



Gender+ Equity Plan

Action plan for equity, diversity and inclusion at UM

2022-2025

1.0 Preamble & objectives

The University of Malta (UM) values equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and is committed to make the necessary changes to ensure that an equitable environment is created, while celebrating diversity, promoting inclusion and protecting the human rights of all individuals working or studying within this entity. For this purpose, a gender equity plan, taking an intersectional approach has been created.

UM strives to ensure that all students and employees enjoy the opportunity to participate in any activity or event concerning the University, each according to their capabilities. The objective of UM is to enable and facilitate the participation of staff, students, alumni and visitors while empowering them to achieve their full potential as members of the University community, Maltese and global society.

The Gender+ Equity Plan (G+EP) aims is to address any structural, cultural and/or situational barriers, to facilitate the participation of the diverse population within this institution, by adopting an intersectional approach taking into consideration, but not limited to, gender, disability, race & ethnicity, religion and socio-economic backgrounds. *Equity* used in this document is meant as an umbrella term to signify the trio of values equity-diversity-inclusion and their derivatives.

1.1 Target population (in alphabetical order)

- a. Academic staff: resident, visiting and casual
- b. Administrative staff
- c. Alumni
- d. Contractors
- e. Other supporting staff: estate, messengers, maintenance, etc.
- f. Researchers
- g. Students: prospective, junior, undergraduate, postgraduate, part and full-time
- h. Technical staff
- i. Visitors.

1.2 Key concepts:

- a. Equity, diversity, and inclusion
- b. Intersectional approach
- c. Support for excellence in education and in research
- d. Management
- e. Sustainability
- f. Accessibility and retention.

1.3 [Key areas](#)

Key Area 1	<p>A. The governance bodies, key actors and decision-makers - Increasing the number and share of women and persons with protected characteristics in leadership and decision-making positions.</p> <p>B. Changing organisational culture - introduce and evaluate policies and measure to ensure an open and inclusive working environment.</p>
Key Area 2	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (Measures and policies promoted by the different entities at UM).
Key Area 3	Recruitment, career progression and retention - Critically reviewing selection procedures and remedying any biases to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion of women and minority groups get equal chances to develop and advance in their careers.
Key Area 4	Work and personal life integration, including Interpersonal Violence (IPV) - promote inclusive work-life balance policies and practices, including parental leave policies, flexible working time arrangements and support for caring responsibilities. Prevent and combat discrimination on the basis of gender, race, disability, age, social origin.
Key Area 5	Sex/gender, diversity and inclusion perspective and approach in research and research teams
Key Area 6	Integration of sex/gender, diversity, equity and inclusion in teaching content

1.4 **Set up**

- a. Creation of an equity implementation team (committee, office and working groups) with clear definition of roles and responsibilities for the preparation and implementation of the Gender+ Equity Plan (G+EP).
- b. The G+EP is endorsed by Senate and Council and reflects feedback from different sectors of UM.
- c. Top influencing managers and decision-makers will be the main G+EP promoters.
- d. It will start with a pilot implementation phase in order to check the G+EP's feasibility and sustainability. Feedback from stakeholders would be required too so as to improve on this pilot phase.

1.5 **Why does UM need a Gender+ Equity Plan?**

- a. Educational and employment disadvantage and exclusion arise from social, attitudinal, situational and environmental barriers (see 1.7)
- b. To support students and employees with protected characteristics such as age, belief, creed or religion, colour, ethnic or national origin, or race, disability, family responsibilities or pregnancy, family or civil status, gender expression or gender identity, genetic features, health status, language, nationality, political opinion, property, sex or sex characteristics, sexual orientation, and social origin, who may face extra challenges to work and study at UM (Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act; Criminal Code (Chapter 9 of the Laws of Malta); Press Act; National Police System).

- c. The university needs to be responsive to the needs of different groups in society, and in so doing it will:
 - i. Implement systematic inclusion and integration
 - ii. Attract students and employ workers from different groups in society to work and study at university, with or without disadvantages
 - iii. Promote and encourage skills and talent among groups of people which in the past were not given the chance to study or work
 - iv. Enable these persons to remain and progress at university as workers, students and researchers to promote their wellbeing as well as that of the institution, economy and society at large
 - v. Provide education and training to students, staff and visitors on inclusion and the respect of diversity
 - vi. Implement systematic inclusion
 - vii. Promote diversity at decision making levels
 - viii. Build awareness of and provide [mental health services](#) to its employees
 - ix. Ensure [quality assurance](#) for all students, employees and visitors

1.6 Issues to take into consideration

- a. Training: Capacity-building initiatives at institutional level; training on diversity (sex, gender, race and ethnicity, religion, disability, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, social origin, etc.); unconscious bias (for recruitment officers, administration and management); on data collection and evaluation; mainstreaming for equity, diversity, inclusion Evaluation of available instruments such as sexual harassment policy, anti-racist policy, accessibility policy, cases of misconduct and an anti-discrimination policy. Where necessary, the design of new tools and policies.
- b. Institutional communication: internal and external communication need to be sensitive to equity, diversity and inclusion.
- c. Work-life balance: flexible work, childcare and the care of other dependents, parental leave and family life/personal life, telework, remote work, right to disconnect.
- d. Social impact (inside and outside the institution), sustainability (long term change), and innovation (accelerate change and inspire others).
- e. Dedicated resources: resources and expertise in equity, diversity and inclusion to implement the plan.
- f. Set up indicators to gauge status and progress.
- g. Corrective actions to be developed and prepared for implementation.
- h. Rectors and Pro-Rectors; Human Resources, Management and Development (HRMD); Office of the Academic Registrar: Legal Services; Marketing, Communications and Alumni Office: and the Internal Audit Office to help promote and monitor equity, diversity and inclusion.

1.7 Legislation promoting equity

As employer, UM has to follow:

1. [UM Strategic Plan 2020- 2025](#)
2. Act No. XXIV of 2016 - Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) (Amendment) Act
3. Act No XIX 1991 Chap 2 Section 45
4. Act No XXI 1993 Civil Code Cap 16
5. MPO Circular 13 1/6/94
6. MPO Circular 28/96 Act No XXI 1997 Art 14. Chapter 325
7. Legal Notice 427 2002 Part – Time Employees Regulations

8. Legal Notice 181 2008 Access to Goods and Services and their Supply (Equal Treatment) Regulations
9. Act No I 2003 Chap 456 Legal
10. Act No 85 2007 Equal Treatments of Persons Order
11. Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) Circular No. 24/2000 'Gender Mainstreaming'
12. Chapter 595 Public Administration Act
13. Constitution of Malta Chap 452.

In detail

- a. **employment; education and vocational guidance;** covers equity on the grounds of sex/gender and family responsibilities, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, racial or ethnic origin, and gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics, as per [Chapter 456, Equality for Men and Women Act. In Equality Bill protected characteristics include](#) age belief, creed or religion, colour, ethnic or national origin, or race, disability, family responsibilities or pregnancy, family or civil status, gender expression or gender identity, genetic features, health status, language, nationality, political opinion, property, sex or sex characteristics, sexual orientation, and social origin.
- b. When it comes to the access to and supply of **goods and services**, UM needs to take into consideration non-discrimination based on race/ethnic origin and gender. This emanates out of [LN 85/2007 Equal Treatment of Persons Order](#) in relation to race/ethnic origin and [LN 181/2008 Access to Goods and Services and their Supply \(Equal Treatment\) Regulations](#).
- c. UM regards both direct and indirect discrimination as forms of discrimination:
 - **direct discrimination** is defined as 'where a person is treated less favourably than another person is, has been, or would be, treated in a comparable situation' and
 - **indirect discrimination** is when 'an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put a person at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.'
- d. [Legal provisions](#) also cover:
 - **instruction to discriminate** is when one individual tells another individual to discriminate against a third person.
 - **victimisation** is when an individual is treated discriminately because of having made a complaint about discrimination or because s/he has helped in proceedings about a case of discrimination.
 - **harassment** is defined as when unwanted conduct occurs with the **purpose or effect** of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- e. **Sexual Harassment** is any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature occurs, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- f. [Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act](#) (ACT XI of 2015 further amended by ACT XX of 2015).
- g. UM takes into consideration **freedom of movement** for workers in the EU in relation to:
 - i. access to employment
 - ii. conditions of employment and work
 - iii. access to social and tax advantages

- iv. membership of trade unions and eligibility for workers' representative bodies
- v. access to training
- vi. access to housing
- vii. access to education, apprenticeship and vocational training for the children of workers; and
- viii. assistance afforded by the employment offices
- h. Accessibility means the physical, psychological and social environment must be organised so as to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in the community. UM strategic plan 2020-2025 underlines that the university will ensure the accessibility of services, usability of equipment, intelligibility of information and the opportunity to participate in decision-making
- i. The University of Malta aims to promote equity as a transparent principle for all its activities. This is called *mainstreaming*. When preparing and making decisions that affect students and staff, the impact of such decisions must be assessed from the perspective of equity. Reference to mainstreaming is found in Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) Circular No. 24/2000 'Gender Mainstreaming' (issued in 2000) and [Gender Mainstreaming in Practice](#) (OPM No. 15/2012).

Other

- j. National European Research Area Roadmap, 2015-2020 (MCST). In the Roadmap, Malta aims to translate equity legislation into effective action to address gender imbalances in research institutions and decision-making bodies and integrate the gender dimension better into R&D policies, programmes and projects.
- k. Gender equity policies or requirements in funding mechanisms – EU FUSIONS, Horizon Europe, ESF and ERDF and others.

2.0 Setting up of the Equity Committee and Office

2.1 Equity Committee

- a. The Equity Committee (EQC) has the role of developing the University's G+EP and conceive activities regarding this plan at an intersectional level. The main pillars of inclusion will continue to function autonomously in accordance with their existing remit as established by the Senate and/or the Council.
- b. The University's Equity Committee should be a Senate and Council entity. It is a body featuring the Chairs of Gender Equality & Sexual Diversity Committee, Access Disability Support Committee, Committee on Race & Ethnic Affairs, and the Junior College Diversity Committee or their representatives working together with the office for equity (EQO). It will also include representatives of the HRMD, the Office of the Academic Registrar, Marketing Communications and Alumni Office, Internal Audit and two student representatives each from KSU and Junior College.
- c. This Committee is a body which falls under the Pro-Rector responsible for Staff and Students.
- d. The objective of this Committee is to design a plan after consultation with the various university's stakeholders, and then proceeds to establish targets and timeframes - what to do and achieve within particular time frames.
- e. The Equity Committee and Office will have dedicated resources: Resources for the design, implementation, and monitoring of G+EP will include funding for the position of Equity Coordinator.

- f. The EQC shall plan regular meetings with governance actors and senior management to strengthen the potential of the plan and maximize the impact of the plan's implementation.
- g. It recommends to Rector what action can be taken when there is non-compliance or targets are not attained within a stipulated time frame by a specific entity.
- h. The EQC shall also draw guidelines on the composition of the Equity Implementing Working Groups to ensure representation of the variety of members of staff and students at UM.

2.2 Office for Equity (EQO)

- a. The setting up of an Office for Equity (EQO) as the executive arm of the Equity Committee.
- b. EQO falls under the Pro-Rector Staff and Student Affairs and coordinates with all the relevant departments.
- c. An Equity Coordinator must have the necessary qualifications and/or relevant experience/training in mainstreaming, evaluation and monitoring for equity, diversity and inclusion.
- d. This entity oversees the implementation of the plan, training, monitoring and evaluation process of the different policies, measures and practices.
- e. Conducts on-site audits and collects proof of policy development and planning.
- f. Stores data in accordance with UM's Data Protection policy and in compliance with GDPR.
- g. Mainstreams internal policies, measures and plans to ensure non-discrimination.
- h. Analyses indicators, metrics and statistics collected by the Internal Audit Office to produce disaggregated data on the basis of sex, race, nationality, religion, disability, age, dependency etc. annually.
- i. Works in collaboration with the Internal Audit Office to compile the annual report on G+EP as well as to disseminate the data in the internal auditors' annual report.
- j. The EQO will liaise with Rector and Pro-Rectors, HRMD (staff), Office of the Registrar (students), IT services, Legal Services, Internal Audit Office, Quality Assurance Office, Marketing, Communications and Alumni Office and Procurement Office.
- k. The EQO will ensure that goals/targets are attained within the stipulated time-frame. The EQO reports to the Equity Committee, which in turn reports to both the Senate and Council.
- l. The EQO will publicise existing best practices of equity, diversity and inclusion work to UM staff and students.
- m. The EQO shall keep record of workshop, meetings and minutes where necessary.
- n. Organizes equity, diversity and inclusion training; creates and updates official websites and disseminates results attained within and outside university
- o. Supports student initiatives.

2.2.1 Main duties and responsibilities of the Equity Coordinator

The selected Officer will be expected to:

- a. Be the executive coordinator of the UM equity Plan (G+EP)
- b. Facilitate Equity Diversity Inclusion (EDI) at UM for students, staff and visitors
- c. Coordinate with UM's Access Disability Support Committee, Gender equity & Sexual Diversity Committee, Committee on Race and Ethnic Affairs and other stakeholders but not be responsible for their operations
- d. Support and mentor students and staff on a one-to-one basis to ensure that they are provided with reasonable accommodation that addresses their needs related to EDI

- e. Support student requests related to gender variant identity and documentation by UM students and staff
- f. Liaise with the different UM academic and administrative structures, to ensure that the EDI support needs of students and staff are met
- g. Liaise with the different UM academic and administrative structures, to ensure that the adaptations of the G+EP are being drawn and implemented in said structures
- h. Be knowledgeable about service-providers in the EDI sector and facilitate contact for students and staff who require their services
- i. Be knowledgeable about Maltese equity legislation
- j. Have experience with working with persons in the EDI sector
- k. Be familiar with UM regulations and with the structures and systems of the University especially those that are dedicated to supporting students and staff
- l. Act as secretary to the EQC and its various working groups
- m. Analyse data from surveys and other similar activities scientifically and be able to present findings in an adequate format
- n. Maintain comprehensive, accurate, and up-to-date confidential records in line with GDPR
- o. Carry out other duties as requested which are commensurate with the post
- p. Use evidenced-informed practice of their work
- q. Regularly evaluate their own service provision
- r. Maintain high standards of professional practice in line with UM Professional Code of Conduct
- s. Communicate effectively with the different entities within UM, and disseminate information about the EP with stakeholders within and outside the university
- t. Participate in training programmes to ensure that they are updated and help develop the knowledge, skills and abilities of students and staff.

2.3 Equity Implementing Working Groups

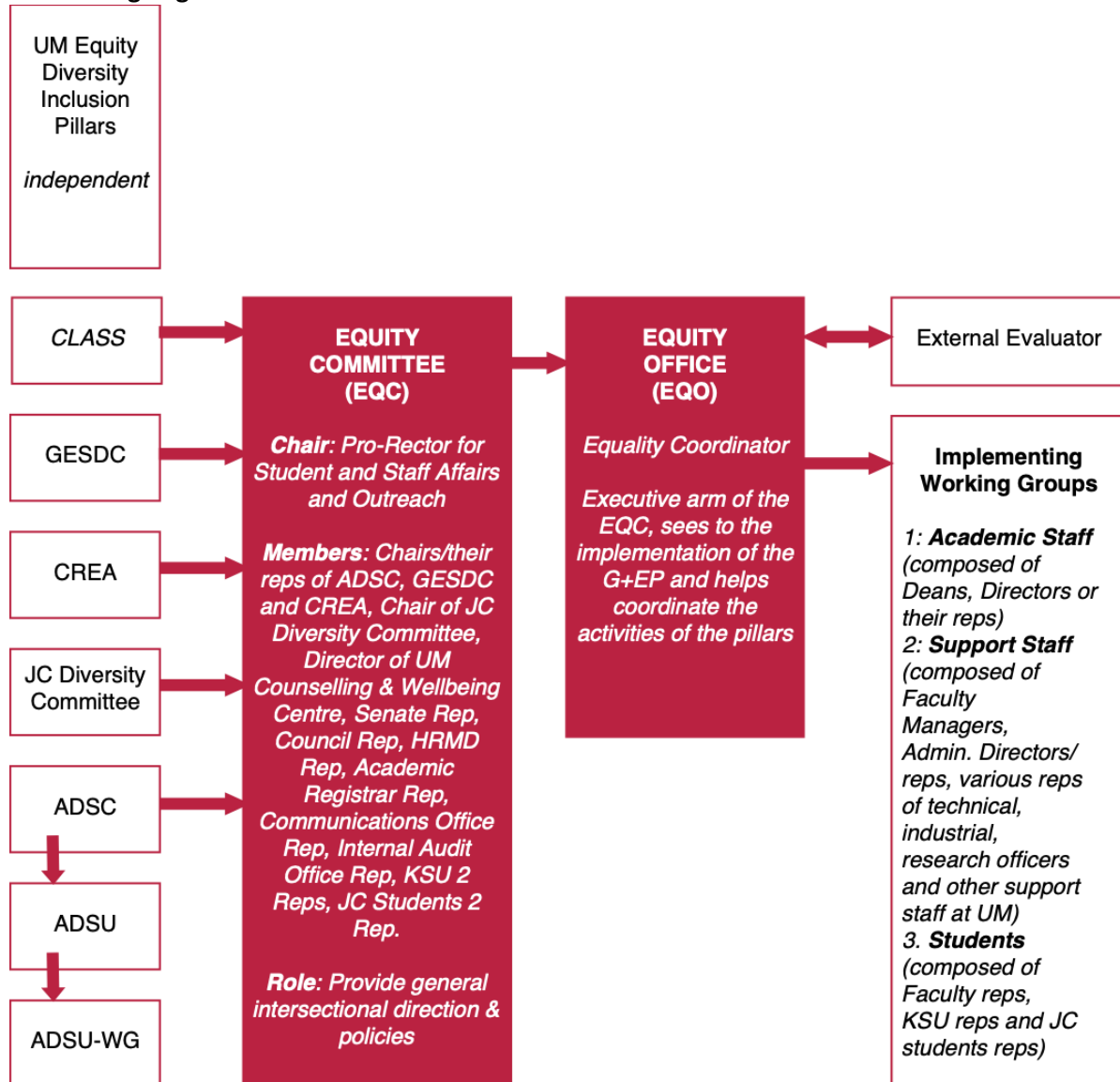
- a. The working groups shall be part of the executive structure of the EQO with the Equity Coordinator present in every single one.
- b. Each Equity Working Group (EQWG) features representatives from the different sectors of the university. The members of the working group are appointed by Rector to include representatives of different staff groups (lecturers, admin, researchers, technical staff, other), and students with particular insight or experience regarding equity, diversity and inclusion. Three essential working groups shall be set up as follows:
 - i. Academic Staff: relating to UM, JC, MATSEC, University of Malta Gozo and Marsaxlokk campuses. This group may be composed of Deans or equivalent or their representatives
 - ii. Support staff: relating to technical, industrial, managerial, specialist staff, research support officers, contracted workers, other workers. This working group may be led by faculty managers/equivalent, administrative directors/their representatives and other representatives to include technical, industrial, research support officers as well as other stakeholders within this category
 - iii. Students: composed of student representatives of each faculty, KSU representatives and other stakeholders.
- c. The working groups report to the EQC/EQO and ultimately to the Pro-Rector Staff and Students.

- d. The equity, diversity and inclusion development of faculties/institutes/centres and departments is reported and discussed as part of the operations management process.

Implementation

- a. All Faculties, Centres, Institutes, Schools, Junior College and administrative departments as well as student bodies need to nominate a focal point and a deputy tasked with promoting equity, diversity and inclusive practices in their area.
- b. Each faculty/institute/centre or department needs to have its own plan on how to implement G+EP.

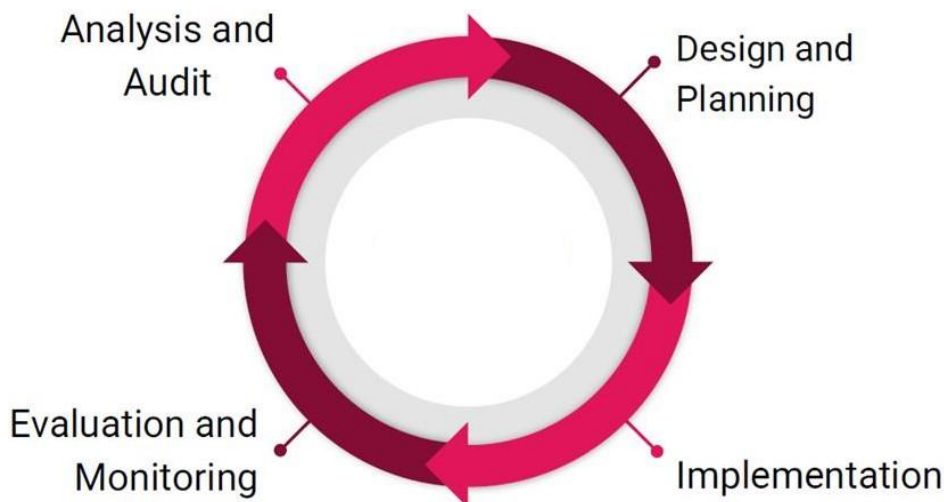
2.4 Organigram



3.0 Equity Plan phases

3.1

- a. **Design and Planning phase:**
- when objectives are defined and targets are set,
 - actions and measures to remedy problems are identified,
 - resources and responsibilities are attributed and timelines are set.
- b. **Implementation phase when:**
- activities are implemented
 - outreach and engagement efforts are undertaken so as to gradually expand the network of stakeholders
 - training.
- c. **Evaluation and monitoring phase:**
- the process and the progress are regularly followed through and assessed
 - Choose/Create monitoring tools to be used
 - Findings from the monitoring exercise(s) are used to adjust and improve interventions, so that results can be optimised
 - Policies, measures, etc are evaluated.
 - Evaluation of the efficacy of the plan takes place on a 5 yearly.
- d. **Analysis and Audit phase:**
- Desk review and analysis of the organisation's key documents
 - Consultation through interviews, focus group discussions, self-assessments, surveys or other channels of consultation
 - Tabulation and analysis of the collected data. Data may be analysed using different diversity, equity, inclusion analysis methodologies
 - Sharing and discussing the main findings with the people who participated in the audit and the managers of the organisation before the final report is presented
 - Decide which changes need to be done for next cycle.



3.2 Order of Issues to work on

Phase 1 (Pilot stage 2020-26)	Phase 2 (2022-2026)	Phase 3 (2024-2026)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finalisation of the G+EP 2. KA 1a Governance bodies, key actors, and decision making; KA 1b Organisation Culture 3. Raising awareness to improve organisational culture 4. KA2 Gender equity, diversity, and inclusion 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Structural set up of office for equity, equity Committee, equity Implementing Working Groups. 2. KA3 Recruitment, career progression and retention 3. KA4 Work and personal life integration, including IPV 	<p>KA 5: Sex/gender, diversity and inclusion perspective an approach in research and research teams</p> <p>KA 6: Integration of gender equity, diversity and inclusion in teaching content.</p>

3.3 Acronyms

ADSC	Access Disability Support Committee
ADSU	Access Disability Support Unit
ADSU-WG	Access Disability Support Unit - Working Group
CREA	Committee on Race and Ethnic Affairs
EDI	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
EQC	Equity Committee
EQO	Equity Office
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
G+EP	Gender Plus Equity Plan
HRMD	Office for Human Resources, Management and Development
JC	Junior College
KA	Key action
KSU	Kunsill Studenti Universitarji (UM Students' Council)
LN	Legal Notice
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
R&D	Research and Design
UM	University of Malta

3.4 Useful tools

- a. [UM Strategic Plan 2020-2025](#)¹
- b. [Sexual Harassment Policy](#)²
- c. [Bullying and Harassment Policy](#)³
- d. [Good Practice in Inclusive Language](#)⁴
- e. [Access Disability Support Committee](#)⁵ and [Access Disability Support Unit](#)⁶

¹ www.um.edu.mt/about/strategy

² www.um.edu.mt/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/478940/SexualHarassmentPolicy-18Oct2021.pdf

³ https://www.um.edu.mt/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/469846/harassmentandbullyingpolicy.pdf

⁴ https://www.um.edu.mt/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/425229/goodpracticeinclusivelanguage.pdf

⁵ <https://www.um.edu.mt/about/governance/committees/accessdisabilitysupport>

⁶ <https://www.um.edu.mt/services/administrativesupport/access>

- f. [Gender Equality & Sexual Diversity Committee](#)⁷
- g. [Committee on Race and Ethnic Affairs](#)⁸
- h. [Junior College Diversity Committee](#)⁹
- i. [Manual of Conduct](#)¹⁰
- j. Plotina <https://www.plotina.eu/plotina-formative-toolkit/>
- k. SAGE toolkit <https://www.sage-growingequity.eu/site/plan>
- l. GenderAction Project <https://genderaction.eu>
- m. GEAMTool <https://act-on-gender.eu/nes/gender-equity-audit-and-monitoring-geam-tool>
- n. GEAR Tool <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear>
- o. RRI Tools <https://rri-tools.eu/>
- p. Gender innovation - How Inclusive Analysis contributes to Research and Innovation <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/667d9e3e-2e03-11eb-b27b-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

Approved by Senate on 20 January 2022 and by Council on 17 February 2022.

⁷ <https://www.um.edu.mt/about/gender>

⁸ <https://www.um.edu.mt/about/governance/committees/raceethnicaffairs>

⁹ <https://www.jc.um.edu.mt/about/collegecommittees/jcdiversityworkinggroup>

¹⁰ <https://www.um.edu.mt/hrmd/secure/policies/ManualofConductandProcedures.pdf>