

Best practice is to include all stakeholders, ranging from full- and part-time employees to teaching and non-teaching, students, researchers.

5. EXPLANATION OF THE POLICY'S PURPOSE

Diversity, equity and inclusion policies are designed to create an inclusive and welcoming environment, where every person feels valued, safe, and able to fully participate. In any university it should be one of the key concerns as well, as diverse learning and research environments are more stimulating and creative and produce better results.

All FilmEU partners come from diverse national backgrounds. We aim to further advance our inclusive culture by building a European University with representation and input of staff, students and stakeholders from diverse cultural and social backgrounds. We truly believe that it helps to eliminate barriers of all kinds to higher education access, and hence to knowledge and the opportunities it creates.

Adopting a DE&I policy demonstrates the commitment of FilmEU partners to creating an inclusive and equitable education landscape and film industry in Europe. FilmEU recognises that EDI is essential for powerful storytelling and for advancing a sustainable film and media arts sector that works for everyone. This belief is backed by a substantial body of academic research which demonstrates that organisations at the forefront of EDI, including the film and media industries, are more successful creatively and economically, generating original and innovative content and broadening their audience and consumer bases. Film schools are a key 'pipeline' to the industry, and it is more important than ever that our staff and student population reflects the diversity of the wider community outside of FilmEU. Without diversity, the stories, cultures, ideas and viewpoints expressed through film and the media arts (and beyond) are limited, while stereotypes of marginalised groups may also take hold if these voices are not in the room.

FilmEU wants our staff, students and all stakeholders to feel included in a safe creative environment no matter what their nationality, gender or background. We

want to embrace diversity, be culturally aware and develop and promote the differences between us. We respect difference and recognise the added value that it brings in allowing people to work together in a highly productive way. We believe that by including all stakeholders we can achieve an EDI campus for everyone to enjoy.

Overall, the purpose of an inclusivity policy is to establish a framework that promotes diversity, prevents discrimination, and creates an inclusive and equitable environment where all staff, students and stakeholders can thrive and contribute their full potential

4. ALIGNMENT OF THE POLICY WITH FILMEU VALUES AND VISION

Reiterating an important core value from its mission statement, *FilmEU is based on the firm belief that the creative empowerment of individuals is crucial for the enhancement of all educational and scientific activities and the overall development of Europe.* This underlines the importance of our consortium and its role in the lives of many stakeholders we embrace, especially our students within this rapidly changing society.

Young people increasingly blur the boundaries between arts consumption and participation. They set the agenda for innovation to benefit from the new digital environment. Cultural diversity helps to fuel innovation by bringing different insights to more traditional practices. To support and develop this innovation and celebrate new and diverse art forms, building on emerging technologies will reinvigorate cultural life and offer new opportunities for community engagement.

In terms of social, economic, and cultural aspects, our population is becoming increasingly diverse, therefore inclusiveness infuses all aspects of the operation of FilmEU and is firmly established within the vision and mission of the consortium:

FilmEU defends the core European values of respect for diversity and human rights and believes audio-visual culture and the arts play a crucial role in promoting a more equitable and diverse society. FilmEU puts the students, teachers, and administrative staff at the centre of its activities, regarding staff development, student engagement, and teachers' empowerment as key components of the alliance.

It affects not only mobility, but teaching and learning, curricula design, research, and governance regarding students and both academic and non-academic staff. *FilmEU promotes equity, inclusion, and diversity while pledging to eliminate barriers of all kinds to higher education access, and hence to knowledge and the opportunities it creates.*

We acknowledge and respect the diversity of the population and we are committed to promote inclusive teaching and learning environments and equity in access and participation of students and staff, regardless of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, or socio-economic background in all aspects of higher education, therefore from the mission statement: *FilmEU is committed to establishing a horizontal management structure that creates spaces of dialogue and interaction between all individuals and institutions, while ensuring everyone's voice is heard and meaningfully contributes to the development and execution of Alliance activities.*

Inclusiveness in our understanding also embraces those who are not part of any disadvantaged minority but belong to the group of students, professors, and staff who have not taken part in physical mobility so far, simply because their personal disposition or circumstance is not in harmony with the requirements of going abroad for a length of time.

FilmEU is supported by a structure built upon collaboration and the design and implementation of a common mission based on shared values. By grounding our work in these values, European Higher Education institutions that constitute the Alliance can fully contribute to a better, richer, and more humanistic society.

There is a clear correlation between the mission statement of FilmEU and our derived DE&I policy while based on the higher values of the European Higher Education Area to which we comply.

5. STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES

Stakeholders of FilmEU have a range of duties to ensure the adherence and promotion of the diversity and inclusion policy:

- **Policy Development:** Create and regularly review diversity and inclusion policies to ensure they are effective and relevant.

- **Training & Development:** Organise regular diversity and inclusion training sessions for staff and students to promote awareness and best practices.
- **Resource Allocation:** Dedicate funds and resources to support diversity and inclusion initiatives, programmes, and scholarships.
- **Inclusive Curriculum:** Design and adapt curricula that reflect diverse perspectives, histories, and cultures.
- **Accessible Facilities:** Ensure that all campus facilities are accessible to individuals with disabilities, taking into account both physical and technological needs.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Regularly engage with students, staff, and the wider community to gather feedback and insights related to diversity and inclusion efforts.
- **Representation:** Strive for diverse representation in decision-making bodies, committees, and panels within the institution.
- **Recruitment & Retention:** Adopt inclusive hiring practices and promote the retention of diverse staff and student populations.
- **Support Services:** Provide specific services and support for underrepresented and marginalised groups, such as counselling or mentorship programmes.
- **Monitoring & Reporting:** Track, measure, and publicly report on diversity and inclusion metrics and progress over time.
- **Event Organisation:** Ensure events, seminars, and conferences are inclusive in nature, from panel diversity to accessibility considerations.
- **Addressing Discrimination:** Implement a clear procedure to address and resolve instances of discrimination or bias, ensuring timely response and corrective action.

6. TRAINING AND COMPLIANCE

Regular, high-quality, evidence-based EDI training for all FilmEU stakeholders is critical to creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment and addressing gaps between policies and practices. Importantly, Horizon Europe requires its funded organisations to offer training to staff on gender equality and unconscious gender bias and encourages institutions to actively promote the integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content. Broader training and awareness initiatives for staff groups that consider further protected characteristics, in addition to intersectionality and dignity and respect, are also necessary for EDI work.

Alongside learning and development opportunities for staff, as key institutional stakeholders and future industry practitioners, EDI leaders have advocated that cultural change must start with student populations. For this reason, an increasing number of global higher education institutions, including IADT Dún Laoghaire, have embedded mandatory EDI training into the academic curriculum for students, with positive impacts already being demonstrated. Regarding sexual violence prevention and response, the Irish government has led the way across Europe by rolling out consent and bystander intervention workshops to all new undergraduates. This directive has been implemented successfully at IADT, providing a model for the FilmEU Alliance (using contextualised materials, including national legislation and cultural norms on matters relating to sexual consent and sexual violence and harassment).

It is envisaged that the FilmEU EDI Office will coordinate an annual programme of training and awareness-raising initiatives for staff and students. Where possible, hybrid training will be offered to facilitate wider engagement across the consortium. Each institutional member of the Alliance will take responsibility for organising and resourcing a certain amount of training each year, ensuring that it is equally informed by lived experience and professional expertise in EDI. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights articulates a solid framework for setting high-level training priorities across Europe, which can be tailored to the needs and the needs and objectives of the Alliance.

Additionally, context-sensitive EDI training will be run at the institutional level as required (for example, on changes to national equality law or sectoral EDI requirements) and, at a minimum, made mandatory for the local *FilmEU* leadership and staff team.

Participant surveys will gauge the effectiveness of EDI training and allow for continuous improvement.

7. REPORTING MECHANISMS

Explain to stakeholders what to do if they have directly witnessed or suspect behaviour that conflicts with the DE&I policy. You can also explain the investigation process that commences once a report is made – including the steps and who’s involved at each stage.

This information is important to include so that stakeholders know that our institution will enforce the policy and hold accountable those parties who have indeed violated it.

Some possibilities:

- Establish a single point person in our organisation to accept reports of violations and route them to the appropriate parties for investigation.
- Promote an open-door policy that encourages employees to go to their managers with concerns.
- Describe this obligation to report for all parties concerned (students, teaching and non-teaching staff), not to look away, in specific documents e.g. code of conduct.

FilmEU is committed to developing a culture that is safe, respectful, supportive, and clear in condemning unwanted and unacceptable behaviours. This should be a whole-of-Alliance approach; all staff and students in FilmEU are responsible for building and maintaining a work and study environment free of bullying, harassment, discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. We aim for swift and decisive action to be taken in response to reports, to ensure support is available to reporting parties, and solid actions to create a zero-tolerance culture.

Each institution in FilmEU currently operates reporting mechanisms that adhere to the legal framework, sectoral requirements, and cultural norms. The reporting lines may differ for staff and students. All Alliance members should be clear on institutional processes in their institution and other institutions.

8. BEST PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED

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- Establishment of an EDI Committee to provide governance and oversight of EDI work.
- Rolling annual programme of EDI training for all staff.
- Mandatory EDI training for all new undergraduate students, embedded into the core academic curriculum.
- The development of a new, stand-alone institutional policy/procedure on Sexual Violence Prevention & Response.

LUCA School of Arts

- DiCE (Diversity in Cultural Education) project: an investigation within the educational Master of Arts into the presence and handling of diversity and inclusion of 170 professional organisations in the wider arts field. It focuses on a future where designers and artists use their skills within cultural institutions to inform, engage and teach diverse audiences. From local libraries and museums to cities and schools and their growing need to engage and respond to diverse audiences; what is the role of the designer and artist and how can their education inform this future role in society?
- Inter-Actions: a research unit on topics such as 'diversifying design education', diversity in cultural education, ways of 'transferring' and working around the subject of dementia, and more.

BFM

- Establishing a dedicated role of the Equal Treatment Office.
- To support the members of BFM in case of grievances, and To promote inclusion, equity and diversity in BFM.
- Dedicated curriculum development to ensure better gender balance in internship placements and a greater focus on traineeship to build the students' bridges with the industry early on.

LUSÓFONA

- Creation and publication of its Gender and Diversity Plan.
- Design and publication of a FilmEU MOOC on Interculturality in the classroom.
- Provision of "Soft skills" training to first-year students on the KinoEyes Master's course.

9. CONCLUSION



Fig 1. FilmEU “Pilot Challenge” ideation week, Ghent, Belgium, October 2022

The promotion of diversity and inclusion is paramount to the success of the FilmEU Alliance. A diverse and inclusive environment not only enriches the academic and social experience of staff, students, and other stakeholders but also reinforces the foundational European values of unity, equality, and respect for human rights, regardless of the background of an individual. The nature of higher education across Europe has changed fundamentally in recent decades; once bounded campuses that catered primarily to the academic education of school leavers, today our institutions have been transformed into internationally orientated organisations engaged with an increasingly diverse and socially engaged staff and student body, with advanced opportunities for physical and remote mobility. Further, in our role as teachers, researchers, and employers, universities have become more pronounced as national agents of social change, sustainability, and digital transformation in a post-pandemic world. Thus, it is critical that issues of EDI and dignity and respect are at the forefront of FilmEU’s strategic objectives, not

marginalised to side conversations, with strong governance and accountability mechanisms and built-in impact assessment.

The FilmEU alliance must understand that Diversity and Inclusion can not be solely based on individual country legislations. Simply adopting national practices can risk the well-being of teachers, students, and staff, especially when encountering negative experiences like bullying or discrimination during international exchanges. It is essential for FilmEU to adopt a comprehensive approach, ensuring protection and support across all partner institutions, irrespective of jurisdiction. This proactive stance on diversity and inclusion is crucial for creating academic environments where everyone feels secure and valued. The unique nature of FilmEU's commitment to mobility between institutions of different nationalities introduces potential vulnerabilities, demanding a specific inclusion strategy. Inaction risks breaching the alliance's duty of care. For FilmEU, inclusivity should not be just a theoretical ideal but should translate into robust on-ground practices, dedicating tangible resources to genuinely uphold its inclusive vision for all stakeholders.

As the FilmEU Alliance expands and moves into its next phase, this Inclusivity Plan provides a declaration of our commitment to diversity and inclusion and solid basis for putting these objectives into action. Of course, EDI work is ever evolving and constantly brings with it new challenges and opportunities. For example, ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Israel and Palestine showcase the need for deep reflection and practical responses, not just frontline support for staff and students who are directly affected by the situation, but also wider consideration to how the Alliance teaches and creates and consumes media on complex, sensitive or triggering issues. Our policies, procedures and initiatives must be agile enough to continuously improve diversity and inclusivity for all, and subject to regular review.

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Note: other references @ our dedicated website [Home - FILMEU European University for Film and Media Arts](#)

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