

Diversity & Inclusion at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences (RUAS)

Colourful, Versatile and Concrete

Motive

Our organisation is particularly attentive to the themes of diversity and inclusion. For instance, students can make their voices heard on the [Platform INCLUDED](#) lecturers work, among other things, on educational development in the field of inclusive pedagogy; staff can attend training on topics such as inclusion and exclusion, discrimination, racism, and sense of belonging. And that is by no means all! Much time is being spent in front of and behind the scenes. And yet it was high time for a **Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2021** in response to current events such as Black Lives Matter, and heated internal discussions on racism and discrimination. It is time to involve more people in the further development of policy, education, and research regarding diversity and inclusion, which is why we are communicating and sharing all information about what is happening. Together, we will take the time to do this well and carefully, to properly hear the voice of as many staff members and students as possible, and to ensure that policy, teaching, and research are well aligned with what is already being undertaken on the one hand and will still be developed and implemented on the other. After all, an inclusion practice can only exist if you work on it together. Paying attention to existing voices, sentiments, and initiatives, while at the same time focusing on (educational and policy) innovations that answer the questions of today and the (near) future.

Throughout our organisation, we have already been working hard to create an inclusive educational institution. This document lists: **Why we are doing that, how we want to do it, and what exactly we are going to do**. If you want to know more, click on the links in the text. This document gives you an insight into the lively and complex practice of inclusion at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences.

Why address Diversity & Inclusion?

In recent years, a lot has happened in the world, in the Netherlands, in Rotterdam and at our educational institution that was related to the themes of Diversity & Inclusion (D&I). While for some of us it was already their life's work or part of everyday reality, for others it meant a shift in thinking about Diversity & Inclusion or experiencing Diversity & Inclusion-related events through discussions about Saint Nicholas & Pete, BlackLivesMatter, Me-too, Inequality of Opportunity, Accessibility, Poverty, and Covid 19, among other things. The world is changing, our cities are changing, and our schools are changing. What is being discussed externally is also discussed in our corridors and in our classrooms. A sense of belonging or feeling excluded, even hurt, are real and topical. As an educational institution, we want to do something about this, because we want to be an organisation that, for both staff and students, is a place of learning and development, a place where you can be yourself, a place where you feel at home and feel that you belong and are allowed to be who you are. Sometimes we have heated discussions taking place about topics such as religious and gender identity, exclusion, and discrimination. At the same time, we are also learning how to better work together, to listen, to be sensitive to another. A place that belongs to all of us that brings out the best in our students and staff where we treat everyone equally. Therefore, a **Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan** was **launched in 2021** including eight themes to be put centre stage. Eight points that have been identified which we are already and will be working on together.

We are pleased with this Action Plan but at the same worried about having overlooked things. There are many people in our organisation who feel involved and are working hard for a good Diversity & Inclusion policy, for supported Diversity & Inclusion education and research. If you are reading this and feel addressed, you too can do your bit. Communicate your wishes, initiated activities to us via mail inclusie@hr.nl or to your study programme/research centre or service department. Because to make inclusion work, we must address it together

How will we address Diversity & Inclusion?

Using the inclusion map, we can carefully keep track of what is happening, to reflect the active inclusion practice as much as possible. We will ask a few questions each time, in order to be clear about which **themes** we are addressing, at which **levels of intervention** we are active and which **target groups** we are actually serving and reaching. We will also track these activities and initiatives over time, so that we can name and measure their effectiveness and impact over the years.

To truly achieve an inclusive educational institution together, we must take the following steps:

- I. Firstly, to show how we are all already addressing Diversity & Inclusion themes**, we have created an **inclusion map**, a coloured wheel with spokes. The connecting factor, the frame, and the spokes, include the themes of diversity and inclusion. The spokes state all the inclusion activities and initiatives currently being developed and implemented in our organisation. The inclusion map is a 'living document,' it will be continuously supplemented and revised over time. Because, in the world of Diversity & Inclusion there is a lot of innovation and a lot going on. For example, where a few years ago, gender-neutral toilets were not even part of the conversation, we now have quite a few gender-neutral toilets. Where before there was no clear place for sharing stories about inclusion and exclusion, racism, and discrimination, we now have the [INCLUDED Platform](#) for our students. Each activity has its own question/mission, its own specific role in the Diversity & Inclusion discussion, has engaged staff, lecturers and students and maybe already has been in place for a (very) long time, or has just started. The inclusion map is thus a literal description and has no value judgment or hierarchy. We see this map as part of a descriptive method of living Diversity & Inclusion practice at RUAS. Because, **for inclusion to work, we need to act together!**



Figure 1. The Inclusion pie D&I at RUAS

II. Secondly, you can analyse the activities in the inclusion map, either for a specific situation or cohesively. And if there is no activity yet at a research centre, institute, or service department, you can quickly find out about existing or desired Diversity & Inclusion activities with three question categories. (See below) The descriptive analysis model places Diversity & Inclusion activities in a certain theme, clarifies at which intervention level in the organisation the activity is carried out and which target groups are central to the activity.

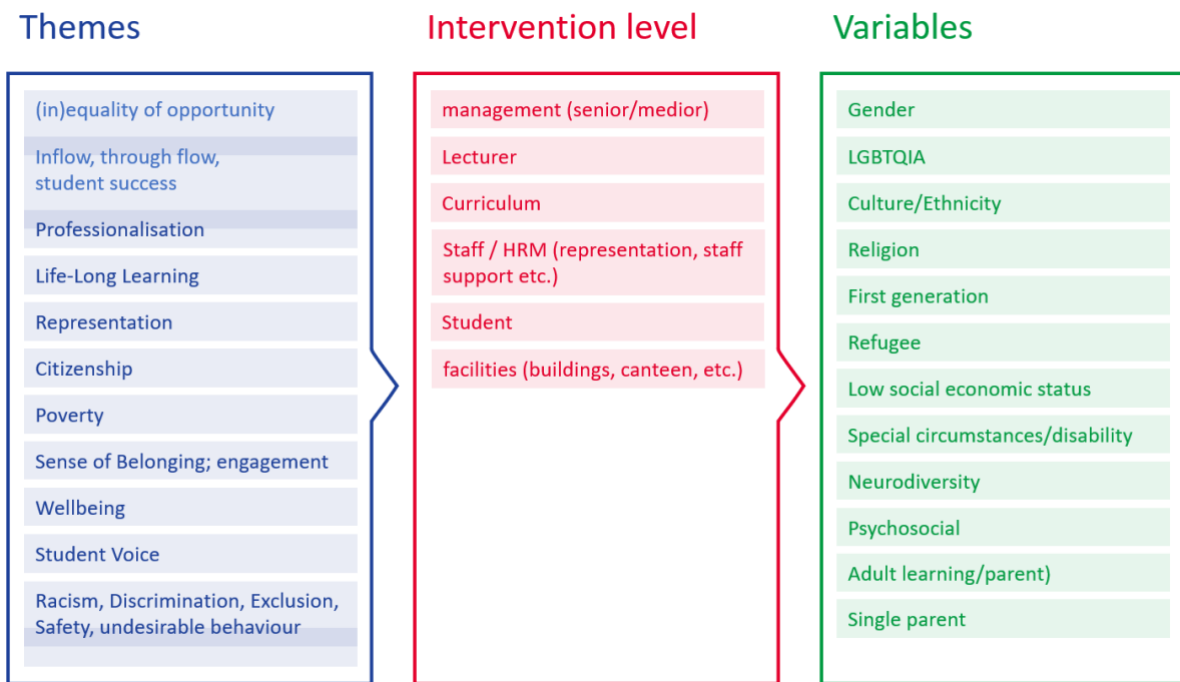


Figure 2. Descriptive Integral Analysis Model Diversity & Inclusion 'what, where and who?'

- 1) **What:** What specific Diversity & Inclusion **theme** is the activity about? What question will be answered and/or what problem will be addressed. Is it about equality, about accessibility, about poverty, or student success? Or about something completely different, such as gender identity or (un)safety. What is the initiative on the inclusion map about and/or what should a (new) initiative be about? It can also cover multiple themes, e.g., first-generation students and poverty. Each theme has a different reason and often, if you come up with an activity, a different response model. The key question is: **what is your problem/topic, and how do we want to address it?** For example, poverty: due to the international gas crisis, prices are rising fast. Almost everyone in the Netherlands is affected by this, but our more vulnerable students have acute financial concerns. These are the underrepresented groups, who are already working extra and must borrow money, to be able to study. A possible new project could then be about additional resources (emergency fund) for these students, focusing on application support.
- 2) **Where:** If you know the theme associated with the activity or topic, you can ask at what level of **intervention** the activity should be carried out. What the action steps are and who then are your key partners and stakeholders. For example, if you want to do something about the representativeness of your employee population to create a more diverse workforce, a policy intervention is needed. Processes are then put in place by (senior)

management to start recruiting and selecting in a more inclusive way. For example, if you want to design a 100-day programme for students who have more challenges to face than some other students (including those from a migration background, who face poverty, who are first-generation students and/or who are studying under special circumstances), this intervention should link to the curriculum. For example, if you want students to be able to maintain their religious identity even inside our buildings, we need the right facilities to make our building accessible and inclusive to all groups.

- 3) Who:** And what groups are you talking about, what are the **variables**? Do you want to reach everyone with your initiative/activity, is it an initiative aimed at the LGBTQIA community, for example, or students with special needs? And if certain activities are offered for some groups, shouldn't we also think about the groups we might not be targeting? And how do these groups feel about it if they are explicitly marked as a group? Did they choose this themselves or is it an identity (assigned by you or us)?

III. Third, you can (further) develop and implement, execute, and evaluate existing and new Diversity & Inclusion activities. We call this an implementation process (based on a *theory of change*), and it has four steps. We will go through and develop these four steps for our entire organisation, in close collaboration with, faculty and students, over the next few years:

- 1) Listing Diversity & Inclusion activities** (the inclusion map): this step involves identifying all existing (and desired) activities and initiatives that fall under the Diversity & Inclusion umbrella (theme, intervention level and variables).
- 2) Describing Diversity & Inclusion activities and initiatives:** each section of the inclusion map is described. What do they include, what goals do they have, and what do they deliver (output)? Each activity is autonomous and thus in charge of the actual design and implementation of the activity.
- 3) Track and evaluate progress:** in this step, those who initiated the activities evaluate them themselves. Based on the chosen objectives, they provide (intermediate) reports and share knowledge and expertise. The results are shared and discussed (outcome).
- 4) Measure effectiveness:** this step involves not only measuring the internally evaluated results but also tries to objectively measure the appreciation of the activities and initiatives for effectiveness. Often, in change management and educational innovations, it is difficult to make short-term statements about effectiveness. This fourth step of the implementation process may therefore also take up more time, ultimately it is about

creating impact in the field of Diversity & Inclusion, in this case, contributing to an inclusive learning and working environment.

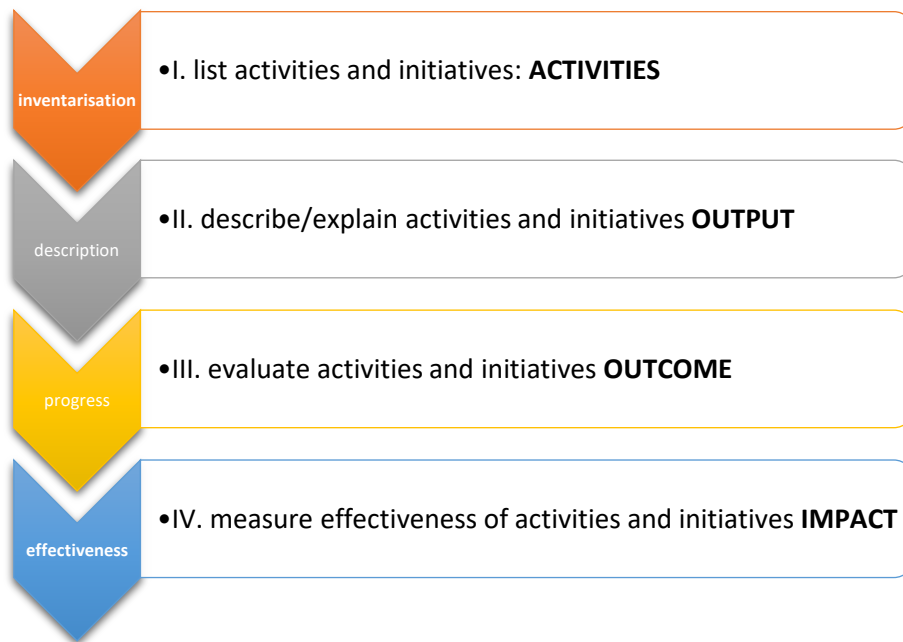


Figure 3. Phases Process Implementation Diversity and Inclusion

To keep track of everything and make it transparent, we are building a webpage/portal containing a Diversity & Inclusion Dashboard. The above analysis questions **Why, How and What** are reflected in this ever-changing Diversity & Inclusion portal. A dedicated webpage, where we describe, track, and visualise the inclusion practices of today and tomorrow as well and detailed as possible. In this portal, we will provide information and monitor the professionalisation of the organisation in the Diversity & Inclusion field.

What exactly are our Diversity & Inclusion activities?

Many colleagues are involved in the **Diversity & Inclusion Stakeholder Consultation** to keep the inclusion map as up to date as possible; to perform the analysis and implementation process as best as possible. For each activity, stakeholders are identified who are end-responsible and who meet periodically. Each stakeholder is and remains the leader of its own inclusion activity, and thus represents that initiative. In this way, we not only ensure a better connection between the various activities, we can then also better learn from each other and jointly determine what is still needed/missing once we have mapped everything clearly. For instance, we can pay a lot of attention to the *student voice* on the Included platform, but what can we initiate for the *voice* of our lecturers and staff? In addition to informing on the progress of individual Diversity & Inclusion activities, more policy, educational and research consultations are also planned by the Diversity & Inclusion

stakeholder network. We have a short-term and a long-term agenda and activity list per Policy, Education and Research theme as summarised in the diagram below.

Policy	Themes/initiatives	Actions
INCLUDED	INCLUDED studentplatform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Everyone feels at home at an educational institution where all voices are heard: ▪ Student participation ▪ Embedding the stories
Policy research	Such as: National Student Survey (NSE), Work Experience Survey (WBO)	Alignment research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data exchange to support operations ▪ Structural consultations ▪ Discuss results
FIT	Safe learning and working environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accessibility of buildings ▪ Project Quiet rooms: universities are accessible to all students ▪ Facilities ▪ Gender toilets ▪ Safety
Intersectionality	Working with different groups and variables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gender identity awareness ▪ High giftedness provision and professionalisation ▪ Inclusive communication
Internship discrimination	Equal opportunity	Policy and approach. Equal opportunities on internship and labour market: make and/or draft/continue agreements and covenant. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Flow-through agenda ▪ Using research on discrimination ▪ Internship discrimination desk

Education	Themes/initiatives	Actions
Curricula	Inclusive curriculum	Support and advisory committee Inclusive Curriculum. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supporting progress and writing final report ▪ Researching inclusive curriculum ▪ Roundtable discussions on inclusive curriculum
Inclusion scan	Design and implementation of the inclusion scan for education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designing curriculum tooling & scan. ▪ Implementing inclusive pedagogy appropriate to the study programme and the professional practice concerned. ▪ Continued research on Inclusive pedagogy and didactics
Student Wellbeing	Student welfare and study success issues	Consultancy and research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UN treaty: survey signing UN treaty ▪ Confidential counsellors and follow-up of reports/complaints: project inventory ▪ Intersectionality ▪ International students ▪ Caribbean Dutch students: student success ▪ Referral functions ▪ In collaboration with stakeholders
HR Academy	Professionalisation in the field of Diversity & Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The open but not non-committal conversation: setting up learning line (bias) training in collaboration with HR Academy ▪ Embedding D&I in training courses and workshops for lecturers ▪ Tailor-made trainings & Learning tracks ▪ Support study programme teams (concretisation of action plan, workshops, discussions)
Stakeholder consultation	Connecting function	Evidence-informed education: initiate partnerships from stakeholder consultation that realise alignment between different actors and levels of intervention. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make connections between existing networks and ongoing collaborations, ▪ In co-creation with our Diversity & Inclusion allies, ▪ A design of optimal cooperation.

Research	Themes/initiatives	Actions
Research	Qualitative research	Research serves/supports the projects/assignments within Policy & Education, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide (substantive) reporting and knowledge dissemination.
Research Centres	Connecting to Diversity & Inclusion theme and research.	Connecting (new) professor Diversity & Inclusion: The open but not non-committal conversation: discussing the research agenda together with initiators of project 'new lecturer Diversity & Inclusion' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with professional practitioners and RUAS students and lecturers to conduct research on Diversity & Inclusion Connecting to ongoing investigations Using survey results Explore how to embed results. Practical research on six regionally embedded themes, Involve in draft of inclusion scan.
Dashboard	Urgency, steering and visibility	Realise Diversity & Inclusion data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A living Diversity & Inclusion portal of the RUAS Web page, adequately describe and visualise the inclusion practice in detail Making your own progress visible Professionalisation of our colleagues Informing our students and staff.
Barometer	Cultural diversity	Diversity is part of strategic human resources policy: effectiveness barometer cultural diversity.

If you want more details, find out more about what we do per theme (policy, education, and research), please feel free to contact us by email: inclusie@hr.nl