



AUS

American Institute
of Applied Sciences
in Switzerland

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

The American Institute of Applied Sciences in Switzerland (AUS) is committed to promoting equality and providing an environment where all members of its community are treated with respect and dignity. We are committed to seeking to employ a workforce and educate a student body that reflects the diverse community that we serve and are part of.

The primary goal of this policy is to promote an inclusive and equitable environment, where diversity is valued, discrimination is eliminated, and all individuals are provided with equal opportunities to thrive academically, professionally, and socially.

The Federal Constitution and the Gender Equality Act constitute the Swiss legal basis protecting people from bullying, discrimination, harassment, and victimization in the workplace, at study and in wider society. As a higher education institution, we have specific equality duties that require us to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

AUS is committed to providing equality of opportunity and will work to ensure that our employees, students, and visitors, as well as those that seek to apply to work or study with us, are treated fairly and are not subjected to unlawful discrimination by the institution on the basis of (their protected characteristic):

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race - (includes race, color, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins)
- religion or belief including philosophical belief and a lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

This policy is applicable to all employees (which includes academic and administrative staff, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers, apprentices, and agency workers), researchers, all students (including but not limited to undergraduates, postgraduates, postdoctoral and placement students), and applicants/offer holders to work or study at AUS. The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way employees and students should treat each other, any visitor, contractors, service providers, suppliers and any other persons associated with the functions of AUS.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Management Committee

Has the ultimate accountability for compliance with the AUS equality obligations. The Head of Student Affairs, the Quality Assurance Director and the President have overall formal responsibility for this policy. In particular, the members of the management committee:

- set a good example by treating all members of AUS with dignity and respect and challenging unacceptable behavior;
- ensure all employees, researchers and students are aware of this policy and know how to report discrimination, harassment or bullying, and that reporting incidents does not result in victimization;
- present employees with information (or knowledge about where to find such information) about employee rights as defined within the scope of AUS policies;
- deal with complaints fairly, equitably, thoroughly, confidentially and within the agreed timescales.

AUS employees and students

Have a personal responsibility to:

- read, understand and practically apply this policy alongside the other institutional policies and procedures.
- challenge and report unacceptable behavior in a safe manner.

3. INSTITUTIONAL AREAS

All AUS areas will take account of this policy, specifically:

3.1. Student Admissions

AUS is committed to provide a professional and fair service for all those who apply for admissions. The institution aims not only to select students who have the ability and motivation to benefit from the programmes which they intend to follow and who will make a contribution to student life, but also to ensure that no prospective or existing student is treated less favorably on any grounds. For further information see the AUS [Policy and Procedures for Admissions](#).

3.2. Widening Participation

AUS is committed to widening participation in higher education and is keen to see a socially and culturally diverse student population at our institution. To help achieve this, AUS offers a wide range of activities for the members of its academic community and is involved in many projects which aim to raise aspirations and encourage access to AUS.

3.3. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

AUS values the diversity of backgrounds and experiences that students bring to the academic environment of the institution and is committed to meeting the needs of a diverse and changing student body. AUS aims to ensure that all teaching, learning and assessment

strategies are equitable, undertaken with awareness of the different needs of students, and are directed towards the encouragement of academic and personal development.

AUS recognises the importance of encouraging diversity to be reflected in the content of courses, teaching methods and forms of assessment.

3.4. Support for Students

The welfare of all AUS students is of the highest priority. The student support team aims to secure the personal development, physical and mental wellbeing and welfare of all students, supporting them in realizing their academic potential. The student supervisory system also plays a role in the welfare of students.

4. SANCTIONS

A failure by anyone to comply with the principles set out in this policy may be considered to be a disciplinary offense and will be addressed as described in the [Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure](#) and [Student Disciplinary Policy](#) respectively.

5. COMPLAINTS

Any cases of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimization will be taken very seriously by AUS. Any employee or student found to have committed unlawful discrimination or harassment will be subject to the relevant disciplinary action. Appropriate action will be taken where possible if any member of the public, visitor or service provider is involved in discrimination or harassment.

Employees, students or other parties who make a complaint of discrimination have the right to do so without fear of victimization, and AUS will make every effort to ensure that any complaints are dealt with fairly and within the agreed timescales. Confidential support and information services are available with the Quality Assurance Director who is available to help with enquiries relating to discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimization. AUS makes provision for complaints to be made, anonymously if so preferred, through the [Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation Form](#).