

Policy on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

European Dental Students' Association

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1. Introduction

A better future is one that is more equitable, inclusive, and representative of the full diversity of our communities. The future is shaped by today's investments, and building inclusive, respectful, and empowering environments is a shared global responsibility.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) ensures equal treatment, dignity, and opportunity for all. EDI aims to eliminate bias, discrimination, and structural impediments that penalise individuals or groups due to inherent or perceived differences. In both educational and clinical settings, EDI has become a cornerstone for institutional excellence and social advancement, with transformative benefits on student achievement, health equity, and workforce well-being (EC, 2023; EUA, 2021).

At the heart of EDI is the understanding that people are an institution's most valuable asset. Promoting a supportive, empowering, and rights-based environment improves institutional performance while reflecting the values of a contemporary, inclusive society. EDI principles are inextricably linked to the ethical development of institutional and societal systems, and they are critical for achieving social justice and sustainable progress.

2. Definitions

- **Equality:** Providing individuals with equal opportunities to thrive, accounting for their individual needs and ensuring no unjust disadvantages.
- **Diversity:** Embracing the range of visible and invisible differences that shape individuals' experiences and perspectives; this includes but is not limited to race, gender, culture, disability, and socioeconomic background.
- **Inclusion:** Creating a culture where differences are respected, valued, and leveraged, ensuring everyone feels safe, heard, and empowered to contribute.
- **Discrimination:** Unjust or prejudicial treatment based on identity traits or beliefs; can be direct, indirect, structural, or unconscious.
- **Equity:** Acknowledging that not everyone starts from the same place and committing to just actions that rectify unfair imbalances.

3. Purpose

- This policy reaffirms EDSA's commitment to addressing systemic imbalances, reducing discrimination, and instilling a sense of belonging in the European dentistry community and the global health education sector.
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4. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals and bodies affiliated with the European Dental Students' Association (EDSA), including:

- Students, alumni, staff, and academic faculty.
- Clinical, research, and community-based actors connected to EDSA initiatives.
- All EDSA Members, irrespective of their position

It affirms a zero-tolerance stance on discrimination and sets forth expectations for equitable treatment based on, but not limited to: gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic background, nationality, language, religion or belief, disability, pregnancy, neurodiversity, or any other legally protected characteristic.

5. Policy Statement

EDSA encourages all educational institutions and professional organisations to:

- Create situations in which everyone is treated with dignity and given equal opportunities.
- Establish fair and merit-based admissions, recruitment, evaluation, and promotion processes for staff and students.
- Proactively prevent and address unlawful or systemic discrimination, harassment, bullying, and exclusion.
- Integrate EDI knowledge into the institutional culture, courses, research, innovation, and leadership development.
- Enhance student and staff well-being through mental health services, inclusive mentoring, and work-life balance policies.
- Emphasise minority rights, inclusive language, and accessible infrastructure in all educational and therapeutic environments.
- Distribute or make available information on individual rights, institutional reporting procedures, and support services.

- Encourage and support inclusive research practices, particularly those that benefit marginalised people or investigate discrepancies in oral health.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- **EDSA Delegates, Board, and Officers** are responsible for promoting awareness of this policy, coordinating reviews, and supporting implementation across member bodies.
- **Member Institutions and Associations** are accountable for local adaptation and implementation of EDI strategies, training programs, and policy interventions.
- **Faculty, supervisors, and administrators** should lead by example and uphold inclusive values through their actions, language, and decisions. Students and community members are encouraged to contribute to an inclusive atmosphere and report problematic behaviour using recognised channels.

7. Related Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

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- [Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union \(2012/C 326/02\)](#)
 - Article 21: Non-discrimination
 - Article 22: Cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity
 - Article 23: Equality between women and men
 - Article 26: Integration of people with disabilities
 - [European University Association \(EUA\) \(2021\). Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in European Higher Education: Survey Report from the INVITED Project.](#)
 - [European Commission Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture \(2023\). Equality and Inclusion in Higher Education Strategy: Progress and Policy Directions.](#)
 - [UNESCO Guidelines on Inclusion and Equity in Education \(2021 Update\).](#)
 - [Global Health 50/50 Report \(2024\). Gender and Power in Global Health.](#)
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8. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

If you have any further inquiries regarding this policy, please contact the EDSA Policy Officer at policy_officer@edsaweb.org.

9. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the current Policy Officer of EDSA. It will be aligned with global health priorities and will incorporate feedback from professionals, stakeholders, and the community.



European Dental Students' Association
International Office - Dublin Dental University Hospital
Trinity College Dublin, The University of Dublin
Lincoln Place Dublin 2
Ireland D02 F859