

# Vision Diversity & Inclusion

Safe, accessible, promising and equivalent



Together we formulate a vision on diversity and inclusion that forms the foundation for all future HU plans and policies. Diversity concerns all of us. Our society consists of people and groups who differ from each other in many ways. Differences between cultures, gender, sexual orientation, in ethnic, cultural, socio-economic and migration background, physical and mental abilities, differences in age, language, religion and nationality. Our society is diversifying more and more and so is our HU community. We highly value diversity and we work hard on being a reflection of the society we are part of. We work on (the accessibility of) our community and value differences. We pay close attention to the increasing diversity and complexity within our groups.

*"Diversity is the actual variety of people,  
inclusion is the choice to embrace that variety.  
Therefore, diversity does not necessarily mean inclusion."<sup>1</sup>*

## Value-driven ambitions

We continue working on our value-driven ambitions.<sup>2</sup> Diversity is important to us. It enriches us. Diversity brings us new ideas, exciting discussions, surprising perspectives and often unexpected solutions. We give each other space. We do this by working on being an inclusive and accessible university of applied sciences, where students and staff feel safe and at home. Where they feel that they are being seen and heard, have equal opportunities, where they belong, make a difference and contribute. We trust one another's qualities and professions and encourage development. Our door is open to everyone. All talents matter! By working on our accessible, safe and promising work and study environment, we contribute to the well-being and happiness of our students and employees.

## The safe, courageous gap

Inclusion is not about inviting 'the other' into 'our normal', nor is it 'us' who are invited into 'the other person's normal'. Inclusion is a journey that we take together, by actively looking at how we think and act. We recognise that this process can sometimes be uncertain and painful, but together we make the fundamental choice to embrace diversity.<sup>3</sup>

*"Everything comes together here" is our creed, which includes all types, flavours and variations of perspectives, experiences, perceptions, dreams for the future and expectations. Our HU community is a sanctuary, a place where everyone can feel safe, express themselves openly and where freedom and respect are unquestionable. And in an environment like this, it will be inevitable that we sometimes step on each other's toes. That one person's opinion or conviction will hurt another person's feelings, that visions will be at odds with one another. But this inevitability is what makes our environment safe. It means that within the HU community, you can and may have different opinions and discuss matters, all within the boundaries of respect and decency, without any consequences.<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Saniye Çelik. Consulted on 17 February 2022, of [De winst van diversiteit | SER](#)

<sup>2</sup> As depicted in the [Ambitieplan HU in 2026](#)

<sup>3</sup> Derde ruimte en inclusie: Sergeant, S. (2021). *Working Together, Learning Together: Towards Universal Design for Research*. Gompel&Svacina Publishers.

<sup>4</sup> Consulted on 28 March 2020 of [Samen bewaken we de grenzen van onze veiligheid en vrijheid | Hogeschool Utrecht \(hu.nl\)](#)



The first step in the continuous process of inclusion is the acknowledgment of differences. It starts with listening carefully to one another and being curious about the life and ideas of the other person. In an equal way, because having a true dialogue is a two way street. What can be learned from one another? What are your, but also the other person's wishes and needs? What do you need and where can you be flexible and give in (a little)? An enriching experience in which we build together on an environment in which everyone comes into his, her or their own.

This is how we all take a step towards the other person and agree on what the conditions and rules are, so that we can all participate. The pursuit of inclusion is not about 'us' and 'them', but affects everyone. In this process, we no longer build for others; we build with each other. This means that we have to be in constant dialogue with each other in order to coordinate matters and weigh wishes and needs against each other. This creates uncertainty and unpredictability. An uncertainty that is permanent, since the process of inclusion is never finished.

This challenging road will know many bumps and wholes. It will be a process of trial and error, which we embark on together and which we will see through with courage and heart. It is therefore important that we leave room for errors and awareness.

How do we continue building our diverse and inclusive HU? We do this by applying the following principles.

**1. *Diversity and inclusion concern all of us***

Diversity and inclusion are principles and processes not just about underrepresented groups, but about all of us. A study and work environment in which everyone feels at home requires awareness, openness, adaptability and willingness from every individual.

**2. *Everyone's responsibility***

Diversity and inclusion is everyone's responsibility. A diverse, inclusive HU is not just the result of more policy or solely the responsibility of a group of people working on it. Inclusive thinking and acting only works if everyone participates. That is why commitment from every single individual is necessary and cooperation with all parts of the organisation is crucial in order to penetrate all layers and levels.

**3. *Diversity as strength and richness***

We view diversity as a strength and a richness rather than as a problem. Because we give every talent the opportunity to develop, and because new ideas and perspectives give us the opportunity to come up with innovative solutions.

**4. *Reflection of society***

We work towards being a reflection of our society. Therefore, we make sure there is a diverse influx of students and staff. This is also reflected in the collaboration of the institutes, services and knowledge centres with (external) partners and suppliers. We work on this reflection by performing concrete and result-oriented activities.

**5. *Expertise & Research***



We work and create together with hands-on experts. They can, like no other, indicate the bottlenecks they encounter and explain what is needed in order to fully partake. Experience, data and research are our starting points and they support and guide our actions.

**6. *Education for life (people first)***

We educate people for and in preparation of life. We facilitate personal development and invest in mutual relationships. We focus on the social skills students and staff need in order to deal with complex social issues in this rapidly changing society.

**7. *One size doesn't fit all***

The vision on diversity and inclusion is clear, the path leading to it can take different forms/routes. We do not use a one-size-fits-all approach. Institutes, knowledge centres and services translate diversity and inclusion in a way that is close to the way people experience it.

**8. *Elements of every aspect of the HU***

Diversity and inclusion are not a stand-alone policy or programme; these concepts are intended to be embedded within the processes of the student's and employee's journeys. We do our best to make our support systems transparent, while taking the diversity of our students and staff into account.

**9. *The pursuit of inclusion never stops***

Diversity and inclusion do not know a finish line: these concepts are living, continuous processes of change. An inclusive university is always in motion, moving along on the heartbeat of society.