



Co-funded by
the European Union

IncluDE

*Compendium of principles and
recommendations for inclusion, equity
and diversity in higher education and
lifelong learning*

#IncluDE_EUproject



The research reported in this document was carried out in the Include EU funded project.
Proposal ID 101185305 under the call ERASMUS-2024-PCOOP-ENGO

Citation:

Barros Dias, I., Porfirio, J., Barros, D., Gronita, J., Roboredo Seara, I., & Antonaci, A. (2025). Compendium of principles and recommendations for inclusion, equity and diversity in higher education and lifelong learning. (Report no. 2.1). Zenodo. 10.5281/zenodo.17992038

ISBN: 978-989-9337-00-8

License used: This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>.

ShareAlike: If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.



Co-funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Executive Summary

The Compendium of Principles and Recommendations on Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity, developed under Work Package 2 (WP2) of the Erasmus+ IncluDE project, presents a comprehensive framework of principles and actionable recommendations to promote inclusion, equity, and diversity across higher education and lifelong learning. It addresses a wide spectrum of inclusion challenges through a multi-level approach encompassing macro (policy), meso (institutional), and micro (practice) dimensions.

Based on a Systematic review of recent research on best practices, national and international policies, and institutional guidelines, it provides guiding policy and pedagogical principles, as well as specific actionable recommendations for improving inclusion. The diagnostic tools and monitoring instruments provided establish a Reference Framework for higher education institutions (HEIs) to assess and improve their inclusion policies, thus supporting the development of inclusive environments across both on-site and distance learning contexts.

The compendium is divided into two main sections, Social and Academic Inclusion, and Digital Accessibility, the first of which is subdivided into the following more specific focus areas:

- functional disabilities;
- specific learning disorders;
- migrants and ethnicity;
- gender;
- prisoners;
- army, athletes, and diplomatic staff.

The expected relevance and impact of this work is to empower HEIs to identify barriers, implement inclusive strategies, and foster equitable learning experiences for all students, especially those in vulnerable or underrepresented groups. This compendium can serve as a foundational resource for shaping inclusive educational environments in alignment with European inclusion standards and fostering equitable access, participation, and success for all learners.

Table of Contents

<i>Executive Summary</i>	3
<i>Introduction</i>	6
General framework, procedures, and methodology	6
Key concepts and internal organization of the Compendium	8
<i>Social and Academic Inclusion</i>	11
Policies and Initiatives General principles (macro-level).....	11
<i>Recommendations on Functional Disabilities</i>	19
Macro-level	19
Meso-level.....	19
Micro-level	21
<i>Recommendations on Specific Learning Disorders</i>	27
Macro-Level.....	27
Meso-level.....	27
Micro-level	29
<i>Recommendations on Migrants and Ethnicity</i>	35
Macro Level	35
Meso-level.....	35
Micro-level	37
<i>Recommendations on Gender</i>	39
Macro-level	39
Meso-level.....	40
Micro-level	41
<i>Recommendations on Prisoners</i>	43
Macro-Level.....	43
Meso-level.....	44
Micro-level	44
<i>Recommendations on the Army, Athletes, and Diplomatic Staff</i>	47
Macro-level	47
Meso-level.....	48
Micro-level	48
<i>Digital Accessibility</i>	51
Policies and Initiatives General principles (macro-level).....	51

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

General and institutional recommendations (meso-level).....54
Detailed recommendations on digital accessibility (micro-level)58
References.....68

Introduction

General framework, procedures, and methodology

This *Compendium of Principles and Recommendations Concerning Inclusion, Equity and Diversity for Various Inclusion Challenges and Target Groups, Applicable in Multi-level Decision-making Processes in Higher Education and Lifelong Learning* is the result of the work carried out in Work Package 2 of the Erasmus + Cooperation named IncluDE, which stands for “A European Inclusion Reference Framework for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity” (ERASMUS-EDU-2024-PCOOP-ENGO | Type of Action: Erasmus-LS, proposal n° 101185305).

As stated in the proposal, the IncluDE project proposed the creation of a Reference Framework for Higher Education Institutions (HEI), alongside practice-oriented instruments to assess and enhance inclusion policies and practices. It aims to enable leaders, intermediary education support services, teaching staff, and students to improve inclusion at all levels. The project aligns with the concepts of inclusion, equity, and diversity, and inclusion challenges as defined by the European Commission, reinforcing the shared European language and approach. Inclusion challenges encompass disabilities, health problems, educational system barriers, cultural differences, social barriers, economic barriers, discrimination, and geographical barriers (Erasmus+). These challenges affect all stakeholders within academic life, including students, teachers, and administrative staff. For students, barriers may arise at multiple stages of their educational trajectory, encompassing pre-entry preparation, equitable admission processes, personalized learning and progression, fair and transparent assessment practices, and adequate preparation for future professional pathways. Similarly, faculty members and other staff may encounter obstacles related to their routine responsibilities as well as opportunities for career advancement. As stated by the first external reviewers of this document in their report: “It is important to understand that the fundamental principle of inclusion is not only to respect differences but to value differences. By valuing differences, we build a society that understands the social worth of each person, which has direct implications for combating segregating and exclusionary movements, many of them contrary to the principles of human rights for a fair global society.”.

The Inclusion Reference Framework is designed to incorporate indicators grounded in principles and recommendations drawn from scholarly literature, international and national policy frameworks, institutional guidelines, and established best practices. Ultimately, it will provide a diagnostic Inclusion Evaluation Instrument based on these indicators, enabling institutions to assess their current status, identify priority actions, and determine what is realistically attainable within their context. Additionally, it will include an Inclusion Monitor to support institutional stakeholders in structuring dialogue and action planning across all levels. These components will be integrated into the Inclusive Higher Education Resources Portal and the IncluDE CPD course, offering stakeholders practical tools and educational resources to manage and enhance inclusion.

The primary objective of Work Package 2 is to develop a comprehensive compendium of key principles and recommendations concerning inclusion, equity, and diversity in higher education and lifelong learning. This constitutes the initial step toward achieving the

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

overarching objectives outlined above. Led by Universidade Aberta (Portugal), this work package involved close collaboration among institutional partners, who combined their expertise and experience to generate synergies. Partners systematically mapped and reviewed research and innovation literature published predominantly within the last five years, focusing on inclusion, equity, and diversity. The reviewed sources were diverse in nature, encompassing both documentary analyses (e.g., legislation and policy reports) and applied studies based on interviews and surveys. In addition, existing national and institutional guidelines for inclusion in higher education were examined, alongside policies and initiatives from the European Union and other intergovernmental organizations such as the OECD and UNESCO. The systematic review and meta-analysis were anchored in the thematic framework developed by EADTU's task force on Diversity and Inclusion, as presented in *Diversity and Inclusion in Digital Education for European Universities* (EADTU, 2022, available at: <https://diversity-inclusion.eadtu.eu/>). This framework served as the basis for the matrix used to collect and organize data across partners. Consequently, the structure of the Compendium reflects this prior work, incorporating its recommendations and supplementing them with extensive information gathered by project partners from national legislation and research outputs.

In the second phase, following consultations with the project management team and the leaders of WP3—given that the principles and recommendations identified in WP2 will serve as the foundation for developing indicators for the Inclusion Reference Framework (WP3) and subsequent project activities—the Universidade Aberta's team undertook the preparation of this Compendium for multi-level validation by expert groups. The initial validation, conducted by two independent reviewers, has already taken place. We gratefully acknowledge the valuable suggestions provided by these experts, as well as the contributions from partners at the Open University and FernUniversität in Hagen, which significantly enhanced the quality of this document. The revised version was subsequently presented to the Associated Partners, members of the Advisory Board coordinated by EADTU, who performed a second external quality assurance review. Their insightful observations have been incorporated into the current version of the Compendium. The next validation stage will involve a thorough review by project partners, whose feedback will also be integrated. Only upon completion of this final phase will the Compendium be deemed ready for use in the forthcoming steps of the project, which aim to develop the following components:

- **An Inclusion Reference Framework:** A matrix with indicators for institutional, curriculum, and course levels, covering the student journey and inclusion challenges.
- **An Inclusivity Evaluation Instrument:** A rating tool to assess institutional policies and practices, facilitating guided discussions and action planning.
- **An Inclusion Monitor:** A tool for structured discussions and action plans, incorporating evaluation results and institutional strategies.

Finally, it is important to underscore that this work reflects the state of affairs at a specific point in time. Legislation is subject to frequent changes, as are working groups, particularly in the domains addressed here, which remain the focus of ongoing debate. Moreover,

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

assistive technologies are advancing rapidly, creating expectations of significant positive developments in the coming years. This dynamic context will imply periodic reassessment and updating of the work undertaken—a process that will be welcomed, as such revisions will represent meaningful improvements.

Key concepts and internal organization of the Compendium

In this Compendium of principles and recommendations concerning inclusion, equity, and diversity for various inclusion challenges and target groups, applicable in multi-level decision-making processes in higher education and lifelong learning, two key concepts are structural to the work:

- **Principles** are the main lines that guide the overall policies, strategies, and pedagogies that promote inclusivity.
- **Recommendations** are specific suggestions or proposals aimed at improving or enhancing the current situation, offering actionable measures to achieve inclusivity, based on a thorough analysis or study of the current situation.

The information collected on these two dimensions was organized according to a typology adapted from that presented in the document *Diversity and Inclusion in Digital Education for European Universities*, used as a guiding reference, as explained above. Each point of this typology is examined across three analytical layers: **macro**, **meso**, and **micro** levels. The **macro level** encompasses national legislation as well as policies and initiatives developed by European and other intergovernmental organizations, corresponding to the ‘principles’ outlined above. Its intended audience aligns with the **strategic** domain. The **meso level** refers to the institutional operationalization of these principles, serving as the intermediary between ‘principles’ and ‘recommendations.’ It addresses faculty governance and the scope of its **operational** powers and duties. Finally, the **micro level** addresses the practical, course-specific application of best practices identified in the research literature, representing concrete ‘recommendations’. Its audience is located within the active **implementation** area. At this point, particular attention is devoted to the detailed considerations involved in designing and developing individual courses and curricular units, especially within e-learning contexts. This includes decisions related to course and syllabus design, programme composition, alignment of individual courses within broader academic structures, and the inclusion of adult and lifelong learners to ensure coherence, progression, and an integrated student learning experience. Although students are the primary target audience of the recommendations presented in this Compendium, many of the items included are also relevant to all individuals involved in the **academic community**, namely, teachers and administrative staff.

The integration of the two core dimensions—principles and recommendations—with the three analytical layers (macro, meso, and micro levels) presented certain challenges, particularly regarding the selection of information (notably at the intermediate level) and the stylistic approach to be adopted in each section. A further key point of discussion concerned the optimal preparation for subsequent stages of the project. This consideration

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

led to the decision to present recommendations as guiding questions within the micro-level sections of the Compendium. This format was considered the most effective for both supporting the development of the tools envisioned in the project and enabling institutions to undertake self-assessment from the outset. For the same reasons, where deemed appropriate, items were organised into thematic clusters under the following categories: **mindset, campus, administration, and teaching.**

The Compendium is structured into two main sections. The first focuses on **Social and Academic Inclusion**, addressing a range of obstacles that may foster differentiation—from architectural barriers limiting mobility for individuals with disabilities to social barriers that restrict access to essential goods and services, particularly education. Geographical distance is also implicitly considered primarily for its social implications, affecting not only individuals residing in peripheral areas but also migrant populations. The second section is devoted to **Digital Accessibility**, which serves as a key enabler of access for “all people with a broad range of abilities and/or otherwise excluded people because of permanent, temporary, or situational scenarios” (Microsoft Inclusive Design Guidebook). This section also examines issues related to digital literacy and their broader implications. Both distance-learning and campus-based institutions must remain fully attentive to challenges associated with social and academic inclusion, as well as those concerning digital accessibility. For e-learning in particular, digital accessibility and access facilitation are critical, as online education often represents the most viable option for individuals who would otherwise face significant barriers to entering and succeeding in higher education.

Although much national legislation primarily targets basic and secondary education, its principles and structures have significantly influenced higher education policies, fostering a more inclusive and supportive academic environment. However, in most countries, the autonomy granted to universities has resulted in considerable disparities in internal regulations for supporting students with disabilities. This situation underscores the need to establish overarching frameworks, regulations, and practices to ensure consistency and equity across institutions (Nogueira, Querido, Nunes, Ortiz & Botelho 2023; Figueiredo, Coelho & Veiga 2024).

Moreover, educational institutions constitute complex and diverse microcosms in which students are not the only group requiring support and inclusion. Faculty members and administrative staff can also benefit substantially from a more inclusive and tolerant environment. In this regard, many of the issues addressed in this Compendium, although primarily focused on students, are in fact relevant to the entire academic community.

Finally, gaining access to a Higher Education Institution (HEI) does not guarantee student success or inclusion, particularly for those requiring additional learning and inclusion support. It is essential to reflect on the personal, social, and educational competencies acquired by these students, the accessibility and opportunities provided by HEIs, the support and motivation offered by families, and the role of educational policies in fostering inclusion (Santos, Souza & Santos, 2022). In line with these authors, this Compendium addresses multiple dimensions of inclusion within HEIs, with particular attention to institutions offering e-learning. Distance education often represents the most favourable

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

option for individuals with disabilities or other conditions, making it a preferred choice. Consequently, this Compendium not only provides relevant information for all universities—whether public or private, large or small—but is also specifically designed for application within e-learning contexts.

Social and Academic Inclusion

Policies and Initiatives | General principles (macro-level)

International, European, and national legislation has increasingly focused on promoting social inclusion and eliminating discrimination, particularly within the field of education for persons with disabilities. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) establishes the right to inclusive education as a fundamental principle. At the European level, the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (European Commission, 2021) reinforces this commitment, aligning with broader efforts to ensure equity and accessibility.

Reports such as “Equity and Inclusion in Education: Finding Strength through Diversity” (OECD, 2023) highlight the importance of inclusive educational systems and the need to address the social determinants that influence access and participation. The European Union has also advanced proposals aimed at fostering inclusive education and improving coordination among member states to reduce structural barriers (EU, 2022; EU, n.d.). These policy frameworks are supported by a range of international initiatives and resources that prohibit discrimination and encourage inter-ministerial coordination to address social determinants of exclusion, including those developed by UNESCO (2017) and by several other projects on this subject matter, like CAST (2018, 2023); INVETED (Claeys-Kulil et al. 2019); EQUiIP (2018); SMILE (EUCEN, n.d.); INCLUSIPHE (n.d.); OHO-hanke (n.d.); UCL (2020); or ISOLEARN (2017).

At the national level, countries are encouraged to implement inclusive education legislation that explicitly prohibits discrimination and fosters diversity. The OECD (2023) advocates for inter-ministerial coordination to address the social determinants of exclusion, recognising that systemic change requires cross-sectoral collaboration. As highlighted by EUCEN (n.d.), national policies should align with broader European frameworks such as the European Education Area, Erasmus+, the EU Digital Education Action Plan (INCLUSIPHE, n.d.), and the European Pillar of Social Rights. In this context, national strategies must also confront intersectional inequalities in higher education, while promoting lifelong learning and ensuring accessibility for all. According to the EU (2022), Erasmus+ policies are conceived as dynamic processes through which member states are encouraged to develop equity strategies with measurable targets, enhance data collection on underrepresented groups, and align funding mechanisms with inclusion objectives. To support these goals, the European Commission (n.d.) recommends that countries adopt evidence-informed institutional strategies that promote inclusion and academic success. Simultaneously, it calls for inclusive approaches to mobility and cooperation, and the strategic use of digital tools to expand access and improve educational quality (European Commission, n.d.).

At the national level, some examples are worth mentioning. Greece has developed a comprehensive national plan structured around six strategic pillars to support persons with disabilities: (1) equal participation in society, (2) independent living and deinstitutionalization, (3) accessibility, (4) inclusive education, (5) employment, and (6) social protection. This plan outlines specific goals and actions aimed at enhancing

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

accessibility across various domains, fostering inclusive educational environments, and expanding employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Importantly, the plan:

- emphasizes equality, non-discrimination, and full participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life;

- includes goals to enhance the digital accessibility of public services and information

- addresses needs related to various functional disabilities through targeted actions

advocates for inclusive education practices that accommodate students with learning disorders

- recognizes the intersectionality of gender and disability, promoting gender-sensitive approaches.

In the United Kingdom, the promotion of equality, diversity, and inclusion within higher education is underpinned not only by the Equality Act 2010, but also by sector-specific governance frameworks. Notably, the *Higher Education Code of Governance* issued by the Committee of University Chairs (CUC, 2020) urges governing bodies of higher education institutions to embed inclusivity at the core of institutional strategy and delivery. This entails the establishment of robust and effective structures and processes that actively foster inclusive practices. The Code further underscores the necessity of engaging a broad spectrum of stakeholders—including students, academic and professional staff, and members of the wider community—to ensure that governance reflects diverse perspectives. Key principles guiding institutional responsibilities include accountability, sustainability, regulatory compliance, inclusivity and diversity, operational effectiveness, and engagement.

Complementing these governance standards, the Office for Students (OFS, 2025) is the English Higher Education Regulator, and provides information about the work that the OFS does as an organization and employer, and with the higher education sector. The general principles stated are:

- promotion of equality concerning access, success, progression, and outcomes for students with relevant protected characteristics;

- promotion of equality concerning the higher education experience of students with relevant protected characteristics;

- intention to be an inclusive workplace that attracts a diverse range of candidates, creating an environment in which colleagues are treated with respect and where there is recognition of the importance of impartiality in work.

In addition, the OFS provides targeted recommendations on social inclusion, with particular emphasis on improving access, success, and progression for students from underrepresented groups. These recommendations also address the complexities of intersectionality, acknowledging the compounded disadvantages faced by individuals with multiple marginalized identities (OFS, 2025). Compliance with these foundational principles is a prerequisite for institutional operation within the UK higher education sector.

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

In Wales, the advancement of equality, diversity, and inclusion within the higher education sector has been guided by a series of strategic frameworks. The *Strategic Equality Plan 2020–2024*, published by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), set out a comprehensive agenda to promote inclusive practices across Welsh institutions. Since 2024, this initiative has been continued and expanded by the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (MEDR), which subsequently released its own *Strategic Plan 2025–2026*. Both documents reflect a sustained commitment to funding and supporting initiatives that enhance access to higher education for underrepresented groups, aligning with the Welsh Government’s national strategy and priorities for an inclusive tertiary education and research. Founding commitments include reviewing and implementing a Strategic Equality Plan, embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion across Medr, and advancing equity through regulatory conditions. The plan explicitly aims to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and gender-based violence, while contributing to an anti-racist Wales. It also emphasises inclusive learning environments for individuals with Additional Learning Needs, promoting person-centred approaches that foster independence. Accessibility is addressed through coherent learning pathways, flexible provision, and support for lifelong learning, ensuring that underrepresented groups can participate fully. The plan promotes global engagement and civic responsibility, encouraging learners to become outward-looking citizens. Overall, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) principles are not treated as standalone objectives but as cross-cutting priorities influencing regulation, funding, learner welfare, and workforce development throughout the strategic period.

Among their core objectives, these strategic plans aim to:

- Direct funding decisions to ensure equitable access for marginalized populations;
- Regulate and promote equality of opportunity and outcomes;
- Foster collaborative partnerships with other public bodies to address systemic inequalities and generate collective impact across the Welsh education sector;
- Embed equality principles by modelling best practices, including fair employment and inclusive institutional cultures (HEFCW, 2020; MEDR, 2025)

Another example is the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), which presents the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2023 (EDI) and emphasizes a vision to cultivate a research and innovation ecosystem that is inclusive, equitable, and representative of diverse talents and perspectives. The strategy underscores the importance of embedding EDI principles across UKRI's roles as a leader, funder, partner, and employer. The general principles stated are inclusivity, equity, diversity, transparency and accountability, collaboration and partnership, leadership commitment, evidence-based approach, and continuous improvement. It highlights the need to widen access to opportunities, supporting underrepresented groups, embedding social inclusion in funding and decision-making, data collection and analysis on social backgrounds, creating inclusive cultures, and addressing intersectionality (UKRI, 2023).

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

In Spain, both legislation and University regulations promote the rights of persons with disabilities and their social inclusion. Legislation ensures equal opportunities and treatment for persons with disabilities, and promotes personal autonomy and universal accessibility, moving towards rights-based, non-paternalistic frameworks (España, 2006; España, 2010; España, 2013; España, 2018; España, 2020; España, 2021a; España 2021b).

The previous paragraphs make it evident that both European and national legislation about education uphold the overarching principle that schools must function as inclusive environments. These legal frameworks mandate that all students—irrespective of their individual circumstances—must be granted equitable access to learning opportunities. To foster such inclusivity, it is essential to cultivate a school culture grounded in respect for diversity and sustained by collaborative engagement among students, educators, and the broader community. Several legislative initiatives have been informed by prior consultations with diverse societal groups and specialized organizations, reflecting a participatory approach to policy development.

Legislation has also been produced targeting specific sectors that need more focused measures. Turning to a more sectoral assessment, related to different areas of inclusion, it is observed that legislation often considers **Functional Disabilities** and **Specific Learning Disorders** together. Laws have been enacted to create an institutional framework for free and compulsory pre-university public education and emphasizing the right of all individuals with disabilities or specific learning disorders to access education, advocating for their full integration into the educational system (España, 2013; España, 2020; España, 2023; Estado Português. Decreto-Lei nº 54/2018; Greek Government. Law 3699/2008). These laws align with these countries' commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the UNESCO definition of inclusive education.

To foster inclusive learning environments that respond to the diverse needs of all students, legislation has promoted the social integration of learners with disabilities or specific learning disorders into mainstream classrooms. This inclusive approach mandates collaboration between special education teachers and general education staff to deliver differentiated instruction and adapt both pedagogical materials and the learning environment. While individualized support in separate settings remains available for exceptional cases, the overarching objective is to facilitate the full inclusion of these students within general education contexts (España, 2020; Greek Government. Law 4186/2013; Greek Government. Law 4368/2016).

Regarding **Gender** issues, National Action plans have been issued to promote gender equality and equal opportunities as a fundamental human right across various sectors, namely:

- the prevention of gender-based violence;
- equal participation in the world of work and decision-making positions and leadership roles;

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- Integration of gender perspective into sectoral policies (General Secretariat for Demographic and Family Policy and Gender Equality 2021).

The need for effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms has been acknowledged, alongside the importance of addressing gender in relation to other factors such as ethnicity and migration status. This intersectional approach aims to address compounded inequalities (General Secretariat for Demographic and Family Policy and Gender Equality 2021).

To address these issues, legislation has been issued to promote gender equality and balanced representation in public administration: mandatory gender quota in public decision-making bodies (Greek Government Law 2839/2000, Article 6; Greek Government Law 3653/2008, Article 57). These principles were also applied to Teaching and Research institutions, aiming to ensure equal opportunities for all genders, especially minorities, namely in recruitment and selection processes, provided they meet the necessary qualifications (Greek Government Law 3549/2007; Greek Government. Law 3653/2008).

Another way of tackling this challenge by governments has been the elaboration of general plans, namely, to Prevent and Combat Sexual Violence and Harassment in Higher Education (Estado Português. Despacho nº 1931/2021), establishing structured prevention and response mechanisms to create a safer and more inclusive academic environment. As an example, we can mention the Office for Students 's (OFS) regulatory requirements to prevent and address harassment and sexual misconduct, commented by Lapworth (2025).

Legislation on **Migrants, and Ethnicity** is often included or articulated with measures regarding populations from disadvantaged backgrounds. As in other areas, states have produced both Action Plans and Legislation.

The National Plan to Combat Racism and Discrimination 2021-2025 (Estado Português. Resolução do Conselho de Ministros nº 101/2021) sets various strategic axes to eliminate racism and discrimination, one of them focused on Education and Culture. This section includes measures for higher-education institutions to:

- review admission and support policies to remove discriminatory barriers,
- create diversity, equality, and inclusion offices,
- implement compulsory anti-racism and accessibility training for academic staff, and publish annual progress reports.

In addition to this plan, legislation has been issued that regulates:

- special regimes and quotas for access and admission to higher education for specific groups, namely under-represented groups;
- scholarships as well as travel and housing supplements to Higher Education Students, aiming at enabling low-income and displaced students to enter and remain in higher education (Estado Português. Despacho nº 9619-A/2022; Estado Português. Decreto-Lei nº 64-A/2023, Estado Português. Portaria nº 325/2023).

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

These initiatives align with the macro-level proposals of the Finish Oho-hanke project (Oho-hanke, n.d.), which advocates for equality and accessibility plans under national legislation—such as the Finnish Equality Act—and promotes systemic change through national evaluation frameworks.

The Greek National Strategy and Action Plan for the Social Inclusion of Roma 2021–2030 outlines Greece's comprehensive approach to promoting the social inclusion and equal participation of Roma communities against the discrimination of ethnic minorities. The strategy focuses on four key pillars: education, employment, housing, and health, aiming to address systemic inequalities and improve the living conditions of Roma individuals. The strategy is grounded in principles of equality, non-discrimination, and social inclusion. Gender equality is also considered, with specific actions aimed at empowering Roma women and addressing gender-based disparities (Greek Government, 2021b).

The Greek National Strategy for the Equality of LGBTI+ People in Greece 2021–2025 outlines a comprehensive plan to promote equality, eliminate discrimination, and protect the rights of LGBTI+ individuals. The strategy addresses key areas, including legal recognition, protection from discrimination, access to healthcare, education, and public awareness. Emphasizes the need for social acceptance and inclusion of LGBTI+ individuals in all aspects of public life. (Greek Government, 2021a).

Some legislative measures have sought to bridge the gap between general principles of accessibility and the educational context. This area has also been actively addressed by targeted institutional initiatives and specific projects. Although most legislation focuses on primary and secondary education, several initiatives aim to improve access to university for persons with disabilities (Estado Português, n.d.). To ensure equity, regulatory frameworks have introduced special admission regimes and quota systems that support inclusive pathways into higher education (Estado Português. Decreto-Lei nº 64-A/2023).

Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO) is an independent hub for the UK higher education sector that provides evidence and resources to help reduce equality gaps. Funded by the Office for Students and an affiliate What Works Centre, and part of the UK Government's What Works Movement. The research hub specializes in insight and evaluation to reduce inequity in higher education with reference to mental health and wellbeing, disabled students, ethnicity, degree awarding gaps, and employment and employability (TASO, 2025). Its' recommendations provide evidence of what works to reduce equality gaps for disabled students, including: 1) recommendations to improve data collection; 2) enable reasonable adjustments; 3) improve transition to HE (by improving IAG); 4) commit to a whole institution approach to disability inclusion; 5) explicitly call out this focus in APPs; and 6) improve evaluation on disability inclusion.

Provisions for general education across all levels, and the promotion of the integration of students with disabilities into mainstream schools, ensuring appropriate support and accommodations have been developed (Greek Government. Law 4186/2013). Countries have created scholarships for higher education attendance to students with a disability

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

degree of 60% or higher, including accommodation supplements (España, 2010; España, 2020; Estado Português. Despacho nº 8584/2017; Estado Português. Despacho nº 7253/2024; Estado Português. Portaria nº 325/2023). The enhancement of physical accessibility conditions has also been considered. For public teaching institutions, the definition of campus accessibility, in line with universal-design standards; for student residences, technical standards defining the conditions for the installation and operation of accommodation for higher education students, ensuring inclusive, accessible, and quality housing for higher-education students by imposing minimum universal-design requirements and periodic inspections on all residences supported by public funds (Estado Português, n.d.; Estado Português. Decreto-Lei nº 63/2021; Estado Português. Portaria nº 331/2021; Estado Português. Portaria nº 35-A/2022; Estado Português. Portaria nº 325/2023).

In Finland, the exercise of the fundamental right to participate in and influence the development of society and its environment is embodied in the activity of the Association of Diverse Learners, which is a key player and influencer in the work on learning difficulties and the removal of barriers to learning (The Finnish Diverse Learners' Association, 2025). Also in Finland, the KOTAMO project (2021–22) recommended promoting equality and diversity, requiring actions, support for higher education institutions, and more research (Jousilahti, et al., 2022).

To understand what happens at universities, Hyrynsalmi (2025) studied the current state of Diversity and Inclusion in software engineering education and faculties in Finland. As a result, a framework to identify attitudes, approaches, challenges, and pedagogical strategies when implementing D&I themes in software engineering education was presented. This study recommends that:

- topics on D&I must be integrated more formally into the learning outcomes of university-level software engineering courses;
- this topics on D&I must be supporting and promoting diversity and inclusion awareness via education;
- there is a continuing need for diversity-aware education and training; and
- it is the responsibility of universities to ensure that future professionals have the skills and knowledge to promote D&I.

As evidenced in the preceding paragraphs, International, European, and national legislation have, in recent years, increasingly prioritized issues of inclusion, equity, and diversity. Countries have progressively aligned their legal frameworks with these principles. Dedicated bodies have advanced research and innovation in legislative evaluation. Universities have actively contributed to this dynamic—not only by applying existing legal instruments within their own educational environments, but also by conducting research aimed at improving these frameworks and fostering broader societal progress.

General Legal Frameworks considered by the University Sector (meso-level)

Universities have sought not only to comply with existing legislation but have also invested in the development of initiatives—particularly within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme—that address issues of inclusion, equity, and diversity. This encompasses individuals with disabilities and learning disorders, as well as a broad spectrum of other conditions that will be examined in subsequent chapters. As Seidel (2014) notes, demographic changes in higher education have led to increasingly heterogeneous student populations. This diversity manifests in prior knowledge, certified educational backgrounds, socio-cultural contexts, motivation, and life circumstances. Such heterogeneity presents both opportunities and challenges for institutional adaptation, requiring negotiation within teacher–student interactions to foster productive engagement.

The following paragraphs outline several examples of such efforts. The outcomes of these initiatives and projects are not binding and have no legal effect in the respective countries, but they may influence or eventually shape legislation.

An illustrative case is the Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan (2025–2026) of Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK) in Finland, which is grounded in the Finnish Constitution. The plan affirms individuals’ right to participate in and influence societal and environmental development. It emphasizes accessibility in spatial design, pedagogical approaches, and learning materials wherever feasible. Furthermore, it accounts for students’ diverse backgrounds and opportunities by integrating these considerations into teaching design and by providing targeted support measures for those in need (Tampere University of Applied Sciences, 2025).

Following Germany’s ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the voluntary commitment adopted by the German Rectors’ Conference, higher education institutions have assumed responsibility for implementing barrier-free environments. These measures aim to guarantee equitable access, uphold equal rights, and foster non-discriminatory participation in higher education, thereby promoting self-determined learning within an inclusive academic system (Bender, C., Bühner, L., & Drolshagen, B., Hrsg. 2023).

In Spain, in compliance with legal frameworks, university regulations establish dedicated support centers and implement targeted measures to prevent discrimination and promote student inclusion. These measures encompass both physical and virtual accessibility and integrate inclusive practices into teaching and learning processes (UNED, 2015; UNED, 2023; UNED, 2024).

In Portugal, the ERASMUS+ ISOLEARN Project (2014–2016) conducted a comprehensive assessment of the inclusion of blind and deaf students in higher education. Building upon previous research, the project developed a conceptual framework to advance inclusion and proposed a set of Key Performance Indicators for evaluating courses and institutional policies. These indicators encompass domains such as institutional policy and strategy, course design and delivery, learner assessment, and overall course evaluation. For Porfírio et al. (2016, p. 2), inclusive education of persons with disabilities is a question of human rights or justice. In addition to the economic arguments, "lack of adequate education

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

remains the key risk factor for poverty and exclusion of any person, whether they are disabled or nondisabled". Recent research in Portugal (Nogueira, Querido, Nunes, Ortiz & Botelho, 2023) examined progress in inclusive higher education. Findings highlight an increasing adoption of regulations aimed at supporting students with disabilities, reflecting a growing institutional commitment to accessibility and equity.

Finally, eight projects from TU Dortmund University, based on the Dortmund approach, provide universities with practical guidance for implementing needs-based counselling and support services for students with disabilities, while promoting inclusive structures consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The projects address critical transition phases—from school to university, throughout the study period, and into employment—offering practitioners a structured repository of strategies and experiences to inform institutional change and enhance participation in higher education (Bender, C., Bühner, L., & Drolshagen, B. (Hrsg.), 2023).

This section introduces the subsequent chapters, which explore multiple dimensions of inclusion, equity, and diversity. At this stage, specific micro-level questions are not addressed. In the following chapters, recommendations will be presented across macro, meso, and micro levels. At the micro level, recommendations will assume an interrogative style to facilitate self-assessment.

Recommendations on Functional Disabilities

Macro-level

Following UNESCO's pioneering reports advocating cross-sectoral collaboration (e.g. health and social services) to support learners with disabilities (UNESCO, 2017; OECD, 2023) endorses the implementation of inclusive education laws that explicitly address the needs of students with disabilities. At the same time, it encourages inter-ministerial coordination to overcome barriers related to health, mobility, and learning support. Similarly, EUCEN (n.d.) promotes intersectional approaches that position disability as a key dimension of inequality and emphasize the need for stronger alignment between national strategies, EU social rights, and lifelong learning frameworks.

In general, EC policies emphasize recognition of disability in national equity strategies and promote data collection disaggregated by disability status to inform policy (European Commission et al., 2022; EUROPEAN Commission, n.d.).

Therefore, the question addressed here is how best to support learners with disabilities at different educational levels, while considering their specific needs.

Meso-level

Legal frameworks require educational institutions to develop inclusive mission statements and codes of conduct, monitoring student participation and equity in outcomes (UNESCO, 2017), and to make significant changes at the organizational level and in the actions of their actors to eliminate barriers and promote an inclusive, equitable environment that respects the differences of people who face the loss or reduction, whether congenital or acquired, of

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

bodily functions or structures (i.e., España, 2010; España, 2017; ISOLEARN, 2017; OECD, 2023; EUCEN, n.d.; European Commission et al., 2022; European Commission, n.d.; Oho-hanke, n.d.; España, 2013; España, 2023b). Namely in Finland, the TAMK Equality Plan for 2025–2026 recommends that no one may be placed in a different position based on health or disability or any other reason relating to the person (Tampere University of Applied Sciences, 2025). The Association of Diverse Learners advocates that each learner, in their own way, needs individual and community support in their learning. Promoting learning and participation opportunities for diverse learners across all age groups and life stages is recommended (The Finnish Diverse Learners' Association, 2025).

But it is not enough to point out the path to inclusion; it is necessary to create conditions and resources for the intentions expressed in regulations and guidelines to become effective practices, enhancing the principles of universal education, equity, inclusion, personalisation, flexibility, self-determination, and minimal interference (Guerreiro, Branco, & Silva, 2025). Therefore, to foster inclusion and equal opportunities for people with disabilities in higher education institutions, specific regulations at various levels are essential (national strategies, legal framework, institutional rules). These internal documents usually consider a concrete number of elements, as pointed out in a study by Figueiredo, Coelho & Veiga (2024) that has analysed the content of Portuguese HEIs' specific regulations on accessibility (usually aimed both at functional disabilities and specific learning disorders).

Accessibility Supports include:

- Architectural accessibility (e.g., adapted classrooms, free parking);
- Communicational accessibility (e.g., alternative formats for materials);
- Methodological accessibility (e.g., assessment adjustments, extended deadlines);
- Instrumental accessibility (e.g., adapted digital tools and equipment);
- Attitudinal and digital accessibility (e.g., awareness campaigns, platform adaptations).

Academic Supports cover:

- Personalised pedagogical strategies and curriculum flexibilization;
- Support services for students and faculty (allowing class recordings, sign language interpreters, guidance sessions...).

Psychosocial Supports include:

- Scholarships, housing priority, meal subsidies;
- Psychosocial and psychopedagogical services (Figueiredo, Coelho & Veiga, 2024).

Functional disabilities require specialized support systems, since these students are entitled to additional support tailored to each person's conditions, namely assessment under conditions appropriate to their situation (UNED, 2015; Universidade de Lisboa, 2016). The measures implemented to guarantee social and school inclusion typically consider the possibility of minor curricular flexibilization as a guarantee of full accessibility and

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

integration, as well as training education professionals to address the diverse needs of students with disabilities. (Nogueira, Querido, Nunes, Ortiz & Botelho 2023). Therefore, inclusion only becomes effective when it is based on collaborative practices, with active co-operation among teachers, specific associations (e.g. sign language interpreters), families, and the rest of the educational community (Rodrigues & Baptista, 2023).

To help overcome difficulties in curriculum adaptation and teacher training for inclusive practices, greater collaboration between teachers and specialists is needed to ensure effective inclusion, namely, analysing problematic situations, and exchanging strategies and best practices used to promote inclusion (Valente, 2021).

Micro-level

The attitudes and practices of university staff and students play a critical role in promoting inclusive education, particularly for individuals with disabilities. Existing research on this topic largely relies on empirical data collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with staff and students from diverse institutions. These studies frequently identify areas requiring improvement. The following questions derive from recommendations highlighted in the reviewed literature and are intended to support self-assessment by addressing multiple dimensions of inclusion for persons with functional disabilities in higher education institutions. While most questions apply broadly to the university context, some are specifically directed at students. The thematic clusters considered are mindset, campus, administration, and teaching. Mandatory actions are indicated by the symbol ♦, whereas recommended actions are denoted by ♣.

Mindset

Does the HEI actively **combat prejudice and discrimination**? (Valente, 2021; EADTU, 2022; UNED, 2024). Does it

- ♦ implement **actions** that sensitise and raise **awareness** of the school community to the importance of inclusion?
- ♦ propose regular programs of awareness-raising activities for students through conferences, sporting events for disabled people, and the participation of “disabled-minded” companies?
- ♦ encourage involving disabled students with other students by conveying positive values, exchanging information on professional, sports, and community projects, and attitudes towards disabled people?
- ♦ make available feedback from former students, and good practice guides on the university’s internet platform?
- ♦ encourage interaction encouraged, and is the time necessary for the student to communicate respected?
- ♣ support **actions** for professional integration (e.g. workshops about guidance for inclusion) with representatives of associations of people with disabilities, students,

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

teachers, and professionals, also of the guidance of secondary education, to raise awareness about the needs and knowledge of people with disabilities for their access to university and their access to the world of work?

♣ have agreements with associations, education authorities, and high schools (transfer of information to high school students, etc.) implemented?

Does the HEI invest in continuous **training for faculty and staff** and provide **adequate training to** effectively address diversity and inclusion? E.g.: in the case of deaf students, are teachers instructed to speak clearly at a slow but natural pace, and to use hands and body to communicate? In the presence of an interpreter, does the teacher know that he/she must address the student and not the interpreter? (The interpreter's role is only to facilitate communication, not to participate) (I.P. Leiria, 2014; Valente, 2021; EADTU, 2022; Chiou, Petracou & Skourtou, 2023; Nogueira, Querido, Nunes, Ortiz & Botelho, 2023; Arráez, Antón Ros, Gómez Puerta, Valero & Jiménez López, 2025). Does it

- ◆ make teachers aware of disabilities (better understanding of visible or invisible disabilities)?
- ◆ trains lecturers to deal with different student profiles (e.g., how to adapt their behaviour and communication, avoiding sentimental remarks on disabilities or expressing surprise when an impaired student performs everyday tasks), and apply successful inclusive strategies?
- ◆ promote faculty training that includes strategies to make **digital materials and resources accessible** to different student profiles?
- ◆ promote **active methodologies**, relying on project-based learning, group work, and personalised teaching to meet the needs of all students? (Valente, 2021).

Does the HEI have a **buddy system | volunteer program** where a disabled student can be guided by another peer who can help him in certain situations? Volunteers can provide support in learning, in the use of virtual tools, in administrative actions, in the preparation of works and activities, in participation in extracurricular activities, or in the development of exams (I.P. Leiria, 2014; UNED, 2015; Universidade de Coimbra, 2020; EADTU, 2022; Arboleda Toro, Gil Ramírez, Osorno Quiceno, Ramírez Bedoya & Arcila Parra, 2025).

- ◆ is the support of disabled people by their peers encouraged, through the support of a **mentor** who helps with study materials, thus providing additional academic support?
- ♣ is there an organised structure | volunteer program that attributes peers to disabled students?

Campus

Has the HEI improved and/or adapted physical **premises and infrastructures** to comply with the standards on accessibility, mobility, comfort, and universal design? (I.P. Leiria, 2014; Universidade de Lisboa, 2016; ESHTE, 2019 Section VI; Universidade de Coimbra, 2020;

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

España, 2020; Estado Português. Decreto-Lei nº 63/2021; Estado Português. Portaria nº 331/2021; Valente, 2021; Nogueira, Querido, Nunes, Ortiz & Botelho, 2023; EADTU, 2022)

- ◆ are the **buildings** on the **campus** in line with universal-design standards of accessibility?
- ◆ sign-posting and easy access to facilities have been ensured? E.g: lifts with controls equipped with Braille information; access ramps; special parking access badges | reserved parking spaces; information desks at wheelchair level; loan of small electric motorized vehicles, if needed; ergonomic cushions; dedicated rest rooms...
- ◆ Does **classroom allocation** consider accessibility needs for staff or students with disabilities? Are there classrooms with adapted furniture?
- ◆ when justified, are designated seating reserved for students with disabilities, or can they choose where to sit?
- ◆ If necessary, is the presence of a third party, including an assistance animal, accepted?
- ◆ if **students' residences** exist, are there fully accessible rooms and areas? Common areas and study rooms are barrier-free? Do they include tactile signage, step-free routes, and assistive technology in study rooms?
- ◆ are students with disabilities given priority in accommodation allocation?

Does the Institution ensure that **digital systems and platforms** are accessible to all students? (Universidade de Lisboa, 2016; ESHTe, 2019 Section VI; Universidade de Coimbra, 2020; Nogueira, Querido, Nunes, Ortiz & Botelho, 2023; Chiou, Petracou & Skourtou, 2023)

- ◆ are **technological resources and assistive technologies available** for teaching staff and/or students to use to mitigate the limitations faced by people with impairments?
- ◆ these aid/support products include devices, equipment, instruments, technologies, and software to prevent, compensate, monitor, alleviate, or neutralize any impairment, activity limitation, and restriction in participation in the learning process and full integration into academic, social, and cultural life?
- ♣ these devices are available only at the institution, or is there a loan system or a dedicated budget to help individuals provide their own resources?

For more detailed information on this subject, see **Part II** below.

Administration

Has the HEI produced **internal institutional policies** to assist students with disabilities? (I.P. Leiria 2014; UNED, 2015; Universidade de Lisboa, 2016; ISOLEARN, 2017; Valente, 2021; EADTU, 2022)

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- ◆ Has it developed **inclusion plans** and guaranteed adequate resources and continuous monitoring of students?
- ◆ Is there a **designated service** that grants the status, welcomes, supports, and monitors students with disabilities?
- ◆ Is there a **specialised service** responsible to varying degrees for reasonable adjustments and services needed by people with disabilities? This technical staff includes pedagogical, psychological, accessibility, and communicational competences?

At the beginning of their studies, are students **informed** about the possibility of having individual arrangements and given a document describing the recommendations for individual arrangements? (EADTU, 2022).

- ◆ When welcoming disabled people, are they informed about the accessibility of rooms, digital accessibility, teaching schedules, etc.?
- ♣ Are there personalized procedures and contacts for registration?

Does the HEI consider adequate mechanisms of **information and confidentiality**? (I.P. Leiria, 2014; ESHTe, 2019 Section VI).

- ◆ Does the institution make it clear where and how a student can declare his/her disability? Is the documentation that must be presented detailed in this information?
- ◆ Are the students encouraged to declare their condition at the time of enrolment (e.g., complete a form and submit documentary evidence that specifies the type of disability and its severity)?
- ◆ If a student wishes to keep his/her condition confidential, is this wish respected?
- ♣ Are the students encouraged to declare their condition anytime?

Does the HEI have a **policy of quotas and priorities**? (Universidade de Lisboa, 2016; ESHTe, 2019 Section VI; Universidade de Coimbra, 2020).

- ◆ Are students with disabilities granted priority in any registration, enrolment, theoretical-practical class shifts, and scheduling processes?
- ◆ Depending on the needs, is priority service in cafeterias considered for any faculty member with disabilities?
- ◆ Do faculty members support students with disabilities by providing guidance and individualized tutorial support hours and follow-up?
- ♣ In the allocation of internship placements, are students' impairments considered a priority criterion in the selection process?

Is **financial support** a reality? (ISOLEARN, 2017; Universidade de Lisboa, 2016; EADTU, 2022; UNED, 2024)

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- ◆ Does the institution have a clear **scholarship policy** that contemplates students with disabilities?
- ◆ Is clear **information** on these opportunities provided, namely about governmental help to encourage students who have their disability recognised?
- ◆ Does the HEI encourage sponsorship actions by professionals (e.g. scholarships to be able to finance extracurricular internships in companies for people with disabilities)?
- ♣ May students with disabilities receive scholarships with additional financial support?
- ♣ Can the university help students by providing them with assistive technology (Digital pens; Magnifying glasses; Large letter keyboards; Line Magnifiers; Supply of a voice recognition software - e.g. Dragon...)?

Teaching

Does the HEI establish **special attendance regimes** to ensure that students with disabilities can attend courses or study cycles and achieve full integration into academic, social, sport, and cultural life, and succeed in their learning endeavours? (Universidade de Lisboa, 2016; ESHTe, 2019 Section VI).

Does the HEI enhance the promotion of **alternative study modes**, with flexible methodologies, collaborative teaching, and curriculum adaptation? (I.P. Leiria, 2014; Valente, 2021; Barbosa, Oliveira & Teixeira, 2023; Arboleda Toro, Gil Ramírez, Osorno Quiceno, Ramírez Bedoya & Arcila Parra, 2025; Guerreiro, Branco, & Silva, 2025).

- ◆ Can methodologies and pedagogical strategies be diversified? E.g.: are deaf students given extra time to process information (particularly when dealing with new or important concepts)? Are low vision students given the time they need to complete tasks that require greater visual effort, such as reading?
- ◆ Is it possible to design alternative educational pathways?
- ♣ Is the use of laptops with headphones allowed, as this makes note-taking more efficient?
- ♣ Does the institution encourage co-teaching practices between teachers and multidisciplinary teams (therapists and other specialists) to better support students with specific educational needs?

Does the HEI allow or provide for alternative **study materials in formats adapted** to the individual needs of students' differences? (I.P. Leiria 2014; Universidade de Lisboa, 2016; ESHTe, 2019 Section VI; Universidade de Coimbra, 2020; Valente, 2021; EADTU, 2022; Barbosa, Oliveira & Teixeira 2023; Guerreiro, Branco & Silva 2025; UNED, 2024).

- ◆ Has the institution adopted Universal Design for Learning?
- ◆ Are students informed in good time about available content in alternative formats and digitalization and conversion centers?

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- ◆ Are students with specific accessibility needs permitted to **audio-record** lectures, provided the recordings are used exclusively for academic purposes? Or does the HEI support peer-note-taking or offer note-taking support, and class materials are provided in advance?
- ◆ For deaf students, are oral presentations complemented with images, graphics, diagrams, shapes, colours, etc.?
- ◆ Does the possibility of translating learning materials into Braille exist? Audiobooks instead of textbooks, especially for maths or statistics, exist? Since metaphorical language, idiomatic phrases, and jokes can be confusing for deaf people, particularly if they are not related to the context of the subject being discussed, is their use avoided, or, if used, is their objective meaning explained?
- ◆ Do audiovisual materials have subtitles?
- ◆ Is there the possibility of extended loan periods for course book loans?
- ♣ Does the HEI provide sign language interpreting services that facilitate communication in educational situations?

How flexible is **assessment**? Do assessment processes consider different rhythms and ways of learning, guaranteeing fairness? (I.P. Leiria, 2014; UNED, 2015; Universidade de Lisboa, 2016;ESHTE, 2019 Section VI; Universidade de Coimbra, 2020; Valente 2021; EADTU, 2022; Guerreiro, Branco, & Silva, 2025).

- ◆ Can individual exam arrangements be provided? Are adjustments in the **spaces** of realization of exams and in their **duration** possible? Namely: taking examinations in a different location or in a dedicated room; reasonable accommodations (ergonomic cushions; dedicated rest rooms); authorization to take a break for tests lasting more than an hour and a half; additional time during the exam session and/or when returning written tasks; transmission of subjects in an adapted format (A3 format, line spacing, bold font, etc.); permission to type instead of handwriting; support of personal assistant | assistance of a sign language interpreter (even if remote) or a secretary who reads scripts; allow access to various personal aids or (computer) programs; use of a laptop computer that has been emptied; Impunity for spelling or grammatical errors.
- ◆ Can assessment instruments be diversified? Among possible adjustments are the presentation of information (e.g., font size) or technological support (paper, digital, Braille, audio) considered?
- ◆ In the case of students who have visual impairments or motor disabilities that significantly hinder or prevent writing, can written assessments be replaced with oral examinations?
- ◆ For students who are deaf, can oral assessments be substituted with appropriately adapted written assessments?

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- ◆ Upon request, and when justified, are students with impairments allowed to do exams in special assessment periods?
- ◆ Can students with repeated hospitalizations or long-term absences for treatment complete assessments on alternative dates?

Recommendations on Specific Learning Disorders

Macro-Level

OECD (2023), and the European Commission (European Commission et al., 2022; European Commission, n.d.) support the development, at a national level, of laws and initiatives to promote inclusive education and recognize neurodiversity and SLDs, while encourages data collection on learning needs beyond visible disabilities, and the increase of inter-ministerial collaboration (education, health, social services) to address SLDs holistically.

UNESCO (2017) advocates for systemic inclusion of all learners, including those with SLDs, and promotes flexibility in curricula and assessment to accommodate diverse learning profiles.

While most reports do not list specific disorders, the following are commonly implied under the umbrella of SLDs:

- dyslexia (reading difficulties);
- dyscalculia (math-related difficulties);
- dysgraphia (writing difficulties);
- ADHD (attention and executive function challenges);
- nonverbal learning disorders (spatial and social processing).

These are typically addressed through recommendations for:

- Inclusive assessment;
- assistive technology;
- multimodal instruction;
- individualized support plans.

The central question at this stage is: How can education systems effectively recognize and value diverse abilities and learning approaches in order to prevent discrimination and foster diversity?

Meso-level

Institutional policies must encourage interdisciplinary collaboration to support students with diverse cognitive profiles as well as the establishment of support services tailored to individual learning needs (ISOLEARN, 2017).

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

Institutions should adopt inclusive admission policies that ensure equitable access for students with specific learning disorders (SLDs) and develop diversity action plans that explicitly incorporate neurodiversity (OECD, 2023). Furthermore, accessibility should be embedded within the design of teaching and learning processes (Oho-hanke, n.d.), supported by institutional policies that promote teachers' proactivity and competence in addressing SLDs (European Commission, n.d.; European Commission et al., 2022). These initiatives should encompass the following measures:

- Development of diversity action plans that include neurodiversity (OECD, 2023);
- Encouragement of staff training in inclusive pedagogy and universal design for learning (UDL) (EC, n.d.; EC et al., 2022; UCL Teaching and Learning, 2020; ISOLEARN, 2017; Oho-hanke, n.d.);

Universities must implement inclusion policies that eliminate barriers to the full success and participation of every student in academic, social, sports, and cultural life (OECD, 2023; European Commission, n.d.). Neurological disabilities, psychological conditions, and behavioural or emotional disorders present specific difficulties that, in conjunction with environmental factors, can limit or hinder students' learning activities and involvement in the academic context on equal terms with other students. Nevertheless, school is fundamental for interpersonal development; therefore, it must offer support for students with Specific Learning Disorders and respond to specific needs without classifying students (Portuguese Government. Decreto-Lei nº 54/2018; Guerreiro, Branco & Silva, 2025). Also, students with long-term or permanent illnesses requiring therapeutic measures that affect their academic performance can be considered in this chapter due not only to the effect of medication, but also because psychological problems such as depression often coexist.

Most HEIs have as a main objective to foster a university for all by eliminating barriers to learning, implementing student inclusion strategies, promoting student well-being and individual success, monitoring academic trajectories, and supporting transitions to the world of work, while addressing academic failure and dropout. (Universidade do Minho, 2021; Valente 2021). To meet this aim, HEIs implement various strategies directed at different dimensions of the student's university experience, namely regarding admission, learning processes, and society. In the specific case of the societal dimension, and compliance with general legislation, Universities can implement support measures within the framework of the Social Support Fund, in coordination with the Social Action Services, and participate in the programme for the allocation of places to students from priority educational intervention areas (Universidade do Minho, 2021).

A student is entitled to receive tailored support and individualized study arrangements when specific learning difficulties, illness, or disability affect academic performance. In Finland, the TAMK Equality Plan (2025–2026) emphasizes the need to consider students' diverse backgrounds and circumstances in teaching design and in the provision of support measures. Peer tutors offer guidance to university and exchange students, while teacher educators assist groups in addressing various challenges. Study counsellors provide targeted support when necessary and collaborate with students to develop individualized study

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

plans, particularly when personalized pathways in programming or content are required. Additionally, the special support lecturer evaluates pedagogical needs and designs appropriate accommodations in consultation with the student (Tampere University of Applied Sciences, 2025).

This approach to student engagement in addressing their own learning challenges reflects the principles advocated by the Association of Diverse Learners, which asserts that all individuals have the right to learn and succeed in everyday life, education, and work. Learning barriers are systematically identified and mitigated within society. In addition to institutional plans and activities, students are encouraged to develop personalized strategies to overcome obstacles to learning (The Finnish Diverse Learners' Association, 2025). Cortes Coss (2024) provides a series of case studies on intellectual disabilities, particularly Down syndrome, demonstrating that inclusive education can be achieved through the collaborative efforts of educators, students, families, and communities across different educational levels.

Regarding assessment, Nieminen (2022) adopts a critical, socio-political approach to inclusive assessment, considering assessment in its broader context of academic ableism to answer the question: How could assessment consider student diversity inclusively? The study clarifies that in higher education, two approaches are used: the common individual assessment accommodations and inclusive assessment design. "Assessment for Inclusion" (Afi) refers to the purpose of assessment as fostering radical inclusion by acknowledging marginalized students as fully included and agentic members of higher education communities. Afi draws reflexively on both individual accommodations and inclusive assessment design. Afi is a critical and resistive approach to assessment: it recognizes the prevalent socio-cultural, historical, and political positioning of marginalized students in assessment and, if needed, explicitly disrupts such positioning by promoting student agency. Afi builds on a collective understanding of agency: it cannot be conducted for students but always with them (Nieminen, 2022).

UCL (2020) recommends departmental reviews of assessment practices to ensure fairness for students with SLDs and encourages flexible teaching methods and alternative assessments. At the same time, institutions should integrate accessibility into teaching and learning design while promoting peer support and group work that accommodates different learning styles (OHO-hanke, n.d.). Especially, Universal Design is recommended to promote quality and inclusive education, which attends to and respects individual differences within the teaching-learning process (Cortés Díaz, Ferreira Villa, & Arias Gago, 2021).

Micro-level

Research has extensively explored the challenges associated with implementing inclusive education, identifying effective practices and providing targeted recommendations. The questions presented below derive from these recommendations and are intended to support self-assessment across multiple dimensions of inclusion for faculty and students with specific learning disorders in higher education. Several items overlap with issues discussed in the previous chapter, as measures that benefit individuals with disabilities

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

often also support students with learning disorders. The thematic clusters addressed include mindset, campus, administration, and teaching. Mandatory actions are marked with the symbol ♦, whereas recommended actions are indicated by ♣.

Mindset

Does the HEI actively **combat prejudice and discrimination** (awareness-raising activities and support actions)? See the development of this item in the previous chapter.

- ♦ Does the HEI enhance the involvement of staff and other students, having previously provided them with guidance and training on inclusion and difference? (Cortés Díaz, Ferreira Villa, & Arias Gago, 2021; Valente, 2021; Loureiro & Neves, 2023; Mumbardó-Adam, Sala-Bars, Adam-Alcócer, Ahufinger & Andrés-Gárriz, 2024; de la Fuente-González, Menéndez Álvarez-Hevia, & Rodríguez-Martín, 2025; González-Ramírez, Alba-Pastor, Galindo-Domínguez, & García-Hernández, 2025; Tampere University of Applied Sciences, 2025).
- ♦ Is human support a reality? Do teachers and staff have a friendly and respectful attitude towards individuals with specific learning disorders (e.g. avoid unconstructive comments that frustrate; avoid being condescending or protective; in situations of agitation or aggression, do not respond aggressively and wait or try to calm the student)?

Does the University encourage the involvement of the **community** in the educational process? (Valente, 2021; Arboleda Toro, Gil Ramírez, Osorno Quiceno, Ramírez Bedoya & Arcila Parra, 2025).

- ♦ Does the HEI practice holistic approaches, accepting the participation of families, social workers, and therapists?
- ♣ Does the HEI enhance increased cooperation with various experts, institutions, and associations that can in any way contribute to more successful work with students with specific learning disorders?

Campus

Has the HEI improved and/or adapted physical **premises and infrastructures** to comply with the standards on accessibility and universal design? (I.P. Leiria, 2014; Universidade de Lisboa, 2016; ESHTe, 2019 Section VI; Universidade de Coimbra, 2020; España, 2020; Estado Português. Decreto-Lei nº 63/2021; Estado Português. Portaria nº 331/2021; Valente, 2021; Nogueira, Querido, Nunes, Ortiz & Botelho, 2023; EADTU, 2022)

- ♦ are the **buildings** on the **campus** in line with universal-design standards of accessibility?
- ♦ sign-posting and easy access to facilities have been ensured?
- ♦ when justified, are designated seating reserved for students with specific learning disorders, or can they choose where to sit?

Administration

Has the HEI produced **internal institutional policies**, an **inclusion plan**, and determined a **designated service** to attend to students with Specific Learning Disorders (as indicated in the previous chapter regarding individuals with disabilities)?

Likewise, for what concerns the **scholarships** and specific information and welcoming procedures?

Is there affordable and quality career counselling before entering the university? Do students receive appropriate support and relevant **information** when choosing a study program? (EADTU, 2022).

- ◆ Are students provided with enough information for independent decision-making in their studies?
- ◆ Is vocational or career counselling available? (especially before enrolment)?
- ◆ Are the students provided with a list of steps for the process of obtaining special status and the possibilities of adjustments and support?
- ◆ Is there a well-established procedure for obtaining status at the university and faculty level?

Considering that some students do not want to **expose** themselves and reveal their problems, does the HEI provide **adequate mechanisms for information and confidentiality**? (I.P. Leiria, 2014; ESHTe, 2019 Section VI).

- ◆ Are the students encouraged to declare their condition at the time of enrolment (e.g., complete a form and submit documentary evidence that specifies the degree of functionality)?
- ◆ If a student wishes to keep his/her condition confidential, is this respected?
- ♣ Are the students encouraged to declare their condition anytime?

Does the HEI have mechanisms to tackle the **challenges of communication** between students and teachers? (EADTU, 2022; The Finnish Diverse Learners' Association, 2025).

- ◆ Are suggestions about the possible adjustments formed alongside the students according to their needs?
- ◆ Is the student empowered to negotiate with each of the teachers for the adjustments he/she needs? Or, if adequate, can he/she have a single contact person in the institution and does not have to explain her/his neurodivergences to various persons?
- ◆ Regarding the teacher or department that analyses the situation proposes adjustments, do they inform other colleagues about the student, monitor the students' progress, etc., and can students turn to them when faced with a problem (e.g. when the appropriate adjustments are not made)?

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- ♣ Is a tutor teacher assigned to each student with specific learning disorders, and together do they formulate a proposal for adjustments to the study process?
- ♣ Does this tutor help with integrating into the academic community of teachers and students, planning and organizing their studies, gathering study material, organizing study groups, etc.?

Does the HEI organize **additional training for students** to develop learning strategies (e.g., enhancing self-regulated learning), interpersonal skills, and empower students with specific learning disorders? (EADTU, 2022).

- ◆ Is there skills support (planning, scheduling, study habits), study motivation issues, namely procrastination and study anxiety (tests, writer's block, public speaking), as well as life skills and personal development (difficulties with stress, anxiety, depression, learning difficulties, accessibility issues, bullying and harassment, and student drug and alcohol abuse) prevention?

In the specific case of **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**, is **Peer-Mediated Intervention** implemented as an effective tool for the inclusion of students by promoting social and academic skills? (Loureiro & Neves 2023; Acuña, Piñeiro, Romero, Rojas & Acuña, 2025).

- ◆ Does it implement interaction environments and promote active participation, without imposing it?
- ♣ Does the HEI stimulate the creation of peer networks with carefully selected peers (empathy, common interests)?

Teaching

Does the HEI continuously invest in **faculty and staff training** and the development of inclusive pedagogical practices? (I.P. Leiria, 2014; EADTU, 2022; The Finnish Diverse Learners' Association, 2025; Guerreiro, Branco & Silva 2025)

- ◆ Are teachers informed about the characteristics of students and possible adjustments that could be made to the study process?
- ◆ Does the HEI organise training for teacher tutors and student tutors and evaluate their work in the form of acknowledged pedagogical hours for teachers or credit points for students?

How **flexible are the teaching practices**? Additional learning support measures are considered? (I.P. Leiria, 2014; Valente, 2021; Loureiro & Neves, 2023; Guerreiro, Branco & Silva 2025).

- ◆ Is the adaptation of content, structures, and strategies to guarantee access and success for all students, regardless of their specific needs, a common practice?
- ◆ Is continuous evaluation and adaptation of strategies and outcomes regularly done?

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- ◆ In the case of **dyslexic** students, is content valued over form, and is selective and positive feedback provided?
- ◆ In the case of students with **Asperger syndrome**, are alternative forms of presentation considered if the student is unable to give oral presentations?
- ◆ In the case of **gifted students**, do the programmes include the possibility of developing more in-depth studies by providing complementary bibliography and spaces for in-depth discussion in order to prevent monotony, disillusionment, and dropping out?

Regarding the **design of teaching materials**, is universal design currently used? (I.P. Leiria, 2014; EADTU, 2022; de la Fuente-González, Menéndez Álvarez-Hevia, & Rodríguez-Martín, 2025)

- ◆ Are alternative study materials provided? Does the HEI provide study materials in accessible formats, or does it have computers equipped with specific software (e.g. WindowsEyes screen readers; Voiceover; Jaws...), or does it have protocols with specialized libraries that have them?
- ◆ Are alternative approaches to print used (e.g., audiobooks, audiovisual media, text-to-speech/speech-to-text software)?
- ◆ Are accessible pre-formatted templates provided to teachers for all teaching materials, as well as guidelines to produce accessible learning materials?
- ◆ Do the learning materials provided have a strong contrast between the background and letters?
- ◆ Is information written in matte paper surface, and not on a graphic background?
- ◆ Is it aligned left only?
- ◆ Are the illustrations | photos above or below the text? Is the digitalization of learning materials adequate (e.g. handouts that allow personalized adaptation of size/shape/colour of letters...)?

Regarding the **contents of teaching materials**, is the information concise? Are sentences short (a maximum of 18 words per sentence)? Is the content linguistically simplified (short, simple sentences)? Are instructions clear (as few long sentences as possible)? (I.P. Leiria, 2014; EADTU, 2022).

Regarding the **study process**, are alternative study modes accepted? (I.P. Leiria 2014; EADTU, 2022).

- ◆ When possible, are bibliographic information, study materials, abstracts, and Power-point presentations provided in advance so that the student can simply add notes during the lecture?
- ◆ Is it possible to record lectures if recordings are not otherwise available?

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- ◆ Does the learning unit/lecture present a clear structure, including the announcement of objectives, important concepts and contents, clear explanation, clarification of new terms and finally a summary of key points?
- ◆ Are Power-point presentations not overloaded with text?
- ◆ Are graphics, diagrams, and mind maps completed with detailed explanations to avoid reading difficulties?
- ◆ Is the use of assistive technology - ICT enabled (e.g. laptops, tablets, readers, smart pens)?
- ◆ In order to help concentration, is the use of noise cancellation headphones; fidget toys and sunglasses allowed?
- ◆ Is the borrowing of materials for longer periods and assistance in finding study literature in the library enabled?
- ◆ In the case of dyslexics, are they taught how to read “strategically”, to select information, and set goals for reading?

Regarding the **completion of study obligations and assessment**, are the specificities of everyone considered? (I.P. Leiria, 2014; EADTU, 2022; Nieminen, 2022)

- ◆ Are students granted time extensions for submitting seminar papers, research reports, etc., and preparing for the exam, for which the student agrees with the professor in advance?
- ◆ Are the students granted extended time for taking the written exam, and are they allowed enough time to think about the answer in the oral exam as well?
- ◆ If suited, can the students take an oral exam instead of a written exam?
- ◆ Can a separate, quiet space be provided to these students to do the exams?
- ◆ If necessary, is it possible to use a computer to take written exams?
- ◆ If possible, is the use of calculators, tables, and/or pre-agreed formulas allowed?
- ◆ In the assignment | exam correction, are font, spelling, grammatical structures, word order, and punctuation not assessed?
- ◆ Are students held constructively responsible for their own studies?
- ♣ Are students assisted with finding a tutor who can help them with the organization and distribution of study obligations?

Recommendations on Migrants and Ethnicity

Macro Level

OECD (2023) advises countries to adopt inclusive education laws that explicitly prohibit discrimination based on ethnicity or migration status, and promote inter-ministerial coordination to address the social determinants of exclusion for migrant and ethnic minority students.

European policies emphasize the need for national equity strategies that include ethnic minorities and migrants, and that promote lifelong learning pathways and recognition of prior learning for migrants (European Commission et al., 2022; European Commission, n.d.).

The EUCEN SMILE (EUCEN, n.d.) project focuses explicitly on migrant background as one of three core dimensions of inequality, recommending the alignment of national strategies with the European Pillar of Social Rights and Erasmus+ inclusion priorities, while advocating for intersectional approaches that consider ethnicity, migration, and socio-economic status together.

Also considered is the need for specialised support and multidisciplinary teams to ensure equal access to education for all (Governo Português. Ministério da Educação, 2022). Governmental policy recommendations enhance the implementation of programs to facilitate access to higher education and the integration of asylum seekers and refugees. These programs provide a diverse range of support tools such as language courses, social support (housing, transportation, scholarships, etc.), orientation, sponsorship, and mentoring of refugee students. Recommendations on welcoming migrants into national education systems are also often provided, with a focus on building a more inclusive school and promoting the integration of migrant students. The strengthening of intercultural education, promoting a school culture that values diversity, combating racism and discrimination, providing language support, and mentoring and tutoring programmes to facilitate school integration is usually advocated (España, 2010; EADTU, 2022; Governo Português. Ministério da Educação, 2022; España, 2023; Guerreiro, Branco & Silva, 2025).

This point will therefore question how universities can effectively respond and contribute to promoting the harmonious integration of ethnic minorities and migrants?

Meso-level

Equity, inclusion, and institutional responsibility constitute fundamental principles of democratic higher education. Consequently, higher education systems must ensure inclusivity and accessibility for migrants and refugees, thereby promoting equal opportunities. At the European level, various initiatives and funding programs have been implemented—particularly in countries such as Greece—to advance refugee inclusion within universities. However, these efforts, whether academic, social, or policy-oriented, often remain fragmented and project-based, largely dependent on EU funding. There is an urgent need for a coherent national policy framework capable of systematically supporting refugee students' access to higher education, academic integration, and professional inclusion (Vasilopoulos & Ioannidi 2020).

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

In the UK, the Office for Students (OFS, 2025) delineates strategies to enhance access, success, and progression for underrepresented student groups, explicitly addressing issues of intersectionality. Similarly, TASO (2022) highlights the growing commitment within British higher education to tackle inequalities and the degree-awarding gap between Black, Asian, and minority ethnic students and their White counterparts.

In Finland, Souto and Lappalainen (2024) stated the general principles of whiteness and radicalization to understand 'How does whiteness “matter” in Finnish university education?'. Authors conclude that "the norm of whiteness is manifested both in the official and informal university spaces, thus operating a racialized touchstone for belonging," and "the practices of white ignorance among other students and teaching staff prevent the recognition and dismantling of racialized power relations," which implies "a critical reflection and dismantling of normative whiteness within the Academy."

As a result of geographical location, a history of relatively strict migration policies, and limited prospects in the world of work, Finland has retained a predominantly white ethnic composition longer than its Nordic neighbours. For university education to become more racially inclusive and develop its decolonial practices and epistemologies, acknowledging that the University setting is not racially neutral is the first step. Race matters in establishing and perpetuating the structures of white dominance in the Academy. The TAMK Equality Plan for 2025–2026 recommends that no one may be placed in a different position without acceptable grounds on the basis of origin (Tampere University of Applied Sciences, 2025).

The KOTAMO project (2021–22) proposes measures to address non-discrimination and diversity among teaching and research staff in Finnish higher education institutions. The study concluded that

- higher education institutions still have a great deal of work to do in promoting gender equality and ethnic diversity;
- they need support in this work;
- the implementation of equality and non-discrimination plans is inadequate;
- the number of women and ethnic minorities at the highest career stages in universities is still low;
- non-transparent recruitment processes persist; and
- career development among ethnic minorities is lower.

These results are explained by the discrimination experienced by these minorities and the non-inclusive working culture (Jousilahti, et al., 2022). In this sense, Jousilahti et al. (2022) clarify that "the Ministry of Education and Culture will convene, fund, and regularly monitor the results of an independent, cross-sectoral cooperation group to support equality work in higher education institutions".

Refugee students are part of broader ethnic and migrant inclusion frameworks. Therefore, migrant backgrounds, ethnic and cultural diversity must be considered when addressing this issue (Vasilopoulos & Ioannidi, 2020).

Micro-level

Multiple initiatives are embedded within policy frameworks, institutional commitments, pedagogical practices, and support mechanisms (Fragkou & Gkofa, 2021). A fundamental initial step involves ensuring legal compliance. For instance, in Portugal, HEIs are required to: (1) revise admission and support policies to eliminate discriminatory barriers; (2) establish offices dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion; (3) implement mandatory anti-racism and accessibility training for academic staff; and (4) publish annual reports detailing progress on DEI measures (Estado Português. Resolução do Conselho de Ministros nº 101/2021).

Studies have been produced based on interviews (namely, considering refugee students' experiences - Fragkou & Gkofa, 2021) and on document analysis. Various recommendations have been issued on existing barriers and how to overcome them. Based on these studies, every HEI must assess its degree of integration, asking itself the following questions, based on recommendations highlighted in the reviewed literature. These items apply broadly to the university context, not only to students. The thematic clusters considered are mindset, administration, and teaching. Mandatory actions are indicated by the symbol ♦, whereas recommended actions are denoted by ♣.

Mindset

Are campuses safe and inclusive for all students and staff? Harassment, bullying, and discrimination should not be allowed under any circumstances. (HEFCW, 2020; MEDR, 2025; EADTU, 2022; Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2024; Universities UK, 2025).

- ♦ Does the HEI have a formal **Inclusion and Equality Strategy or Plan** describing the policies, practices, and ethics? Does it address educational inequalities linked to ethnicity and support data monitoring on ethnicity, encouraging targeted actions?
- ♦ Has the HEI defined a **Code of Conduct** that applies to all staff, students, and visitors, that considers the combat of harassment and discrimination?
- ♦ Does the HEI implement inclusive institutional policies and practices?

Is the lack of **intercultural awareness** a concern, and have measures been taken to overcome it? (Fragkou & Gkofa, 2021; Tampere University of Applied Sciences, 2025).

- ♣ Does the HEI implement inclusive practices, such as bridging programs and peer mentoring?
- ♣ Are counsellors provided to support international students with concrete help and advice (e.g., on housing and accommodation issues, job search, tax issues, and finding social networks) to adapt to the country's culture and society?

Does the HEI implement comprehensive **training programs** for faculty (teachers and staff) to enhance cultural and intercultural competence and inclusivity, as well as institutional

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

policies that support diverse student populations? (Vasilopoulos & Ioannidi, 2020; Jousilahti, et al., 2022; EADTU, 2022; Governo Português. Ministério da Educação 2022; Chiou, Petracou & Skourtou, 2023; Araújo, 2024).

- ◆ Do institutional teacher training programs focus on building inclusive contexts, namely the social and academic integration of refugee students?
- ◆ Is the use of digital resources proposed as pedagogical tools to facilitate the learning and inclusion of migrant students, namely for the upgrading of competences?

Is **migrant empowerment** promoted, especially among youth and women, in projects for social integration? (EADTU, 2022).

- ◆ To facilitate the identification of successful patterns of integration which have the potential to be easily scaled up, are **role models** promoted for migrants, either as successful graduates or members of staff?

Does the HEI engage in or integrate projects that create **ties with society**? (Silva 2011; EADTU, 2022).

- ◆ Is multi-cultural research fostered?
- ♣ Are partnerships with governments, non-governmental organisations, and local communities developed to work towards quality education for the most vulnerable youth?
- ♣ Have communication channels been established between the university and specific communities to create bridges of cooperation and dialogue (such as the 'Empathy Project')?
- ♣ Is the University involved in the promotion of multi-stakeholder collaboration? Does it try to make stakeholders and society aware of the potential of cultural differences?

Administration

Since the recognition of migrants' qualifications (prior learning and skills) is often slow and ineffective, does the HEI reduce **bureaucratic** rigidity and limited institutional flexibility for Migrant and disadvantaged ethnic students? (Espana, 2010; Vasilopoulos & Ioannidi, 2020; Fragkou & Gkofa, 2021; EADTU, 2022; Espana, 2023).

- ◆ Are there multidisciplinary teams prepared to welcome and support multicultural students?
- ◆ **Prior learning** is duly recognised?
- ◆ Are students informed about available **scholarships and grants**?

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

Teaching

Do the HEIs **diversify curricula** considering anti-racism? (Silva, 2011; Governo Português. Ministério da Educação, 2022; EADTU, 2022; TASO, 2022; Chiou, Petracou & Skourtou, 2023; Araújo, 2024; Oliveira, 2024).

- ◆ Are educational materials inclusive (or culture-neutral)?
- ◆ Is the recognition of cultural diversity and the defence of practices that attend to migrant students and ethnic minorities enhanced?
- ◆ Do curricula promote an education that values and respects cultural diversity and diverse backgrounds so that students feel respected and integrated?
- ◆ Are there awareness-raising programmes that promote cultural diversity and combat stereotypes and prejudices towards migrants and other local communities, like Roma, and that actively involve those communities, ensuring the integrity of their ideologies and making space for them to be heard and, where possible, for there to be an echo between who they are, what they study and what they seek to achieve?
- ◆ Is equal participation in collaborative environments encouraged, regardless of ethnic or cultural origin?
- ◆ Are students' life experiences and cultural knowledge valued?
- ◆ Do pedagogical practices that combat prejudice and discrimination include online interactions?

Since the lack of knowledge of the host country's language is a significant barrier, does the HEI provide the possibility of **language support** and/or learning of the country's language? (Fragkou & Gkofa, 2021-, Governo Português. Ministério da Educação, 2022; EADTU, 2022; Tampere University of Applied Sciences, 2025).

- ◆ Does the HEI provide reception guides in several languages, promoting diversity at school?
- ♣ Does the HEI provide specially designed education, training, and re-skilling opportunities for migrants and refugees, namely MOOCs and Free Digital Learning?.

Recommendations on Gender

Macro-level

Promoting gender-sensitive educational policies that mitigate disparities in access, participation, and outcomes, alongside inter-ministerial coordination to combat gender-based exclusion—particularly in leadership roles and STEM disciplines—constitutes a central recommendation of the OECD (2023) on gender equality. Similarly, EUCEN SMILE (EUCEN, n.d.) identifies women's representation in leadership as one of its three core dimensions of inequality, advocating for national strategies to enhance female participation in academic and administrative leadership, in alignment with EU gender equality frameworks and the

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

European Pillar of Social Rights (European Commission et al., 2022). Accordingly, the European Commission encourages the formulation of national equity strategies to address gender segregation across study fields and career trajectories.

This section aims to propose strategies through which universities can address gender-based segregation and simultaneously foster broader societal representation across all levels.

Meso-level

Policy overview studies have focused on the promotion of gender equality across various sectors (namely, by the European Institute for Gender Equality, 2020). Legislation and Equality Plans (e.g. TAMK Equality Plan for 2025–2026) have been advocating gender equality and non-discrimination (HEFCW, 2020; MEDR, 2025; España, 2017; Jousilahti, et al., 2022; Tampere University of Applied Sciences, 2025). Universities produced action plans addressing these issues, following national legislation, in line with European policies on gender equality and prejudice elimination in Academia (España, 2010; Natsi & Papa, 2019; Greek Government, 2021a).

Universities' action plans and good practice guidelines articulate comprehensive strategies aimed at advancing gender equality and addressing discrimination and stereotyping across all institutional levels. This challenge requires a multi-layered approach encompassing students and applicants, academic staff, research activities, and governance structures. These plans underscore higher education institutions' commitment to fostering social justice, equal opportunities, and the recognition of diversity, while embedding inclusive practices within institutional operations and culture. They involve identifying systemic barriers and implementing policies to reduce gender gaps and eradicate discriminatory practices. Furthermore, they seek to enhance representation in leadership roles and promote equitable participation in all dimensions of university life—research, curricula, governance, and human resource management—thereby cultivating a more just and inclusive academic environment where diverse perspectives are acknowledged and valued. Measures include targeted training, policy revisions, systematic data monitoring, and awareness-raising initiatives tailored to higher education contexts. By nurturing an inclusive academic and professional culture, universities can create environments in which all individuals, irrespective of gender identity, can thrive and contribute meaningfully to knowledge production and institutional development. Addressing sexual and gender-based harassment remains imperative, with particular attention to the safety and well-being of non-binary and transgender students, who frequently report feelings of insecurity that negatively impact academic performance. (Hellenic Open University, 2022; University of the Aegean, 2022; University of West Attica, 2022; EADTU, 2022; University of Piraeus, 2023; Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2024; FernUniversität in Hagen, 2025).

Initiatives such as the GENDRHED project, implemented by the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), aim to strengthen the capacity of universities and research institutions to address gender inequalities through targeted training programs and policy recommendations that embed gender perspectives within institutional structures,

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

thereby fostering an inclusive academic environment. The accompanying policy paper underscores the limited effectiveness of current measures and highlights the pivotal role of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) as drivers of institutional transformation. It further offers recommendations for the Greek government to facilitate the implementation of GEPs and advance substantive gender equality in higher education. Additionally, the paper acknowledges the necessity of tackling intersectional forms of discrimination, including those related to ethnicity and migration status (Anagnostou, 2023). Complementing these efforts, the EUCEN SMILE project advocates for the use of a Diversity Audit Tool to evaluate gender representation in leadership and decision-making processes, alongside the creation of support networks for women in academic and administrative roles.

The Equality, Equity, and Diversity Plan 2021-2025 for CIPES – Centre for Research on Higher Education Policies (Portugal) reflects a commitment to promoting an inclusive and socially responsible organizational culture. This plan aims to integrate gender and diversity dimensions into all institutional practices, recognizing diversity as an enriching factor for research and the development of public policies in higher education. It aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals, aiming to achieve gender equality. It is also in line with the European Union priorities and Portugal's 2030 Agenda, reinforcing CIPES's commitment to social justice and cohesion within higher education. (Carvalho, Diogo, Cardoso, Silva, & Vilhena, 2021). Universities, such as FernUniversität in Hagen and Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, have approved Codes of Conduct for preventing and combating harassment and discrimination by establishing rules and procedures that apply to all staff, students, and visitors. It also sets up confidential reporting channels and mandates annual training on equality, diversity, and inclusion. The aim is to create a safe and inclusive academic environment by defining unacceptable behaviours, protection measures for complainants, disciplinary procedures, and compulsory training for the entire university community (Universidade Nova de Lisboa 2024; FernUniversität in Hagen 2025).

Multiple-factor situations must also be considered, e.g., the situation of girls from the Roma ethnic group, and others, in whose culture girls are particularly driven to accompany other family members in domestic and family matters and are deliberately kept away from the school environment (Silva 2011).

Micro-level

Official policies have promoted substantive gender equality by mandating the incorporation of gender perspectives into teaching and research, while fostering inclusive participation within public bodies and research institutions (Greek Government Law 4604/2019; European Institute for Gender Equality, 2020). Consequently, the initial level of inclusion entails compliance with legislation. Drawing on the reviewed literature, the following questions are formulated to support institutional self-assessment. These questions are broadly applicable to the diverse stakeholders within the university context. The thematic clusters considered are mindset, administration, and teaching. Mandatory actions are indicated by the symbol ♦, whereas recommended actions are denoted by ♣.

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

Mindset

Are gender perspectives integrated into **institutional policies**? (Greek Government, 2021a; Carvalho, Diogo, Cardoso, Silva, & Vilhena, 2021; EADTU, 2022; Jousilahti, et al., 2022; University of the Aegean, 2022; Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2024; Araújo, 2024; University of Piraeus, 2023).

- ◆ Is there a plan for raising awareness among teachers of the need to create inclusive educational environments that respect gender diversity?
- ◆ Is inclusive participation of all genders emphasized?
- ◆ Does the HEI promote awareness campaigns and gender equality, and non-discrimination **trainings** to sensitize university staff to gender related imbalances and supportive mechanisms for underrepresented or marginalized groups?
- ♣ Are these trainings mandatory, at least, for new staff members?
- ♣ Are gender perspectives incorporated into research plans, projects, and practices?
- ♣ Are projects aimed at preventing discrimination promoted?

Administration

Does the HEI have a **gender balanced organizational environment** based on respect for personal integrity and dignity? (Greek Government. Law 3653/2008, Article 57; Carvalho, Diogo, Cardoso, Silva, & Vilhena, 2021; EADTU, 2022; University of Piraeus, 2023; Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2024).

- ◆ Since women remain disproportionately underrepresented throughout all faculties, and the opposite is true for lower administrative tasks at universities (more women than men are to be found in auxiliary positions), is the HEI's staff **gender-balanced**, namely in decision-making bodies, following the European and national regulations?
- ◆ Do recruitment policies and career progression comply with legislation regarding minority gender issues?
- ◆ Do these procedures ensure equal opportunities for all genders in recruitment and selection processes?

Has the HEI defined a written equality and non-discrimination plan **with specific rules and actions** to prevent, detect, and stop any gender-based violence and discrimination within the organisation? (University of the Aegean, 2022; Jousilahti, et al., 2022; UNED, 2024; Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2024).

- ◆ Is there a university's **Gender Equality Committee**?
- ◆ Is there a **Code of Conduct** that applies to all staff, students, and visitors, that considers the combat of harassment and discrimination?

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- ◆ Does the HEI provide information about its gender equality and non-discrimination plans, so that implementation is more efficient and visible to individuals who participate in recruitment and work in leadership positions?

Has the HEI defined **prevention and response mechanisms** to gender-based violence and anti-harassment based on sex, gender expression, and/or sexual orientation? (Estado Português. Despacho nº 1931/2021; Carvalho, Diogo, Cardoso, Silva, & Vilhena, 2021; University of the Aegean, 2022; EADTU, 2022; University of Piraeus, 2023; Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2024; Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2024).

- ◆ Are there **confidential reporting channels**, and compulsory staff training on equality, diversity, and inclusion?
- ◆ Do monitoring reports exist and have been published?

Teaching

Are **pedagogical practices** free of gender stereotypes? ? (EADTU, 2022; Merino-Fernández, Ortiz-Revilla & Greca 2023; Araújo, 2024).

- ◆ Have gender-sensitive courses been implemented in curricula?
- ◆ Is collaborative work that deconstructs gender inequalities in educational dynamics encouraged?
- ◆ Are the principles of dialogical pedagogy applied, and individual contributions valued regardless of gender identity or expression?
- ◆ Is equal participation by students of all genders in spaces for debate and the construction of knowledge encouraged?
- ♣ Is special attention given to the presence of women in STEM subjects?

Recommendations on Prisoners

Macro-Level

Prisoners should be explicitly recognized in equity and inclusion policies as a marginalized group with specific educational needs. Reports like those from UNESCO (2017) and the OECD (2023) emphasize that all learners, including incarcerated individuals, must be included in national and international education strategies.

Governments are encouraged to align prison education with mainstream education systems, ensuring equivalency in quality, certification, and access (UNESCO, OECD, European Commission). Policies should support digital access in secure environments, balancing security with the right to education.

EU-level initiatives (e.g., Erasmus+ priorities) advocate for targeted funding to support inclusive education, including for underrepresented groups like prisoners. Investment in

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

secure digital infrastructure is essential to enable access to online learning platforms in prisons.

The question addressed in this chapter is the following: What strategies can universities adopt to facilitate the reintegration of incarcerated individuals, while promoting their educational empowerment in alignment with the lifelong learning needs of adult populations?

Meso-level

Education is a way for the transformation and social reintegration of prisoners. As so, institutions should adopt inclusive missions that explicitly include non-traditional learners, such as incarcerated students (EUCEN, EQUiP, INVITED project). Use of diversity audits (e.g., SMILE project) can help institutions assess their readiness to support such learners.

HEIs should collaborate with prison authorities, NGOs, and justice ministries to co-design and deliver educational programmes, and encourage recognition of prior learning and credit transfer for incarcerated learners. Collaboration being the first step, it is important for universities to designate specific contacts for the needs of incarcerated students. This way, the educational staff in the correctional facilities knows exactly whom to turn to when issues arise.

Nevertheless, university education for prisoners sets various challenges, the first of which is: how best to cultivate a learning environment in **prisons** that can fully engage prisoners in education? To address this and the derived challenges, several steps must be taken, bringing together different aspects of the prisoners' situation. Universities, penitentiaries, associations, and support networks must be able to work together to promote policies and actions that allow for the formation of individuals and contribute to the reintegration of people into life and society after their incarceration. In fact, among the priority objectives that we must address is the reintegration of people into society once they finish their sentence (EADTU, 2022)

In addition to being incarcerated, people usually also have other traits or characteristics of diversity that need to be cared for within the prison. The multiple aspects of these issues imply that investment in research and innovation is a fundamental pillar that will allow for the generation of new experiences, environments, and resources to strengthen the success of students with expectations of university education in prison (EADTU, 2022).

Micro-level

Learner-centered approaches are critical concerning prisoners. To this end, UDL Guidelines recommend offering multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression, which is especially relevant for learners with limited access to technology or diverse learning needs.

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

The questions presented below are informed by recommendations identified in the reviewed literature and encompass multiple dimensions of inclusion for incarcerated individuals in higher education. The thematic clusters addressed include mindset, campus (study location), administration, and teaching. Mandatory actions are indicated by the symbol ♦, whereas recommended actions are denoted by ♣.

Mindset

For this student's population, **support and motivation** are critical. What kind of support is provided? (EADTU, 2022)

- ♦ Do institutions provide academic advising and mentoring, even remotely, to support incarcerated learners, and recognize and celebrate learner achievements to build confidence and motivation, which is crucial in prison contexts?
- ♣ In order to develop **pride and civic engagement**, and active citizenship skills, are University students in prison able to participate in representative and decision-making bodies?
- ♣ When a student completes qualification | a degree, can a ceremony be arranged in prison?

Campus (study location)

Does the HEI have **agreements** with penitentiaries, with associations, and support networks? (EADTU, 2022)

- ♦ Is the time and place for the **exams** duly identified, and the whole process adequately organized (including digitalization, when needed), clearly identifying the roles of each institution?
- ♦ Given the financial limitations of the inmates and of the penitentiary institutions, have mechanisms been developed to ensure stable and sufficient financing to guarantee the infrastructure for prisoners' study?
- ♣ Is the evolution of these specific programs studied, and their effects monitored?

Do prisoners have access to specific **areas and facilities for training**? (EADTU, 2022)

- ♦ Do prisoners have access to learning means and training-oriented facilities such as libraries, study rooms, gyms, workshops, laboratories, etc.
- ♣ Have these been created, reinforced, or maintained?

Administration

Is there a **guidance system** (e.g. booklet, Welcome Plan) with information on university education? (EADTU, 2022)

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- ◆ Is there information, such as a prospectus or tutorials, on the possible way to access university courses for adults (how to apply, how to register)?
- ◆ Given the **limitations** of movement and isolation, are prisoners duly **informed about** what is possible to study?
- ♣ Where possible, are face-to-face Information, Advice and Guidance sessions promoted for both prisoners and prison staff?

Teaching

Given the singularity of penitentiary environments and of prisoners as students, is **curricular flexibility** considered? (EADTU, 2022; CAST, 2023).

- ◆ Is Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles applied?
- ◆ Are modular, asynchronous, and low-bandwidth-compatible courses delivered in prison settings?
- ◆ Being social and linguistic competences basic skills that improve employability, mobility, and inclusion in an increasingly mobile, diverse world, are these basic competences reinforced by higher education in prison?
- ♣ Are complementary activities | non-formal courses designed specifically for prisoners?

How is access to **study materials** in secure environments processed, and how are they **adjusted**? (EADTU, 2022)

- ◆ Does the prison have a Library that includes study materials? Or, as an alternative, does the University provide study materials?
- ◆ Do adjustments include printed teaching material for each subject, made up of basic texts and support materials, enough to pass the different tests prepared by the teaching teams?
- ◆ Considering that connectivity and the use of ICT are fundamental as an essential basic competence for current learning and reintegration, what limitations does the prison impose on access to the Internet and the online study portal? How is access to digital study materials processed? Does the prison have a secure intranet that prisoners can use? Is there a dedicated tutor in the prison who has access to the study materials?
- ◆ The prison staff involved in accompanying teaching includes insertion managers? Is there support through Advisors in the use of the educational platform in penitentiary centres that have access to it?

How is the **learning process managed and accompanied**? (UCL, EQUIIP; EADTU, 2022)

- ◆ Are educators trained in inclusive and trauma-informed teaching practices?
- ◆ Does tuition provide for flexibility in response to the different learning needs of each student and acknowledge her or his uniqueness?

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- ◆ Does tuition provide space for reflection, encouraging the student to think about both how something has been done and how well it has been achieved, and hence to identify the next steps in learning? And does it feed forward, looking ahead to mid-term and long-term learning goals of the student, and to skills which are encountered or developed further?
- ◆ Does tuition involve the student in self-assessment, explaining the evaluation process, so students can identify their strengths and weaknesses?
- ♣ Does tuition serve different purposes? Besides teaching (the tutor explains at a distance something that has not been understood), do they encourage students to pursue studies and facilitate skills development (tutors can help the students develop an underdeveloped ability), leading the student to attain the desired learning outcomes?
- ♣ Are self-paced learning and peer mentoring models fostered within prison education programmes?

Recommendations on the Army, Athletes, and Diplomatic Staff

Macro-level

Armed forces personnel on mission, high-performance athletes, and diplomatic staff and their families represent groups that experience geographical displacement for defined periods. To address the educational challenges faced by these mobile populations, institutions should adopt flexible admission policies and mechanisms for recognizing prior learning, while developing tailored support services such as academic advising and credit transfer systems. In line with this, OECD (2023) recommends that national inclusion strategies explicitly acknowledge non-traditional learners, including those with interrupted or mobile educational trajectories—such as military personnel, elite athletes, and diplomatic families—and promote recognition of prior learning alongside flexible re-entry pathways into higher education.

Aligned with this perspective, European Commission reports advocate for lifelong learning frameworks that accommodate learners with non-linear educational trajectories and urge national legislation to facilitate credit transfer, modular learning, and the recognition of informal and non-formal learning. Furthermore, they recommend the implementation of bridging programmes and individualized learning pathways for returning learners—such as post-deployment military personnel—while emphasizing the need for institutions to monitor retention and re-engagement among students whose studies have been interrupted. Within the Erasmus+ programme, the Commission proposes that blended mobility and modular structures be designed to meet the needs of learners with limited availability due to professional obligations, including athletes and military personnel, thereby promoting inclusive mobility strategies. Additionally, institutions are encouraged to establish partnerships with sports federations, military organizations, and diplomatic services to support learner transitions (European Commission, n.d.; European Commission et al., 2022)

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

In line with the previous paragraphs, this chapter addresses the following question: What alternative opportunities can higher education institutions offer to populations whose availability is limited by representational responsibilities?

Meso-level

Higher education institutions have organized their regulatory frameworks and operational procedures in accordance with prevailing international, European, and national legislation. Such legislation typically establishes special provisions governing access, admission, and participation in higher education for specific groups, with the aim of promoting equity of opportunity (Estado Português, Decreto-Lei nº 64-A/2023). In addition, HEIs have implemented targeted programs to support populations that experience displacement or limited availability during certain periods (EADTU, 2022). For these individuals, e-learning represents the most viable and effective modality.

Micro-level

Universities have integrated recommendations of good practices for the inclusion of students from the Army, Athletes, and Diplomatic Staff, as proposed by various sectors such as:

- OECD:
 - To use modular course design and asynchronous learning to accommodate irregular schedules.
 - To apply inclusive assessment methods and recognize experiential learning.
- EC Reports:
 - To offer self-paced learning, digital mentoring, and alternative assessments for learners with time constraints.
 - To promote an inclusive syllabus design that acknowledges diverse learner profiles.
- Erasmus+:
 - To encourage the use of micro-credentials, digital badges, and stackable modules.
 - To support hybrid learning environments that combine in-person and online participation.
- ISOLEARN Project:
 - To offer personalized learning paths and adaptive assessments for non-traditional learners.
 - To promote peer learning and collaborative digital platforms to maintain engagement.

The subsequent questions stem from the recommendations identified and are designed to facilitate institutional self-assessment by encompassing multiple dimensions of inclusion for individuals with periodic limited availability. The thematic clusters considered are mindset, administration, and teaching. Mandatory actions are indicated by the symbol ♦, whereas recommended actions are indicated by ♣.

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

Mindset

◆ Has the HEI created **specific status**, such as an "athlete status" (also for Paralympic athletes) or "army status" and developed personalized educational plan programs to support these students at the academic level? (EADTU, 2022)

Administration

Are there **specific admission schemes** for people with military student status, athletes, and diplomatic staff? (Universidade de Coimbra, 2020; EADTU, 2022).

- ◆ Is there a specific **Reception Plan** for athletes, explaining the services and the possibilities of flexibility and adaptation to their needs?
- ◆ Is professional guidance advising on the professional opportunities of careers available?
- ◆ Are these students duly informed about the existing opportunities (e.g., scholarships)?
- ♣ Is there the possibility of **financial aid** from the university in the public prices of the tuition, bag for books, and didactic materials, and endowment of material and sports clothing?

Teaching

Does the HEI have **personalized study plans** with the purpose of allowing athletes or army to coordinate school and sports or missions as much as possible so that the two do not interfere with each other? (EADTU, 2022)

- ◆ Do these personalised study plans focus on the organization of study time and provide specific online tutors who solve doubts about the different subjects so that they can progress in their studies and complete their studies in a longer time than is provided or allowed for other students?
- ♣ Do these specific study plans include the **recognition of credits** for being registered in high-level sports organizations or for representing the university in competitions?

Have mechanisms been considered to solve the situation of students who are unable to attend **assessments and/or examinations** on the scheduled dates due to military, athletic, and diplomatic obligations? (Universidade de Coimbra, 2020; EADTU, 2022)

- ◆ Can these assessments be taken during an extraordinary examination period?
- ◆ Are these students informed about requests and their deadlines, to be presented in due time, and to reschedule examination dates?
- ♣ Does the HEI have an agreement with the Ministry of Defence allowing for examinations outside the ordinary term of the calendar for displaced military personnel? The same with the Ministry of External Affairs and of Sport?

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- ♣ In the frame of an agreement, can these students take their exams in the embassies and consulates in other countries?

Digital Accessibility

Policies and Initiatives | General principles (macro-level)

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are instrumental in promoting the social inclusion of students with functional disabilities and specific learning disorders within higher education (Riga, Ioannidi & Nikolaos, 2020). As educational systems increasingly integrate digital tools, a critical challenge lies in ensuring that these technologies advance equity and inclusion. Achieving this objective necessitates equitable access to digital resources, the cultivation of digital competencies among both students and educators, and the implementation of inclusive technologies tailored to accommodate diverse needs (Gottschalk & Weise 2023).

The inclusion of students with functional disabilities is guided by principles articulated in Article 24 of the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, which inspires European priorities in this domain. Core principles encompass the right to inclusive and non-discriminatory education, the provision of reasonable accommodation, and the removal of barriers to guarantee accessibility, particularly through digitally assisted services (Riga, Ioannidi & Nikolaos, 2020). Several countries have harmonized national legislation on accessibility requirements for products and services with the **EU Accessibility Act** (Directive EU 2019/882) to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities. This framework enshrines the right to equal access to digital products and services and promotes universal design. This legislation prescribes mandatory accessibility standards and universal design principles for a wide range of products and services, including WCAG 2.1 compliance for e-books and all public-sector digital services, explicitly covering web portals and online procedures within higher education institutions.

Key OECD Recommendations for Inclusive Education, as synthesised by Gottschalk & Weise (2023) are:

- **Inclusive Technology Design:** Apply the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to ensure flexibility and accessibility. Promote participatory design processes by involving marginalised groups in the development of educational technologies.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Incorporate the values, languages, and learning practices of ethnic minorities and Indigenous communities into digital content. Ensure materials are validated in collaboration with target communities to guarantee cultural relevance.
- **Inclusive Pedagogy through Technology:** Provide teachers with specialised training on how to effectively use technology to foster inclusive educational environments.
- **Integration of Assistive Technologies:** Encourage the use of assistive technologies - such as screen readers, speech recognition tools, and accessibility software - for students with special educational needs (SEN). Reduce associated stigma and ensure both technical support and teacher training are in place.
- **Personalisation and Diversity:** Employ digital technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, to offer personalised learning pathways tailored to individual learners' preferences and abilities. Promote diverse content that reflects a range of genders, cultures, and learning styles.

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

Gottschalk & Weise (2023) also synthesise the fundamental recommendations on policy and practice from OECD Countries:

- **Governance of Digital Technologies in Education:** Ensure cross-ministerial coordination, clearly defined inclusive objectives, and ethical regulation of technology use in education.
- **Technological Resources for Diversity and Inclusion:** Invest not only in access to digital devices and infrastructure but also in the quality and adaptability of resources to meet the specific needs of diverse learners.
- **Teacher Capacity Development:** Prioritise systematic and practice-oriented teacher training, with a strong emphasis on inclusive pedagogies that are responsive to learner diversity.
- **Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation:** Establish regular evaluation mechanisms using disaggregated data (by gender, background, SEN status, etc.) to continuously improve inclusion-oriented policies.

UNESCO, 2023 booklet has, as primary goal, to ensure that educational systems are inclusive, accessible, and equitable, particularly for persons with disabilities, who represent 15% of the global population. The guidelines emphasize the role of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) as a key solution to overcoming educational barriers, especially during emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. They advocate for the use of Open Educational Resources (OER), Free and Open-Source Software (FOSS), and Open Access (OA) research to facilitate inclusive and accessible learning. These guidelines aim to promote inclusive and accessible education for persons with disabilities, supporting the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4 on quality education and lifelong learning for all. This document intended for governments, educational institutions, instructional designers, educators, and quality assurance bodies, providing recommendations for designing, implementing, and monitoring ODL platforms and processes. It highlights the importance of considering accessibility from the outset of educational projects, utilizing assistive technologies, and integrating Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. Its' guidelines for governments emphasize their critical role in ensuring access to Open and Distance Learning (ODL) for persons with disabilities. These guidelines aim to create a supportive and inclusive environment for learners with disabilities in ODL settings. They include the following procedures:

- **Legislative and Policy Provisions:** Governments should develop and support legislation and policies to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in ODL. These policies should address monitoring, compliance, and accessibility standards.
- **Funding:** Governments should secure adequate funding to create an enabling environment for inclusive ODL, including additional resources for emergency situations.
- **Cooperation and Partnership:** Governments should facilitate communication among ODL stakeholders and ensure inter-ministerial collaboration across sectors like education, health, technology, and employment.

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- **Access to Assistive Technology and Inclusive ICT:** Governments should ensure access to assistive technologies and inclusive ICT tools to enhance learning through ODL.
- **Research:** Support research and development on the use of Free and Open-Source Software (FOSS), Open Educational Resources (OER), and Open Access (OA) to improve accessibility.
- **Infrastructure:** Develop and strengthen infrastructure, such as broadband networks and communication systems, to support ODL for persons with disabilities.
- **Capacity Development:** Train instructors, support staff, and IT administrators on accessibility issues, assistive technology, and open solutions to effectively work with students with disabilities.
- **User-Targeted Work:** Collaborate with organizations and associations focused on persons with disabilities to identify challenges and solutions for inclusive ODL. Special attention should be given to empowering women and girls with disabilities.
- **Standard Procedures:** Require quality assurance and recognition bodies to include accessibility-related issues in their standards.
- **Training and Learning Materials:** Ensure that universal design for learning (UDL) and accessibility aspects are integrated into national teacher training curricula (both pre-service and in-service).

More recently, the report resulting of the work of the EADTU Task Force on Personalisation of Education (EADTU, 2025) explores how personalisation can transform online and distance higher education, promoting equity, student autonomy, and academic success. It underlines the importance of Personalisation, which means adapting content, methods, pace, and assessment to the individual characteristics of students, namely with the help of AI. This report recommends Policymakers to:

- Promote policies that encourage student participation in curriculum co-design, ensuring that personalisation strengthens both agency and belonging;
- Support the development of Next Generation Digital Learning Environments (NGDLEs) with policies and funding that encourage modular, interoperable systems;
- Establish ethical and legal guidelines for AI in education, aligned with GDPR and the EU AI Act, focusing on consent, data minimisation and algorithmic accountability.

In various national legislations, enforcement mechanisms are also defined, as well as phased implementation deadlines (e.g.: 2025-2030), annual progress reports, and penalties for non-compliance (European Union, 2019; Estado Português. Resolução do Conselho de Ministros nº 30/2020; Estado Português. Decreto-Lei nº 82/2022). The enhancement of higher-education measures regarding digital-accessibility projects complying with WCAG 2.1. is often underlined in national legislation, requiring accessible digital application procedures, namely online, WCAG-compliant application portals (HEFCW 2020; España, 2018; España, 2021b; Estado Português. Decreto-Lei nº 64-A/2023; Estado Português. Portaria nº 325/2023; Estado Português. Despacho nº 7253/2024), to promote inclusion, equity, and 21st-century skills.

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

The implementation of digital accessibility principles is of critical importance for distance learning institutions due to their complete reliance on virtual communication infrastructures. Consequently, such institutions are uniquely positioned to address challenges related to diversity and inclusion and to promote awareness of these issues within the academic community. Furthermore, diversity and inclusion strategies can be strengthened through inter-institutional collaboration and the systematic exchange of expertise. The dissemination of best practices serves as a catalyst for the development of comprehensive policies and frameworks aimed at fostering equity and inclusivity across higher education (EADTU, 2022).

Recognizing that digital technologies inherently function as enablers of societal communication, this chapter concentrates on their potential to address the needs of specific populations, namely in Distance Teaching Universities. It seeks to answer the central question: How, and through which mechanisms, can digital accessibility be effectively implemented to optimize broader and more responsible societal use?

General and institutional recommendations (meso-level)

UNESCO, 2023 guidelines for educational institutions delivering Open and Distance Learning (ODL) emphasize the importance of accessibility and inclusion for students with disabilities. The provided instructions aim to ensure that educational institutions create inclusive virtual environments that support the learning needs of all students, particularly those with disabilities, at different levels, namely:

- **Enrolment:** Ensure accessible processes for enrolment, including public information, registration, entrance exams, interviews, and acceptance.
- **Needs Assessment:** Conduct initial assessments of students with disabilities to identify their needs and ensure full access to programs, including during emergencies.
- **Strategy and Internal Disability Policy:** Develop strategies and internal policies for systematically including students and staff with disabilities, addressing recruitment, workplace adjustments, accessible content, and technology.
- **Content Design:** Create content that accommodates diverse needs and contexts using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles.
- **Integration of Open Solutions:** Incorporate Free and Open-Source Software (FOSS), Open Educational Resources (OER), and Open Access (OA) into program design and delivery to address accessibility issues.
- **Barrier Removal:** Utilize assistive technology to eliminate cognitive, physical, and sensory barriers to learning. Ensure all departments work collaboratively to remove barriers using UDL principles.
- **Training:** Provide training for students, faculty, and staff on accessible content and technology.
- **Efficacy:** Implement feedback, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms to ensure continuous improvement.

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- **Support Services:** Establish informed support services, including financial assistance, to address the needs of students with disabilities.
- **Compliance:** Deploy best practices recommended or required by quality assurance bodies and recognition authorities.

According to EADTU, 2025, Institutional Strategies should integrate personalisation into their strategic plans and pedagogical models. Flexible pathways, personalised support, inclusive design, and ethical use of data should be considered and introduced in institutional models, creating **Virtual Learning Environments** (VLEs, digital platforms designed to support and manage educational processes, enabling both synchronous and asynchronous interactions between students and teachers). This can be fully achieved through the use IA and analytics systems such as Intelligent Tutoring Systems, LMS with adaptive features, next-generation digital learning environments (NGDLE), and emerging tools (chatbots, GenAI). Technology must be looked at as an enabler: AI, analytics, intelligent tutoring, and advanced digital environments allow for the construction of adaptive pathways and personalised feedback but require ethical use and human oversight (learning analytics responsible use, ensuring transparency, privacy, and ethical handling of data). Institutions, especially e-learning universities should also:

- Participate in ongoing professional development focused on data ethics and AI literacy;
- Combat the digital divide with devices, connectivity, and digital literacy programmes that promote inclusion;
- Adopt a learner-centred approach that integrates PL into the wider mission of inclusion and equity;
- Promote collaboration between teachers, designers, technicians, and students (co-design).

E-learning, combined with assistive technologies, plays a pivotal role in fostering the inclusion of students with diverse disabilities, specific learning disorders, and various other specificities addressed in the chapters of Part I of this Compendium. Owing to their distinctive characteristics—such as the absence of mandatory face-to-face attendance and reliance on computer-mediated interaction—distance learning institutions are particularly well suited to accommodate learners with specificities. These institutions must ensure that all students, irrespective of physical, sensory, neurological, or any other limitation, have equitable access to digital technologies and educational content, thereby guaranteeing equitable conditions and opportunities for academic success. Achieving this objective requires the development and provision of accessible educational resources tailored to individual needs through the integration of assistive technologies. Furthermore, the promotion of collaborative networks that enable university and students to exchange support fosters an inclusive academic environment that values diversity. Equally critical is the continuous professional development of educators to implement effective pedagogical strategies within inclusive and heterogeneous learning contexts. (Monteiro & Gomes, 2009;

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

Dias, Barros & Seara, 2020, HEFCW, 2020; MEDR, 2025; Universidade Aberta, 2021; Valente, 2021; EADTU, 2022).

Ensuring the right to education for all, while accounting for individual specificities, requires the establishment of internal regulatory frameworks that govern the provision of student support. Such frameworks should define access conditions, procedural guidelines, and the nature of assistance offered, thereby promoting inclusion and guaranteeing accessibility across academic programs. Equally essential is the presence of monitoring committees or dedicated units tasked with delivering targeted support for specific cases (Universidade Aberta, 2021; UNED, 2024)

In Finland, the TAMK Equality Plan for 2025-2026 recommends that accessibility assessment tools be systematically introduced into digital learning environments, and training is provided on how to use them. Accessibility encompasses three areas: the content is understandable, the service is technically accessible, i.e., it complies with international accessibility guidelines, and the service is clear, logical, and easy to use (Tampere University of Applied Sciences, 2025). Besides, in Finland, students actively participate in determining needs and solutions. The Association of Diverse Learners influences the work on learning difficulties and the removal of barriers to learning, raising awareness of technological solutions and resources, and supporting their adoption (The Finnish Diverse Learners' Association, 2025).

Digital inclusion is a priority to ensure all students have access to educational resources, especially those with disabilities or cognitive impairment. This includes hardware and software. Vd. **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)** and other web accessibility standards developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). Compliance with digital accessibility rules when designing resources is fundamental to enabling better public access. In general, the technical dimension must rely on 4 basic principles (see <https://webaim.org/intro/>):

- **Perceivable:** All information and user interface components must be available to the senses, either through the browser or assistive technology.
- **Operable:** Users can interact with all user interface components and navigate, either using the mouse, keyboard, or specialized assistive technology.
- **Understandable:** Content and the operation of the user interface must be understandable; it is clear and limits confusion and ambiguity.
- **Robust:** A wide range of technologies can access the content and the user interface, including old and new devices and AT. (EADTU, 2022).

But digital inclusion in higher education institutions goes beyond merely overcoming digital barriers. Digital learning barriers often affect students who, despite having access to technological resources, still struggle with low levels of academic performance and engagement. In the context of higher education, digital inclusion requires a strategic approach grounded in clear standards and personalised support to address individual learning needs (Fisseler, 2024). Universities have taken steps to comply with legislation, promoting equality and support for students with learning difficulties. However, further

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

efforts are needed, especially in adapting curricula, learning materials, and training academic staff, to fully implement inclusive education and ensure equal participation for all (Riga, Ioannidi & Nikolaos, 2020).

Regarding **info-excluded populations**, Universities have been responding to national legislation's mandates and fully address inclusive and anti-discriminatory practices. However, further adjustments and decisive progress steps are needed to ensure global inclusion. Socio-economic factors, age, disabilities, or specific mindsets can imply resistance towards the digital dimension of day-to-day life, including learning. Digital accessibility can divide (unequal access/concept of digital poverty) or unite (universality). Education policies often consider info-exclusion as an accessibility issue that needs recognition and specialized support. Persistent gaps often articulate with social, economic, ethnic, and gender inequalities. Therefore, inclusion must be conceived as a multidimensional process that requires systemic changes to overcome segregating practices and promote policies that reduce inequalities in access, permanence, and success at school, especially in contexts of socio-economic and cultural vulnerability. Diversity should be valued as a resource and the construction of a democratic and equitable school that respects and welcomes all students, regardless of their individual or social characteristics (Abrantes, 2021; EADTU, 2022). Digital inclusion is multi-dimensional, involving access, infrastructure, usage, and outcomes. It aims to reduce inequalities, improve the quality of teaching and learning, and ensure all students can participate fully, especially those from disadvantaged groups or with special educational needs. Digital tools can promote inclusion by avoiding exclusion, supporting personalised learning, and ensuring non-discrimination through thoughtful design and implementation (Gottschalk & Weise, 2023)

Institutional regulations have been designed to provide adequate accessibility for students and to promote the right to education for all, considering specificities. They establish a framework for the process of granting support to students. These regulations define access conditions, procedures, and support to be provided to students, promoting their inclusion and accessibility to courses, an issue that most universities worry about and have designed strategies to address (HEFCW, 2020; MEDR, 2025; Universidade Aberta, 2021; UNED, 2023; Hyrynsalmi, 2025).

According to Hyrynsalmi (2025), it is possible to advance diversity and inclusion awareness via education; the development and training of faculty members are crucial for successfully implementing a more diverse-aware approach in various fields. Particularly, a need for best practices in deeply technical courses.

At the institutional level, Digital Accessibility should be considered at least at four levels:

- **Institutional Culture and Leadership**, to develop inclusive leadership and governance structures that prioritize accessibility and diversity (<https://udlguidelines.cast.org/>; <https://udlguidelines.cast.org/more/downloads/>), and to promote the use of tools like the SMILE Diversity Audit Tool to assess institutional readiness and progress.

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- **Curriculum and Programme Design**, promoting the use of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Guidelines 3.0 to ensure flexible, accessible learning environments, and the offer of modular and flexible study options (e.g., online, part-time, recognition of prior learning) to accommodate diverse learners (<https://udlguidelines.cast.org/more/research-evidence/structure/>).
- **Staff Development and Support**, including the implementation of CPD programmes for educators on inclusive teaching, intercultural competence, and digital accessibility (e.g., EQUiIP modules), and the use of peer learning and communities of practice to share inclusive strategies (<https://udlguidelines.cast.org/more/research-evidence/structure/>; <https://equiip.eu/userguide/>).
- **Inclusive Student Engagement** to foster inclusive student participation in governance and learning through initiatives like INCLUSIPHE <https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/inclusive-and-connected-higher-education> and support non-traditional students with tailored engagement strategies and digital tools.

Detailed recommendations on digital accessibility (micro-level)

Research literature has been produced presenting specific cases of difficulties that contributed to the design of procedures and strategies leading to greater inclusion in a technological distance learning environment. These strategies are aimed at specific, potentially problematic situations, such as

- teacher/student interaction and the inherent identification and valorisation of situations that justify didactic and/or curricular flexibilization;
- access to study materials adapted to students' needs,
- the suitability of the physical and temporal space for face-to-face tests for different students. (Dias, Barros & Seara, 2020).

While increasing people's autonomy, e-learning promotes their inclusion in society. In fact, accessible and innovative distance education models can stimulate social transformation. Beyond their academic function, Information and Communication Technologies can serve as key enablers of social participation, helping students to engage more fully with their peers through collaborative digital tools and communication platforms. Such tools are essential for creating inclusive learning environments where all students can contribute and connect (Riga, Ioannidi & Nikolaos, 2020; Araújo, 2024). Inclusive pedagogical practices in digital environments should focus on the personalisation of teaching, accessibility, and active methodologies. The accessibility of content and didactic resources must be ensured, and active and differentiated methodologies must consider the specificities of each student. (Carrascal, Anguita, Navarro, & Barros 2024).

Studies that investigate digital inclusion and accessibility practices in universities often focus on the pedagogical strategies adopted to support students with disabilities. A strong institutional effort toward accessibility and academic support is also made to accommodate students with specific learning disorders. HEIs must promote educational innovation, personalisation, and digital accessibility. (Carrascal, Anguita, Navarro, & Barros, 2024).

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

In e-learning, “technologies do not merely support learning: they transform how we learn and how we come to interpret learning” (Säljö, 2010). These transformations are fundamental at the various levels and stages of the teaching-learning process:

- Course conception - the course outline: structure’s definition, the clear definition of tasks to be performed; type and duration of tasks; types of evaluation;
- Pedagogical construction of the materials and related contents - definition of materials to be available on the web pages; level of interactivity and detail that these materials should present in order to fulfil the pedagogical objectives, made with the help of a web designer;
- Course delivery and logistics;
- Learners’ evaluation/assessment;
- Course evaluation; and
- Feed forward process (Porfírio et al., 2016).

The following questions delineate targeted measures and strategies designed to strengthen the effectiveness of inclusive higher education in e-learning contexts. These questions aim to support institutional self-assessment by enabling the identification of strengths and areas for improvement within this domain. While most items are broadly relevant to the e-university setting, some are specifically oriented toward students. The thematic clusters addressed encompass mindset, campus, administration, and teaching. Mandatory actions are denoted by the symbol ♦, whereas recommended actions are indicated by ♣.

Mindset

Since, beyond technical solutions, a shift in institutional culture towards inclusivity and anti-discrimination in a virtual environment is essential, does the HEI’s institutional policy **promote Structural and Cultural Change?** (Monteiro & Gomes, 2009; Riga, Ioannidi & Nikolaos, 2020; Dias, Barros & Seara, 2020, Riga, Ioannidi & Nikolaos, 2020; EADTU, 2022; UNESCO, 2023; Araújo, 2024; Maia & Santos, 2024).

- ♦ Is the entire educational community involved in building inclusive contexts and putting its principles into practice? Is awareness raised to develop understanding of issues related to inclusion of persons with disabilities and highlight the benefits of inclusive online education?
- ♦ Do academic and administrative staff receive continuous professional development **training** focused on digital accessibility, inclusive education practices, and awareness of disability rights, also providing online resources to be used or tools to create an inclusive learning environment with ongoing technical support?
- ♦ Does teacher training include accessible use of ICT in distance learning, enabling them to develop accessible digital content? Does teacher training promote awareness and use of Universal Design principles for Learning in the construction of online content?

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- ◆ Does the HEI provide ongoing **teacher training** to identify signs of specific difficulties and adapt teaching strategies, thus respond to functional limitations?
- ◆ Does the HEI promote Professional Development and Knowledge Exchange? Does it enhance teaches to stay updated on research findings and best practices in accessibility and apply them in professional practice? Also to engage in knowledge-sharing with peers in the professional community?
- ◆ Does the HEI provide and disseminate awareness-raising and support documentation among staff (such as information on how to recognize and how to act, according to specific neurodivergences)?
- ◆ Does it provide information on most accessible formats, characters to avoid, etc.? Are accessible document templates available to staff?

Is **Social inclusion** promoted in virtual environments, namely by the involvement of students, families, and teachers in inclusive strategies? (España, 2007; Monteiro & Gomes, 2009; Rodrigues & Baptista, 2023)

- ◆ Is social awareness towards impaired individuals and their needs a study subject?
- ◆ Is the active participation of diverse students in academic life promoted?
- ◆ Is functional and neurological diversity valued through inclusive practices? E.g.: is there the possibility to add a sign language avatar in the virtual classroom to value Sign Language as a language of instruction and cultural identity (which implies that deaf students are recognized as bilingual people and deafness considered as a linguistic and cultural difference whose appreciation is essential for full inclusion)?

Regarding Students from ethnic or other **Minority groups**, have digital tools been used to create content that authentically reflects diverse cultural realities and promote intercultural activities and collaboration among students from different backgrounds? (Gottschalk & Weise 2023)

- ◆ Regarding **gender**, have tools been designed as responsive to gender preferences, offering customisation options that respect identity and avoid reinforcing stereotypes?
- ◆ Regarding **migrant students**, are technologies used to support language acquisition (e.g., subtitles, social robots, digital storytelling)?
- ♣ Is access to learning platforms facilitated with the possibility of translation into the students' native languages?
- ♣ Is the design adapted to non-Latin scripts (e.g., right-to-left reading interfaces)?
- ◆ Do these tools also provide personalised options that support the mental health and well-being of Neurodivergent Students?

Do e-learning universities have responses to boost the inclusion of **economically disadvantaged groups**, mitigating barriers, namely **info-exclusion**, and ensuring that everyone can participate in higher education? (HEFCW, 2020; EADTU, 2022; MEDR, 2025)

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- ◆ Can these students have access to specific scholarships, affordable tuition fees according to students' income (reduction or exemption of fees or phased payments), or a grant system that pays part of the costs for adult students studying part-time?
- ◆ Does the HEI provide **access courses**, preparing for study (with skills development), including **digital literacy** and information about assistive technologies?
- ◆ Have curricular units/training offers that stimulate study and research on specific subjects, including digital accessibility, been created?

Campus

Have **inclusive e-learning environments** been created? Does the HEI implement structural and technological measures, namely **digital services**, to guarantee fair access to knowledge? Does the institution enhance digitally assisted services that are accessible and responsive to the needs of students' specificities? (I.P. Leiria, 2014; Monteiro & Gomes, 2009; Riga, Ioannidi & Nikolaos, 2020; Dias, Barros & Seara, 2020; Ismail, Kuppusamy, & Paiva, 2020; Universidade Aberta, 2021; EADTU, 2022; Rodrigues & Baptista, 2023; UNESCO, 2023; Araújo, 2024; EADTU, 2025).

- ◆ Does the HEI incorporate explicit accessibility provisions into quality standards and criteria to make learning environments inclusive for all students?
- ◆ Does the HEI select appropriate Learning Management System (LMS), preferably using Free and Open-Source Software (FOSS) and ensures immediate accessibility of platforms and content for learners with disabilities? Are clear criteria for selecting platforms and content that meet accessibility standards established? Are Open Educational Resources (OER) and Open Access (OA) materials integrated in course design
- ◆ Is **Universal Design** and **WCAG 2.1** applied to all products (including administration and management platforms) and at all stages of teaching and learning? Are hypertext and hyperlinks identified with clear and unique terms? Are expressions like 'click here' or place terms with the same name ('next', "ok", 'cancel', etc.) on the same page avoided? Are various means to [highlight, correct, or comment] used (in addition to colour, use square brackets [] and indicate the reason for the highlighting before the highlight - e.g., Comment; Correction; Attention; etc.)? Are simple tables used (avoid: multiple columns - cell subdivision-, complex tables -tables within tables-, and manual tabs -TAB)? Are graphs and tables preceded by a summary (about their organisation – number of columns and rows – and a summary of the content)? Are the caption and description features used for images and other graphic elements?
- ◆ Does the HEI ensure equal opportunities in access to ICT, adapting learning management systems to the specific needs of impaired students? Does it have mechanisms that guarantee all students—regardless of delivery mode—achieve equivalent learning outcomes and have opportunities for retention and graduation?

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- ◆ Does the HEI provide alternative access (e.g., printed materials, USB drives) for those without internet or assistive technology?
- ◆ When developing and implementing digitally assisted services, are the needs of students with disabilities considered? Does the HEI conduct needs analysis and field testing with learners with disabilities?
- ◆ Have conditions been created for full participation in synchronous and asynchronous spaces?
- ◆ Does the institution gather information about students' needs and functional capabilities to provide timely and relevant support and make necessary adjustments to the learning process and environment?
- ◆ Are there accessible digital platforms that facilitate equal participation in online discussions, group projects, and broader social interactions within the university context been developed and implemented?
- ◆ Do the digital platforms include intuitive and responsive navigation? Do they include accessibility features like skip to navigation, zoom in, zoom out, font size management, screen reader, accessibility statement, contrast, and the introduction of simple-to-read terms in the web content?
- ♣ Does the HEI recur to emerging tools for personalised learning? Does it use Intelligent Tutoring Systems, such as Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) and Conversational Agents (AI Chatbots) to provide personalised and adaptive support and scaffolding? (e.g.: generative AI and conversational agents for customised content and personalised feedback, intelligent adaptive and personalised learning, self management and autonomy in learning), but always preserving pedagogical leadership and human judgment.
- ◆ Have learning resources been adapted to students' physical or sensory specificities? Does the HEI provide accessible documentation to students? As an alternative, does it have computers equipped with specific software (e.g., WindowsEyes screen readers; Voiceover; Jaws...), or protocols been established with libraries with accessible documentation (audiobooks, braille)?
- ◆ Possible adjustments consider the extension of library loan deadlines?
- ◆ Are multimodal materials (video, text, image, audio) that facilitate different ways of accessing the content used? E.g.: Is a sign language application available for download? Are there subtitles and/or a GL interpreter available in the HEIs' videos? Are visual materials adapted with alternative text, ensuring digital accessibility?
- ◆ Possible adjustments consider the adaptation and/or extension of deadlines for assignments and final assessment tests?
- ◆ Computer-based exams can have a different format (e.g., recording)?
- ◆ Are computer-based exams compatible with the support of screen readers (for blind, and partially sighted)?

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- ◆ Does the HEI provide technical support | ongoing technical support and Help center, both to teachers and students? Are clear communication channels maintained for feedback and troubleshooting?
- ◆ Is the accessibility of platforms and content regularly checked (using tools like WAVE and W3C Validator)? Is feedback collected from learners and instructors on platform usability and content accessibility? Are embedded surveys and periodic checks used to assess satisfaction and compliance? Is a database of accessibility issues and solutions for continuous improvement maintained?

Does the HEI encourage **information** and online **socialization**? (Stürmer, et alii 2018; Araújo, 2024; Dias, Barros & Seara, 2020; UNESCO, 2023)

- ◆ Has the HEI established a virtual **relationship-building program** designed to foster social integration among distance education students (including students with impairments) with effects on interpersonal liking and social integration?
- ◆ Is self-regulation and peer support encouraged?
- ◆ Has an online dedicated space for interaction and mutual help (counselling, dissemination of information and opportunities, mutual help), bringing together teachers, students, and former students, been created?
- ◆ Are course coordinators and teachers informed about students to be supported more attentively?
- ◆ Are students encouraged to dialogue with teachers, presenting their difficulties?
- ♣ Does the HEI collect and disseminate examples of successful inclusive strategies to improve the quality of ODL across institutions?

Administration

Does the HEI have an **institutional digital strategy policy** that considers integration and strives to guarantee equal access to learning resources and technologies for all, including in distance learning contexts? (Riga, Ioannidi & Nikolaos, 2020; EADTU, 2022; UNESCO, 2023)

- ◆ Does the HEI promote ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure that institutional policies align with both national legislation and international conventions promoting inclusive education and digital accessibility?
- ◆ Has the University clearly defined who is responsible for making each part of its ICT systems accessible for all students, following the WCAG and other standards?
- ◆ Has the HEI produced a “disability statement and the institutional integration of digital accessibility” to ensure that students and staff know that the institution cares about digital accessibility?

Does the HEI have a **Monitoring Committee or Support Offices**, responsible for including students by recognizing specific learning needs and defining the most appropriate support

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

for each case, taking differentiated additional measures according to the students' profiles to eliminate barriers to learning? (I.P. Leiria, 2014; Monteiro & Gomes, 2009; Universidade Aberta, 2021; UNED, 2023; Oliveira, 2024; Figueiredo, Coelho & Veiga, 2024)

- ◆ Is co-operation between Support Offices for Students with Disabilities, teachers, and IT services stimulated?
- ◆ Are individual differences valued?
- ◆ Does the HEI provide psychological support to its students with a view to their overall well-being?

Teaching

Is there scope for **adapting curricula** according to the students' profile? (Monteiro & Gomes, 2009; Riga, Ioannidi & Nikolaos, 2020). (Maia & Santos, 2024; EADTU, 2025)

- ◆ Can curricula be diversified to meet the needs of all students, including those with disabilities?
- ♣ Does the curriculum design include **modularisation**, stackable credentials, interdisciplinary pathways, as well as multimodal content, flexible pace, and adaptive feedback? Does it design considers **flexible learning pathways** with multiple entry and exit points, opportunities to reengage, varied pacing options, and clear success criteria?
- ◆ Does the HEI respond to the increasing diversity in higher education and the wide range of student needs by continuously **(re)evaluating** how the teaching and learning process is structured to effectively support the attainment of the desired outcomes?

Does the support of students with disabilities include **differentiated pedagogical practices**? (I.P. Leiria, 2014; Araújo, 2024; Carrascal, Anguita, Navarro, & Barros, 2024; Oliveira, 2024; Ferreira & Pedrosa, 2024; UNESCO, 2023; EADTU, 2025)

- ◆ Are accessible pedagogies tailored to students with disabilities, making individual adjustments as needed, and incorporating open solutions and inclusive technology used?
- ◆ Are accessible open solutions integrated into ODL and comply with accessibility standards at all stages of development and implementation? Does the support of students with disabilities include personalisation and pedagogical innovation, responding to student diversity with differentiated strategies? Does personalisation include assessment (varied formats, continuous feedback, alignment with real-life contexts)?
- ◆ Are pedagogical practices that respect students' pace, rhythms, and modes of communication encouraged, namely personalised learning rhythms with the possibility of repetition and autonomous exploration of the content?
- ◆ Are digital learning materials adapted to different formats (text, audio, video) according to the different profiles of students with disabilities?
- ◆ Are activities created with clear instructions, accessible, and segmented language?

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- ♣ Is AI considered a valid technological tool to be used as a strategy to facilitate the inclusion of students with different profiles, namely by facilitating the development of autonomy and metacognition (Technology-enhanced personalisation: use of chatbots that provide personalised feedback, simplification of texts, visualisation systems)?
- ♣ Are predictable analytics applied? not only to identify and support students at risk, but also to help all learners reach their full potential?
- ♣ Is **student agency** fostered by engaging students as partners in the co-design of the curriculum and in learning (providing choice, supporting self-regulation and goal-setting, and embedding reflective practice within assessment)? Are mechanisms implemented for student participation in course design through feedback, analytics, and formal course reviews. Is data on student experiences collected and analysed to improve future courses?

Are the learning infrastructure and the **study materials** accessible? (I.P. Leiria, 2014; EADTU, 2022)

- ◆ Are textbooks available in digital adaptive format (PDF. ePUB. MOBI. HTML5)?
- ◆ Are there audiobooks, chapter summaries, interactive videos, practice tests, exercises, live online classes, videos of online classes, and language translation applications?
- ♣ Do study materials in general provide navigation clues to locate content?
- ◆ Have text alternatives been created for non-text content? E.g.: are subtitles added to videos, thus ensuring that they can be understood by students with partial or total hearing loss? Are simultaneous transcription or subtitles for the videos available?
- ♣ Is listening and viewing facilitated by highlighting key elements? Or other such as smart contrast, screen reader, adaptive fonts, dyslexia fonts, text spacing, line spacing, and pausing animations?
- ◆ Does the HEI stimulate the use of tools that provide the LMS with accessible versions of the files/resources that are uploaded within a course, automatically creating alternative versions (enhanced pdf, audio, electronic braille, ePub, HTML), allowing the students of a course to choose the type of file that best suits their needs?
- ♣ Do students have access to **specialized software**? E.g.: screen magnification software or screen reading software, text-to-speech systems; alternative keyboards (e.g., with larger or smaller keys, operable with limited hand and arm movements, or with a mouth stick; virtual keyboard navigation); alternative input devices (such as joysticks, operable using the foot or with limited hand movements); voice recognition that enables people with disabilities to use a computer, tablet, or mobile device using their voice?
- ◆ In synchronous communication occasions, is verbal information provided that allows blind students to understand what happened in the classroom?
- ◆ Does the Documentation Sector offer tutorials and personalized assistance (when needed) to help students with difficulties to become autonomous as Library users?

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- ◆ Are e-books edited by the Institution produced under accessible format rules?

Regarding **virtual classrooms**, are they clearly organised? (EADTU, 2022; UNESCO, 2023)

- ◆ Is the structure of the virtual classroom as simple and clear as possible (e.g., with dates clearly stated, and with topics organized down-top so that the most recent topic appears first)?
- ◆ Is the Communication effective? Is regular contact with students maintained to assess their progress and address any challenges they face?
- ◆ Is the information stable, avoiding changes?
- ◆ Are the provided instructions accurate?
- ◆ Is excessive complexity, large amounts of information, a large number of formulae, or of graphic marks such as italics, underlined, bold... avoided?
- ◆ Is Periodic Review of Content Accessibility done? Is course content regularly monitored to ensure it complies with accessibility standards and make modifications as needed?

Do **written documents** follow the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)? (I.P. Leiria 2014).

- ◆ Does the page width not exceed 80 characters per line? Is the text aligned left? Is the font Verdana or Arial, or another equally perceptible? Are font sizes 11 or 12 for body text, 22 or 24 for presentations, and titles and subtitles the same size or larger than the body text? Is the spacing 1.5 between lines and between paragraphs at least 1.5 times greater than the spacing between lines? Have styles been applied to organise the content structure (chapters, titles, subtitles; header style always used for titles)? Is hyphenation avoided? Is there a table of contents either on the 1st page or after the cover page? Is the background plain, with no watermarks or background images?

Do **spreadsheets | Excel** follow the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)? (I.P. Leiria, 2014).

- ◆ Is a general description of the layout provided, indicating the direction of text flow (whether from top to bottom or left to right)? Are row and column headers identified as such? Are visual reading elements identified and have a textual equivalent (description)? If colour is used to show information in graphs, is maximum contrast ensured? Is the colour inversion function possible (Windows Magnifier or another equivalent tool)? Is each sheet identified with a meaningful name that is representative of the information?

Do **presentations | PowerPoint** follow the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)? (I.P. Leiria, 2014)

- ◆ Are standard, simple presentation templates used? Is a plain background without columns used? Do slides have clear, descriptive titles? Are shapes with embedded text boxes avoided? Are the notes field used to provide more detailed descriptions, e.g., of

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

images, graphs, videos, or even the content of the slide? Are animations and transitions between slides or within them avoided?

Do **PDF** follow the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)? (I.P. Leiria, 2014)

- ◆ Are they made with OCR? Have they not been created from scanned images? Was it ensured that tables, paragraphs, and sentences have not been split by page breaks?

Does the HEI have a **peer mentoring** programme? Bringing together freshmen and students from advanced semesters responds to students' need to relate to fellow students in a distance learning setting. (EADTU, 2022; Universities, 2024)

- ◆ Is there an individual support programme for new students defined according to their needs and experience? (e.g. the 'Inclusion Concept' and the 'Peer Mentoring project' at the FernUniversität in Hagen, which focus on disabilities or chronic illnesses, or the "Projeto Acessibilidades" at Universidade Aberta).
- ♣ Do students with disabilities participate in workshops based on their specific needs, so that they acquire general study skills which will help them to proceed successfully with their studies, thus lowering dropout rates?
- ♣ Does the programme coordinator or the students themselves organise synchronous meetings to enhance peer mentoring?

References

- Abrantes, P. (2021). Educação inclusiva: Proposta de quadro analítico e aplicação ao caso português. *Revista Portuguesa de Educação*, 34(1), 25–41. <https://doi.org/10.21814/rpe.18677>
- Acuña, X., Piñeiro, J. L., Romero, M., Rojas, P., & Acuña, X. (2025). *Inclusión y Diversidad en Educación. 10 años de Investigación en Educación Especial*. Ariadna Ediciones. <https://10.26448/ae9789566143383.133>
- Anagnostou, D. (2023). *Οι έμφυλες ανισότητες στην ανώτατη εκπαίδευση και την επιστημονική έρευνα στην Ελλάδα: Μπορούν τα Σχέδια Δράσης να προωθήσουν την ουσιαστική ισότητα*; [Gender Inequalities in Higher Education and Scientific Research in Greece: Can Action Plans Promote Substantive Equality?]. Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP). Retrieved from <https://www.eliamep.gr/oi-emfyles-anisotites-stin-anotati-ekpaidefsi-kai-tin-epistimoniki-erevna-stin-ellada-boroun-ta-schedia-drasis-na-proothisoun-tin-ousiastiki-isotita>
- Araújo, M. (2024). *Inovação e desenvolvimento de competências para o século XXI com a implementação das Ações Educativas de Sucesso do projeto INCLUD-ED* (Tese de doutoramento, Universidade Aberta). Universidade Aberta.
- Arboleda Toro, V., Gil Ramírez, E., Osorno Quiceno, M., Ramírez Bedoya, D., & Arcila Parra, A. (2025). Procesos de flexibilización curricular en estudiantes con discapacidad. *Palabra*, 25(1), 44–67. <https://10.32997/2346-2884-vol.25-num.1-2025-5028>
- Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. (2024). Σχέδιο Δράσης για την Ισότητα των Φύλων 2024–2027 [Gender equality action plan 2024–2027]. https://isotita.auth.gr/wp-content/uploads/sites/352/2025/01/ΣΔΙΦΚΔ_ΑΠΘ_2024-2027επικαιροποιημένο_ΜΕ-ΔΙΟΡΘΩΣΗ-ΣΥΓΚΛΗΤΟΥ.pdf
- Arráez, G., Antón Ros, N., Gómez Puerta, M., Valero, M. Á, & Jiménez López, A. (2025). Discapacidad auditiva: un análisis sobre la preparación del futuro profesorado. *INFAD* (Barcelona), 1(1), 359–366. <https://10.17060/ijodaep.2025.n1.v1.2834>
- Barbosa, S., Oliveira, A., & Teixeira, F. (2023). Initiation practices and access to higher education for deaf students: The interpreter as a resource. *Journal of Interpretation*, 31(1), Article 4. <https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/joi/vol31/iss1/4>
- Bender, C., Bühner, L., & Drolshagen, B. (Hrsg.). (2023). *Teilhabe an hochschulbildung. Grundsätze, konzepte und praxisbeispiele für die beratung und begleitung von studierenden mit behinderung*. Waxmann: Münster; New York. <https://doi.org/10.25656/01:28489>
- Carrascal, S., Anguita, J. M., Navarro, Ó., & Barros, D. M. V. (2024). Internacionalização na educação: Personalização e acessibilidade em contextos digitais. *Em Rede*, 11.
- Carvalho, T., Diogo, S., Cardoso, S., Silva, P. L., & Vilhena, B. (2021). *Plano para a Igualdade, Equidade e Diversidade 2021–2025*. Centro de Investigação de Políticas do Ensino Superior (CIPES). https://www.cipes.pt/sites/default/files/Plano%20de%20Genero%20do%20CIPES%2015112022_PO_RT.pdf
- CAST. (2018). *The UDL Guidelines*. UDL Guidelines. <https://udlguidelines.cast.org/> (Nota: Projeto original de 2018, atualizado em 2023)
- Chiou, V., Petracou, E., & Skourtou, E. (2023). How inclusive is Greek higher education? Attitudes and practices of faculty staff and students’ experiences on inclusive education at tertiary level. In N.

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

Oruç Ertürk & A. Yürekli (Eds.), *Inclusive education: Definition and conceptual framework* (pp. 119–148). Waxmann. <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/9w2k4>.

Claeys-Kulik, A. L., Jørgensen, T. E., & Stöber, H. (2019). *Diversity, equity and inclusion in European higher education institutions: Results from the INVETED project* (C. Royo & H. Mariaud, Eds.). European University Association. <https://zenodo.org/records/6546238>.

Committee of University Chairs. (2020). *The higher education code of governance*. <https://www.universitychairs.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CUC-HE-Code-of-Governance-publication-final.pdf>

Cortes Coss, D. E. (2024). Inclusión en entornos educativos: experiencias de incidencia para su impulso. *EDITUM*. Ediciones de la Universidad de Murcia.

Cortés Díaz, M.; Ferreira Villa, C.; & Arias Gago, A. R. (2021). Fundamentos del Diseño Universal para el Aprendizaje Desde la Perspectiva Internacional. *Revista brasileira de educação especial*, 27. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1980-54702021v27e0065>

De la Fuente-González, S., Menéndez Álvarez-Hevia, D., & Rodríguez-Martín, A. (2025). Diseño Universal para el Aprendizaje. Una revisión sistemática de su papel en la formación docente. *Alteridad*, 20(1), 113–128. <https://doi.org/10.17163/alt.v20n1.2025.09>

Dias, I. B., Barros, D. M. V., & Seara, I. R. (2020). Projeto Acessibilidades: A inclusão na Universidade Aberta de Portugal. In E. Godoi, E. L. Ferreira, & F. I. Takakura (Orgs.), *Análise das políticas públicas de inclusão e o diálogo entre os diversos atores do processo educacional* (pp. 17–31). NGIME/UFJF. ISBN 978-85-67380-64-3.

EADTU. (2022). *Diversity and Inclusion in Digital Education. For European Universities*. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6546238>

EADTU. (2025). *Personalisation of Education. Enhancing Equity, Learner Agency and Academic Success*. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17279059>

EQUiIP. (2018). *User guide: Educational quality at universities for inclusive international programmes*. Retrieved from <https://equiip.eu/userguide/>

ESHTE. (2019). Regulamento Académico da Escola Superior de Hotelaria e Turismo do Estoril. *Diário da República*, 2.ª série, n.º 125, de 3 de julho.

España. (2006, 14 de diciembre). Ley 39/2006, de 14 de diciembre, de Promoción de la Autonomía Personal y Atención a las personas en situación de dependencia. *Boletín Oficial del Estado*.

España. (2007, 23 de octubre). Ley 27/2007, de 23 de octubre, por la que se reconocen las lenguas de signos españolas y se regulan los medios de apoyo a la comunicación oral [Ley]. *Boletín Oficial del Estado*.

España. (2010, 30 de diciembre). Real Decreto 1791/2010, de 30 de diciembre, por el que se aprueba el Estatuto del Estudiante Universitario. *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, núm. 318, de 31 de diciembre de 2010.

España. (2013, 29 de noviembre). Real Decreto Legislativo 1/2013, de 29 de noviembre, por el que se aprueba el Texto Refundido de la Ley General de Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad y de su Inclusión Social. *Boletín Oficial del Estado*.

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

España. (2017, 8 de noviembre). Ley 9/2017, de 8 de noviembre, de Contratos del Sector Público. *Boletín Oficial del Estado*.

España. (2018, 7 de septiembre). Real Decreto 1112/2018, de 7 de septiembre, sobre accesibilidad de sitios web y aplicaciones para dispositivos móviles del sector público. *Boletín Oficial del Estado*.

España. (2020). Ley Orgánica 3/2020, de 29 de diciembre, por la que se modifica la Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de educación (LOMLOE). *Boletín Oficial del Estado*.

España. (2021a, 2 de junio). Ley 8/2021, de 2 de junio, por la que se reforma la legislación civil y procesal para el apoyo a las personas con discapacidad en el ejercicio de su capacidad jurídica. *Boletín Oficial del Estado*.

España. (2021b, 14 de julio). Carta de Derechos Digitales. Ministerio de Asuntos Económicos y Transformación Digital.

España. (2023a, 21 de marzo). Real Decreto 193/2023, de 21 de marzo, por el que se regulan las condiciones básicas de accesibilidad y no discriminación de las personas con discapacidad para el acceso y utilización de los bienes y servicios a disposición del público. *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, núm. 69, de 22 de marzo de 2023.

España. (2023b, 22 de marzo). Ley Orgánica 2/2023, de 22 de marzo, del Sistema Universitario. *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, núm. 70, de 23 de marzo de 2023.

Estado Português. (2017). Despacho n.º 8584/2017. *Diário da República*, 2.ª Série, n.º 189, de 29 de setembro.

Estado Português. (2018). Decreto-Lei n.º 54/2018. *Diário da República*, 1.ª Série, n.º 129, de 6 de julho.

Estado Português. (2020). Resolução do Conselho de Ministros n.º 30/2020. *Diário da República*, 1.ª Série, n.º 79, de 21 de abril.

Estado Português. (2021). Decreto-Lei n.º 63/2021. *Diário da República*, 1.ª Série, n.º 145-A, de 28 de julho.

Estado Português. (2021). Despacho n.º 1931/2021. *Diário da República*, 2.ª Série, n.º 38, de 24 de fevereiro.

Estado Português. (2021). Portaria n.º 331/2021. *Diário da República*, 1.ª Série, n.º 235, de 3 de dezembro.

Estado Português. (2021). Resolução do Conselho de Ministros n.º 101/2021. *Diário da República*, 1.ª Série, n.º 145, de 28 de julho.

Estado Português. (2021). Resolução do Conselho de Ministros n.º 101/2021. *Diário da República*, 1.ª Série, n.º 145, de 28 de julho.

Estado Português. (2022). Decreto-Lei n.º 82/2022. *Diário da República*, 1.ª Série, n.º 234, de 6 de dezembro.

Estado Português. (2022). Despacho n.º 9619-A/2022. *Diário da República*, 2.ª Série, n.º 150, de 4 de agosto.

Estado Português. (2022). Portaria n.º 35-A/2022. *Diário da República*, n.º 10/2022, 1.º Suplemento, Série I, de 14 de janeiro.

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

Estado Português. (2023). *Decreto-Lei n.º 64-A/2023*. *Diário da República*, 1.ª Série, n.º 147, de 31 de julho.

Estado Português. (2023). *Portaria n.º 325/2023*. *Diário da República*, 1.ª Série, n.º 210, de 30 de outubro.

Estado Português. (2024). *Despacho n.º 7253/2024*. *Diário da República*, 2.ª Série, n.º 127, de 3 de julho.

Estado Português. (n.d.). *Estratégia Nacional para a Inclusão de Pessoas com Deficiência 2021–2025*. <https://www.inr.pt/documents/11309/284924/ENIPD.pdf>

Estado Português. (n.d.). *Estratégia Nacional para a Inclusão de Pessoas com Deficiência 2021–2025*. Retrieved from <https://www.inr.pt/documents/11309/284924/ENIPD.pdf>

EUCEN. (n.d.). *Building a more inclusive Europe: Providing higher education institutions with the tools to deal with diversity and social inclusion*. Retrieved from <http://smile.eucen.eu>

European Association of Distance Teaching Universities. (2024). Supporting Retention and Student Services in Online and Distance Education. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11120008>

European Commission, European Education and Culture Executive Agency. (2022). *Towards equity and inclusion in higher education in Europe*. Publications Office of the European Union. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2797/631280>

European Commission. (n.d.). *Inclusive and connected higher education*. <https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/inclusive-and-connected-highereducation>

European Commission. (n.d.). *Priorities of the Erasmus+ programme*. <https://erasmusplus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-a/priorities-of-the-erasmus-programme>

European Institute for Gender Equality. (2020). *Greece – Legislative and policy backgrounds*. <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/legislative-policy-backgrounds/greece>

European Union. (2019). *The European Accessibility Act: Directive 2019/882*. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/882/oj/eng>

FernUniversität in Hagen. (2025). *Gleichstellungskonzept der FernUniversität*. https://www.fernuni-hagen.de/chancengerechtigkeit/docs/7530_brosch%C3%BCre-gleichstellungskonzept_2025-2028_web-.pdf

Ferreira, A., & Pedrosa, D. (2024). Uso da inteligência artificial para apoiar a autorregulação da aprendizagem: Uma revisão de literatura. *Revista de Educação e Tecnologia*, 7(2).

Figueiredo, M. C., Coelho, O., & Veiga, A. (2024). Educação inclusiva no ensino superior português: Avanços, desafios e medidas de apoio para estudantes. *Revista da FLUP*, 242–262.

Fisseler, B. (2024). Digitale Inklusion an Hochschulen. *Public Health Forum*, 32(2), 149–152. <https://doi.org/10.1515/pubhef-2024-0019>

Fragkou, V., & Gkofa, C. (2021). Social inclusion of refugees into higher education: Inclusive practices and reflections from Greece. *Educational Review*, 75(4), 541–555. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2021.2009443>

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

General Secretariat for Demographic and Family Policy and Gender Equality. (2021). *Εθνικό Σχέδιο Δράσης για την Ισότητα των Φύλων 2021–2025* [National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021–2025]. <https://isotita.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ΕΣΔΙΦ-2021-2025.pdf>

González-Ramírez, T., Alba-Pastor, C., Galindo-Domínguez, H., & García-Hernández, A. (2025). Efecto de la formación del profesorado en el diseño universal para el aprendizaje (DUA) sobre la percepción de los facilitadores y las barreras para la educación inclusiva. *Educar* (Bellaterra, Spain), 61(1), 35–51. <https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/educar.2121>

Gottschalk, F., & Weise, C. (2023, August 1). Digital equity and inclusion in education: An overview of practice and policy in OECD countries. *OECD Education Working Papers* No. 299.

Governo Português. Ministério da Educação. (2022). *Recomendação sobre o acolhimento de migrantes na escola inclusiva*. Lisboa, Portugal. [Conselheiros/Relatores: Santos, L., Mineiro, J. P., Batalha, J., & Reis, J.]

Greek Government. (2000). Law 2839/2000 – Regulations related to the Ministry of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization and other provisions. *Government Gazette*, 196/A/12-09-2000.

Greek Government. (2007). Law 3549/2007 – Reform of the institutional framework of the structure and functioning of higher education institutions. *Government Gazette*, 69/A/20-03-2007.

Greek Government. (2007). Law 3549/2007 – Reform of the institutional framework of the structure and functioning of higher education institutions. *Government Gazette*, 69/A, 20 March.

Greek Government. (2008). Law 3653/2008 – Institutional framework for research and technology and other provisions. *Government Gazette*, 49/A, 21 March.

Greek Government. (2008b). Law 3699/2008 on the special education of persons with disabilities or with special educational needs. *Government Gazette*, 199/A/2-10-2008.

Greek Government. (2013). Law 4186/2013 on the restructuring of secondary education and other provisions. *Government Gazette*, 193/A, 17 September.

Greek Government. (2016). *Law 4368/2016 – Measures to address the humanitarian crisis and other provisions (Article 82)*. *Government Gazette*, 21/A/21-02-2016. <https://www.european-agency.org/country-information/greece/legislation-and-policy>

Greek Government. (2020). *National action plan for the rights of persons with disabilities (2020–2023)*. Retrieved from https://accessible-eu-centre.ec.europa.eu/document/download/5c928a2c-a806-4475-82eb-290c042ed908_en?filename=EL_AccessibleEU_AccessibilityIndicators2023_Report_acc.pdf

Greek Government. (2021a). *Κατευθυντήριες γραμμές και εργαλεία για την εκπόνηση και εφαρμογή σχεδίων δράσης για την ισότητα των φύλων στα ανώτατα εκπαιδευτικά ιδρύματα* [Guidelines and tools for developing and implementing gender equality action plans in higher education institutions]. https://docs.aula.gr/sites/default/files/attachedposts/ΣΔΙΦ_Κατευθυντήριες-γραμμές-και-εργαλεία.pdf

Greek Government. (2021b). *National strategy and action plan for the social inclusion of Roma 2021–2030*. Retrieved from https://adsdatabase.ohchr.org/IssueLibrary/GREECE_National%20action%20plan%20for%20Roma.pdf

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

Guerreiro, A. B. C., Branco, M. L., & Silva, S. M. da. (2025). Educação inclusiva em Portugal, do ensino básico ao ensino superior: Uma análise da legislação. *European Public & Social Innovation Review*, 10, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.31637/epsir-2025-1121>

HEFCW. (2020). *HEFCW Draft Strategic Equality Plan*. W20 02HE Annex A HEFCW Draft Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 English.pdf

Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP). <https://www.eliamep.gr/oi-emfyiles-anisotites-stin-anotati-ekpaidefsi-kai-tin-epistimoniki-erevna-stin-ellada-boroun-ta-schediadrasis-na-proothisoun-tin-ousiastiki-isotita>

Hellenic Open University. (2022). *Action plan for gender equality 2022–2027*. Retrieved from <https://www.eap.gr/wp-content/uploads/sxedio-drasis-emfili-isotita/index.html>

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2021.2021395>

Hyrnsalmi, S. (2025). Challenges and opportunities: Implementing diversity and inclusion in software engineering university level education in Finland. *Journal of Systems and Software*, 219. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jss.2024.112239>

INCLUSIPHE. (n.d.). *Supporting inclusive student engagement in professional higher education*. <https://inclusiphe.eu>

Instituto Politécnico de Leiria. (2014). *Necessidades educativas especiais: Manual de apoio para docentes | Manual de apoio para estudantes* (G. Seco, L. Filipe, P. Pereira, & S. Alves, Orgs.). Instituto Politécnico de Leiria.

Ismail, A., Kuppusamy, K. S., & Paiva, S. (2020). Accessibility analysis of higher education institution websites of Portugal. *Proceedings*, 685–700.

Jousilahti, J., Tanhua, I., Paavola, J.-M., Alanko, L., Kinnunen, A., Louvrier, J., Husu, L., Levola, M., & Kilpi, J. (2022). *Report on the state of equality and diversity in Finnish higher education institutions*. Publications of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland 2022:40. <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-263-789-5>

Lapworth, S. (2025). *What students can expect from new regulation on free speech and preventing harassment and sexual misconduct*. Office for Students (OFS) <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/blog/what-students-can-expect-from-new-regulation-on-free-speech-and-preventing-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct/>

Loureiro, M., & Neves, P. (2023). Intervenção mediada por pares e inclusão de crianças com perturbação do espectro do autismo. In M. Baptista (Coord.), *Desafios da educação inclusiva* (pp. 25–34). Instituto Politécnico de Coimbra. Escola Superior de Educação, Núcleo de Investigação em Educação, Formação e Intervenção.

Maia, M., & Santos, P. (2024). *Desenho Universal para a Aprendizagem no ensino superior: mapeamento de iniciativas de consciencialização*. EduSer.

MEDR. (2025) *Strategic Plan 2025-2030*. Commission for the Tertiary Education and Research. <https://www.medr.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Medr-Strategic-Plan-2025-2030.pdf>

Merino-Fernández, M. Á., Ortiz-Revilla, J., & Greca, I. M. (2023). Diseño universal para el aprendizaje en educación STEAM integrada: una experiencia en educación primaria. *Revista de Enseñanza de La Física*, 35(2), 223–235. <https://doi.org/10.55767/2451.6007.v35.n2.43733>

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- Monteiro, R., & Gomes, M. J. (2009). *Estudo de práticas de acessibilidade e inclusão digital nas universidades públicas portuguesas*. Universidade do Minho. <https://repositorium.sdum.uminho.pt/handle/1822/9429>
- Mumbardó-Adam, C., Sala-Bars, I., Adam-Alcócer, A. L., Ahufinger, N., & Andrés-Gárriz, C. (2024). El uso del Diseño Universal para el Aprendizaje por parte del profesorado universitario: un estudio exploratorio. *Revista Electrónica de Investigación en Docencia Universitaria*, 5(1), 200–234. <https://doi.org/10.54802/r.v5.n1.2023.135>
- Natsi, D., & Papa, T. (2019). *Η νομοθετική αντιμετώπιση των έμφυλων διακρίσεων στην Ελλάδα* [The legislative approach to gender-based discrimination in Greece]. Heinrich Böll Foundation. Retrieved from <https://eifpada.uniwa.gr/wp-content/uploads/sites/577/2022/05/H-NOMOΘETIKH-ANTIMETΩΠΙΣΗ-ΤΩΝ-ΕΜΦΥΛΩΝ-ΔΙΑΚΡΙΣΕΩΝ-ΣΤΗΝ-ΕΛΛΑΔΑ.pdf>
- Nieminen, J. H. (2022). Assessment for inclusion: Rethinking inclusive assessment in higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 29(4), 841–859. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2021.2021395>
- Nogueira, J. M., Querido, L., Nunes, N., Ortiz, A., & Botelho, M. d. C. (2023). Alunos com deficiência no ensino superior em Portugal. *Revista Educação e Políticas em Debate*, 12, 1000–1018. <https://doi.org/10.14393/REPOD-v12n3a2023-69998>
- OECD. (2023). *Equity and inclusion in education: Finding strength through diversity*. <https://www.oecd.org/publications/equity-and-inclusion-in-education-e9072e21-en.htm>
- OFS. Office for Students. (2025). *Equality and diversity*. <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/equality-and-diversity/>
- OHO-hanke. (n.d.). *Accessibility criteria*. <https://esok.fi/hankkeet/oho-hanke/julkaisut/accessibilitycriteria>
- Oliveira, G. A. (2024). *Práticas pedagógicas promotoras de inclusão: Perspetivas, desafios e reflexões* [Dissertação de Mestrado, Universidade do Porto]. Repositório da Universidade do Porto.
- Porfírio, J. (Coord.), Martins, M. (Coord.), Gerardo, G. (Coord.), Caforio, A., Rashidi, A., Cotovanu, A., Palmares, F., Silva, H., Gronita, J., Valle, L., Spatafora, M., Sentic, M., Estanqueiro, P., Cunha, R., Carrilho, T., Averhed, Y., & Dolnicar, V. (2016). *Innovation and social learning on higher education* [Ebook]. Universidade Aberta. <http://hdl.handle.net/10400.2/5945>
- Riga, A., Ioannidi, V., & Papayiannis, N. (2020). Students with special educational needs in Greek higher education: ICTs as a vital tool for inclusion. *European Journal of Special Education Research*, 6. <https://doi.org/10.46827/ejse.v6i2.3232>
- Rodrigues, M. L. H., & Baptista, M. M. (2023). Modelos de colaboração docente e inclusão de alunos surdos. In M. M. Baptista (Coord.), *Desafios da educação inclusiva* (pp. 35–52). Instituto Politécnico de Coimbra, Escola Superior de Educação, Núcleo de Investigação em Educação, Formação e Intervenção.
- Säljö, R. (2010). Digital Tools and Challenges to institutional tradition of learning: technologies, social memory and the performative nature of learning. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 26, 53–64
- Santos, E., Souza, D. C., & Santos, P. Â. (2022). Políticas educativas e a inclusão no Ensino Superior: percepções sobre o contexto português. *Educação e Filosofia*, pp. 37–63.

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

- Seidel, S. (2014). Defizitär oder produktiv. Die Heterogenität der Studierenden. *Die Hochschule* (Bd. 23, Nummer 2, S. 6–21).
- Silva, M. da C. S. (2011). *Inclusão escolar de crianças e jovens de comunidades ciganas: práticas pedagógicas formais e não-formais no âmbito do programa Escolhas* (Relatório de estágio). Universidade de Lisboa, Instituto de Educação da Universidade de Lisboa.
- Souto, A. M., & Lappalainen, S. (2024). Normative whiteness in Finnish university education. *Critical Studies in Education*, 66(1), 91–107. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2024.2347276>
- Stürmer, S., Ihme, T. A., Fisseler, B., Sonnenberg, K., & Barbarino, M.-L. (2018). Promises of Structured Relationship Building for Higher Distance Education: Evaluating the Effects of a Virtual Fast-Friendship Procedure. *Computers & Education*, 124, 51–61. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.05.015>
- Tampere University of Applied Sciences. (2025). *TAMK's Equality Plan for 2025-2026*. https://content-webapi.tuni.fi/proxy/restricted/2025-03/accessible-tamk-equality-plan_2025-2026_0.pdf
- TASO. (2025). *Research topics*. <https://taso.org.uk/research-topics/>
- TASO. (2022). *The impact of curriculum reform on the ethnicity degree awarding gap*. <https://taso.org.uk/research/the-impact-of-curriculum-reform-on-the-ethnicity-degree-awarding-gap/>
- The Finnish Diverse Learners' Association (2025). *Learning disability at work and in studies*. <https://www.eoliitto.fi/en/>
- UCL Teaching & Learning. (2020). *Inclusive teaching, learning and assessment*. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/publications/2020/apr/inclusive-teaching-learning-and-assessment>.
- UKRI. (2023). *UKRI's equality, diversity and inclusion strategy*. <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukris-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy/>
- UNED. (2015, 15 July). *Reglamento de organización y funcionamiento del Centro de Atención a Universitarios con Discapacidad (UNIDIS)* [Internal bulletin No. 39/Anexo I]. Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia.
- UNED. (2023, 24 April). *Resolución de creación de la Unidad responsable de accesibilidad (URA) de la UNED* [Resolution]. Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia.
- UNED. (2024, 11–12 de noviembre). *Proyecto de Estatutos de la UNED* [Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia] aprobado por el Claustro Universitario (noviembre 2024) [PDF file]. UNED.
- UNESCO. (2017). *A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248254>
- UNESCO. (2023). *Revised Guidelines on the Inclusion of Learners with Disabilities in Open and Distance Learning (ODL)*. <https://www.unesco.org/en/open-access/cc-sa>
- Universidade Aberta. (2021). Regulamento do Estudante com Necessidades Educativas Especiais [Despacho 147-R-2021]. *Diário da República*, Extrato 20493/2021.

D2.1- Compendium of Principles and Recommendations

Universidade de Coimbra. (2020). Regulamento Académico da Universidade de Coimbra. *Diário da República*, n.º 187, 2.ª série, Regulamento n.º 805-A/2020.

Universidade de Lisboa. (2016). Regulamento do Estudante com Necessidades Educativas Especiais da Universidade de Lisboa [Despacho n.º 6255/2016]. *Diário da República*, de 29 de abril.

Universidade do Minho. (2021). *Plano de Ação 2021–2025*. Universidade do Minho.

Universidade Nova de Lisboa. (2024). Código de conduta para a prevenção e combate ao assédio e discriminação. *Diário da República*, 2.ª Série, n.º 67, Despacho n.º 3658/2024, de 4 de abril.

Universities UK. (2025). *Equality, diversity and inclusion*. <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-research/equality-diversity-and-inclusion>

University of Piraeus. (2023). *Σχέδιο δράσης για την ισότητα των φύλων 2023–2025* [Gender equality action plan 2023–2025]. Retrieved from https://www.unipi.gr/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/ΣΧΕΔΙΟ_ΔΡΑΣΗΣ_ΙΣΟΤΗΤΑΣ_ΦΥΛΩΝ_ΠΑΠΕΙ.pdf

University of the Aegean. (2022). *Σχέδιο δράσης για την ισότητα των φύλων 2022–2025* [Gender equality action plan 2022–2025]. University of the Aegean.

University of West Attica. (2022). *UniDiversity: Οδηγός καλών πρακτικών* [UniDiversity: Good practices guide]. Retrieved from https://eifpada.uniwa.gr/wp-content/uploads/sites/577/2022/06/UniDiversity_%CE%9F%CE%B4%CE%B7%CE%B3%CF%8C%CF%82-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%BB%CF%8E%CE%BD-%CF%80%CF%81%CE%B1%CE%BA%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%8E%CE%BD.pdf

Valente, C. (2021). *Inclusão escolar: As práticas e perspetivas dos professores do 1.º ciclo* (Dissertação de Mestrado). Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL).

Vasilopoulos, A., & Ioannidi, A. (2020). European policies for the inclusion of refugees in higher education: The case of Greece. *Open Journal for Anthropological Studies*, 4(2), 61–74. <https://doi.org/10.32591/coas.ojas.0402.03061v>

License used: This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Share Alike 4.0 International License: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>
With this license, you are free to **share** copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format. You can also **adapt** remix, transform and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially.

But only Under the following terms:

Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

Share Alike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.

Disclaimer: Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



Co-funded by
the European Union

