

APPROVED
by Resolution No. SPN-36 of 20 June 2023
of the Senate of Vilnius University

VILNIUS UNIVERSITY DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STRATEGY 2020-2025: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE PERIOD OF 2023-2025

The monitoring of diversity and equal opportunities at Vilnius University in 2022 provides recommendations for future activities following the strategic directions. The tables detail the activities for the next period.

1. DISABILITY

The recommendations provided in the Monitoring of Diversity and Equal Opportunities Situation in Vilnius University in 2022: The experience gained in assisting students with disabilities or other learning difficulties shows that (1) it is necessary to develop a wider range of professional services within the higher education system. At the same time, it is important to ensure the continuation of current activities, such as (2) the education of community members on the topics of disability and individual needs arising from disability, the universal design for learning, the awareness of opportunities to adapt and individualise the study process to a person’s individual needs at the University, the individual consultations provided for those intending to study or already studying, and those transitioning to the labour market. It is important to pay attention not only to the physical improvement of the accessibility of the University, but also to (3) the access to the information technologies of the University.

Planned activities for the period of 2023-2025:

1st strategic objective	Activities (2023-2025)	Outcome sought	Implemented by
Strive for dignified, need-oriented, and high-quality study and work conditions at the University for people with disability.	Expansion of the study individualisation options for persons with disability	Structured assistance services for students with disabilities in the study process (e.g. volunteering, mentoring, assistance in preparations to participate in exchange programmes) Strengthening of the network of contact persons at units: four thematic meetings held	Community Development Division; Contact persons at units
	Enhancement of career opportunities for students with disabilities	Provision of targeted career advice; Monitoring of data regarding graduation and employment of students with disabilities; Three social initiatives, events and/or social campaigns to be organised to raise public awareness	Student Services and Career Division; Community Development Division; VU Students’ Representation

	Development of the University community members' (academic and non-academic employees, students) competencies related to the topic of disability	Organising thematic training sessions and consultations on different disabilities, the adaptation of studies, and assistance during the studies, Developing remote training modules; Organising at least 12 training sessions	Community Development Division; Contact persons at units
	Enhancement of the physical accessibility of the University environment	Carrying out analysis assessing the accessibility situation, updating the plan, and highlighting the priority projects	Property Management and Service Centre; Heads of units; Community Development Division
	Enhancement of the accessibility of the University information environment	Increasing the accessibility of information and information systems; Carrying out the assessment of the situation on the accessibility of information with the aim to have information environments adapted for employees and students	Communication and Marketing Division; Information Technology Service Center; Community Development Division

2. GENDER EQUALITY

The recommendations provided in the Monitoring of Diversity and Equal Opportunities Situation in Vilnius University in 2022: To ensure gender equality at the University, it is necessary to: (1) strengthen the network of VU equal opportunities coordinators in order to maximise their synergy, share knowledge and good practice, help colleagues facing obstacles at their units to continue their activities. A standardised remuneration for work in the field of gender equality should also be established, as for any other additional work at the University; (2) aim for a greater commitment of the management to gender equality, thus ensuring the sustainability of the activities in this field, since support from the management is essential in the development of community awareness; (3) continue raising awareness of gender equality among the VU community by helping to understand the personal and institutional benefits of gender equality; (4) systematise data management in order to effectively analyse information on the situation of women and men at the levels of the University and units. This would help monitor the implementation of gender equality measures at the units. Also, targeted community surveys at units would allow to assess the impact of gender equality measures.

Planned activities for the period of 2023-2025:

2 nd strategic objective	Activities (2023-2025)	Outcome sought	Implemented by
Strive for gender equality in individual areas of science and studies at the University through implementing gender equality plans with respect to students and staff and through pursuing gender balance in the University's governing bodies.	Strengthening of the network of gender equality coordinators	Holding at least 18 thematic network meetings; Three events, initiatives or social campaigns on gender equality to be jointly organised by at least two members of the network	Community Development Division; Gender equality coordinators at units
	Promotion of gender mainstreaming in science	Development of recommendations on how to address the gender perspective when preparing applications for Horizon Europe	Research and Innovation Department; Community Development Division; Gender equality coordinators at units; Communication and Marketing Division
	Promotion of communication based on the principles of gender equality	Development of recommendations for gender mainstreaming in communication processes	Community Development Division; Gender equality coordinators at units; Communication and Marketing Division; VU Students' Representation

3. CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The recommendations provided in the **Monitoring of Diversity and Equal Opportunities Situation in Vilnius University in 2022**: A trend of consistent increase of students and employees from abroad is observed at the University. Monitoring this trend from the perspective of ensuring equal opportunities, it is important to continue to foster as deep as possible integration of foreign students into the VU community. This requires (1) developing the openness of community members to cultural (language, religion, national identity, race, etc.) diversity, (2) ensuring the provision of information to students and employees in Lithuanian and English, and ensuring opportunities for foreign students to use the services of self-expression and support provided by Vilnius University as widely as possible. It is also important to further (3) develop and expand the idea of mentoring of foreign students – to bring together and ensure the functioning of a sufficient network of mentors who are able and willing to mentor in English.

Planned activities for the period of 2023-2025:

3rd strategic objective	Activities (2023-2025)	Outcome sought	Implemented by
Promote cultural diversity at the University and seek equal inclusion of foreign students and staff in the University's community.	Coordination and dissemination of initiatives at core units related to the inclusion of incoming students from abroad	Development of a plan for the integration measures for foreign students Activities, also foreseen in the VU Plan of Measures to Improve the Activities and Implement the Recommendations Provided During the External Evaluation	International Relations Division; Community Development Division; Studies Divisions of the core academic units
	Preparation of information material for students coming from abroad	Development of a summary of relevant information for incoming students from abroad (including issues related to life in Lithuania and studies at Vilnius University)	International Relations Division; Communication and Marketing Division; VU Students' Representation

	Facilitation of access to information, support, and self-expression services, which are provided for foreign students and staff by the University community	Increasing the number of services provided in English by 20 per cent	VU non-academic units providing support and self-expression services; Health and Sport Center; Culture Centre; Student Services and Career Division; Consultation and Training Centre
	Development of a mentoring system for full-time and exchange students from abroad (continuous activity)	Provision of mentoring assistance to full-time and exchange students from abroad	VU Students' Representation; Student Services and Career Division

4. STUDIES REGARDLESS OF THE SOCIAL STATUS

The recommendations provided in the Monitoring of Diversity and Equal Opportunities Situation in Vilnius University in 2022: The University consistently demonstrates social responsibility and supports and develops measures to encourage social exclusion experiencing people to pursue studies at the University. This responds to and highlights the openness of the University community to the Third Mission of Universities, which is perceived as providing practical benefits to society, involving both innovative and social activity. These activities (1) are worth nurturing and expanding, based on both the experience gained and shared by the foreign universities. Financial support by providing a special 450th anniversary scholarship to prospective students facing financial difficulties, one-off social scholarships, and support (with the contribution of social partners) for gifted disadvantaged students – these good practices are worth nurturing and expanding. It is also important (2) to increase the awareness of such support among pupils and current students.

Planned activities for the period of 2023-2025:

4 th strategic objective	Activities (2023-2025)	Outcome sought	Implemented by
Search for ways to enable people experiencing social exclusion due to financial or other social circumstances to pursue higher education at the University.	Maintaining the existing and developing new measures to encourage pupils who experience social exclusion to pursue higher education at the University	Maintaining the existing financial support system to encourage people experiencing social exclusion to choose studies at Vilnius University; Updating financial support system for students of Vilnius University from socially sensitive environment	Study Administration Division; Community Development Division; VU Students' Representation
	Ensuring awareness of support among pupils and current students	Development and publication of a single information package on available support	Study Administration Division; Communication and Marketing Division; Business School, Lifelong Learning Center; Partnership Development Division

5. WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The recommendations provided in the Monitoring of Diversity and Equal Opportunities Situation in Vilnius University in 2022: In order to create conditions for the members of the University community to better balance study and/or work commitments with personal commitments, in addition to the guarantees provided for in the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania (annual leave, paternity/maternity time, caretaking of relatives leave, extra days off for fathers and mothers, the right to time off for family needs, the need for remote work, etc.), additional benefits for employees are also provided at the University, such as discounts for employee studies or rest, or additional benefits for employees in case of an accident or increase in the number of members of the family, etc. It is important (1) to consistently increase the awareness of these guarantees and benefits within the University community. There is (2) also an urgent need for greater accessibility and systematisation of administrative data relating to the improvement of the work-life balance. Consistent data collection and analysis would allow the University to gain deeper insights into the real challenges of the employees' work-life balance in the future.

Planned activities for the period of 2023-2025:

5 th strategic objective	Activities (2023-2025)	Outcome sought	Implemented by
Develop measures that help members of the University community better balance study and/or work commitments with personal commitments (maternity, paternity, caretaking of relatives, etc.).	Increasing the University community awareness of the guarantees and benefits provided by the University to employees	Developing a list of systematised guarantees and benefits provided by the University to employees; At least five items of content to be prepared and published on the topic of work-life balance via internal and/or external communication channels of VU	Human Resources Division; Communication and Marketing Division; Community Development Division
	Development and implementation of a collection plan for administrative data relating to work-life balance	Development and launch of a monitoring plan for data relating to work-life balance	Human Resources Division; Community Development Division
	Enhancement of the engagement of students' and employees' children during the summer (continuous activity)	Annual summer camps for employees' children (at least 50 places in a camp for employees' children to be provided per year)	University units
	Activation of a children playroom	Preparing a feasibility study and developing, on its basis, an activation model of a children playroom	Community Development Division

6. PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION

The recommendations provided in the Monitoring of Diversity and Equal Opportunities Situation in Vilnius University in 2022: The system of ensuring prevention of discrimination is established at Vilnius University, but it is necessary (1) to expand the awareness of this system and activities as well as to develop the competencies of community members to recognise possible cases of discrimination and disrespectful behaviour. It is also important (2) to increase the awareness of the Trust Line among students and employees.

Planned activities for the period of 2023-2025:

6 th strategic objective	Activities (2023-2025)	Outcome sought	Implemented by
Develop anti-discrimination measures at the University to reduce direct and indirect discrimination on all the prohibited grounds of discrimination, enshrined in the legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania, and to foster an organisational culture that values diversity and respects each member of the University community.	Implementation of the Policy on the Prevention of Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Violence and Persecution at Vilnius University and the Description of the Procedure for the Investigation of Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Violence and Persecution Cases at Vilnius University: Activation of the network of responsible employees at units Preparation of the Trust Line's application form	Establishing a network of responsible employees at units; Holding at least seven thematic network meetings; Trust Line's online application form to be prepared, uploaded to vu.lt, and made available in Lithuanian and English	Community Development Division; Responsible employees at units

	<p>Education of community members on the prevention of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, violence, and persecution or on diversity and equal opportunities issues</p> <p>Raising awareness of support in the event of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, violence or persecution at VU, increase in the awareness of the system</p>	<p>At least six events/training sessions for the community to be organised;</p> <p>At least 50 items of content to be prepared and published on the topics of diversity and equal opportunities with hashtag #AtvirasVU ('OpenVU' in English) via internal and/or external communication channels of VU</p>	<p>Community Development Division; Responsible employees at units; VU Students' Representation; Communications and Marketing Division; Human Resources Division</p>
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