

Diversity in the Context of Equal Opportunities at the University of Oldenburg

Last revised: June 2022

This policy on Diversity in the Context of Equal Opportunities at the University of Oldenburg was adopted by its Senate on 6 July 2022 and by its Presidential Board on 11 July 2022. The policy was developed as part of the Stifterverband's diversity audit "Shaping Diversity".

Preamble

This document presents the University of Oldenburg's understanding of diversity in the context of equal opportunities. The term "equal opportunities" forms the roof under which the three pillars of gender equality, family friendliness and diversity are institutionalised at the University of Oldenburg. The area of diversity, which was newly focussed on as part of the Stifterverband's diversity audit, is described in more detail below, while the established areas of gender equality and family friendliness are explained in more detail elsewhere.

The University of Oldenburg is firmly committed to **equal opportunities** for all its members, affiliates and guests. It considers constant progress in this area as an indispensable basis for developing talent and potential in studies, research and teaching, as part of its professional actions in administration and transfer and as a contribution to fulfilling its social responsibility and role model function. The university considers anti-discriminatory action as indispensable for successfully promoting equal opportunities. At the same time, it pursues equal opportunities in the knowledge that social inequalities are always (re-)produced at university. So, in this knowledge, the university must always be aware of its own role when it comes to producing exclusions or inclusions in a university context.

The joint commitment to equal opportunities is institutionalised at the University of Oldenburg in the three pillars of **gender equality**, **family friendliness** and **diversity**. These structures are designed to allow all university members, affiliates and guests to participate on an equal footing – regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, health impairment, ethnic or social origin, educational background, language, religion or ideology and family situation. At universities, there are structural relationships of dependency, particularly between the various status groups, which can have an unequal impact on different social groups. The University of Oldenburg is committed to reflecting on social inequalities at all levels, raising awareness of these inequalities and counteracting structural exclusion. It takes an active stance against all forms of discrimination while taking the interconnections between different forms of social inequality (intersectionality) into account. In this way, the university promotes a participatory, inclusive and less discriminatory environment in which its members can study, research and work successfully.

Gender equality

The University of Oldenburg has a special statutory obligation to create equal opportunities for women and men of all status groups in their different life situations by promoting women, to counteract discrimination on the basis of gender, to work towards the elimination of existing disadvantages and to contribute to the promotion of women's and gender studies. With its successful commitment to promoting women, the UOL focuses on further reducing areas of under-representation, increasing the proportion of women in academic self-administration and organising working conditions and qualification opportunities in a non-discriminatory way. With its *Gender Equality Plan 2020*, the University of Oldenburg has placed its gender equality work on a systematic, transparent and binding long-term footing. The central gender equality officer acts as an independent representative of interests in decisions on gender equality work.

Family friendliness

The University of Oldenburg has made it its mission to consciously organise its working and study conditions in a family-friendly way. It promotes the compatibility of family and career or studies and supports its members and affiliates who provide care and nursing services in various phases of life. Family is understood as a social place in which personal responsibility for other people is assumed regardless of the family relationship. As part of the *family-friendly university audit*, the University of Oldenburg has repeatedly been recognised for its family-friendliness and now holds a permanent certificate.

Diversity

The University of Oldenburg is committed to a culture of diversity and equal, non-discriminatory participation of all its members, affiliates and guests. In addition to the established areas of gender equality and family friendliness, the University of Oldenburg's policy addresses the strategic handling of diversity as part of the university's organisational development. Dealing with diversity is seen as a cross-cutting management task that affects all areas of university development and management, such as studies, teaching and continuing education, research, transfer and promotion of early-career researchers, technology and administration, as well as staff recruitment and development. Actively promoting and organising diversity is a strategic management task which is carried out with the participation of the diversity officers and interest groups at the University of Oldenburg. At the same time, all members, affiliates and guests of the university are called upon to organise their fields of activity with diversity and participation in mind. In order to enable them to achieve this, the university is opening up spaces which help them recognise social inequality and structural exclusion at the university in the present and past and allow them to reflect on their own actions. The University of Oldenburg is thus pursuing the common goal of a diversity-friendly organisational structure and culture at various organisational levels and with the participation of all status groups. It sees itself as a learning organisation that takes a self-critical and error-friendly look at its structures, processes and practices and constantly develops them further.

The starting points for the further development of the strategic approach to diversity are the areas of inclusion, open university and internationalisation already established at the University of Oldenburg. This also draws on the scientific expertise available at the University of Oldenburg in various research areas relating to diversity and social inequality.

For the University of Oldenburg, the **inclusion** of members, affiliates and guests with health impairments is a process of accepting and actively shaping diversity - and thus far more than just fulfilling the legal mandate. All physical and mental impairments are included, regardless of whether they are visible or invisible. The design of accessibility, compensation for disadvantages and inclusive management processes in research, teaching and administration are central elements on the way to a diversity-sensitive and participatory university with a living culture of inclusion.

The University of Oldenburg sees itself as an **open university** that is accessible to a diverse student body, especially students with a vocational background and first-generation academ-

ics. Based on this understanding, it offers target group specific services, counselling and support while promoting lifelong learning. The University of Oldenburg thus actively promotes permeability between the vocational and higher education systems.

At the University of Oldenburg, **internationalisation** is both a practised attitude and a strategic development task. One of the main goals of the University of Oldenburg's *internationalisation strategy* is to continue to increase its international competitiveness and visibility in order to make the university more attractive for international academics and students and at the same time to offer all university members, affiliates and guests a cosmopolitan campus and opportunities for international networking.

The existing areas of work on diversity at the University of Oldenburg are constantly being developed and supplemented by additional subject areas. The University of Oldenburg has set itself the goal to recognise the **gender diversity** of its members, affiliates and guests more strongly and to work towards open, respectful treatment of people who see themselves as trans*, inter, queer or non-binary. The university wants to actively oppose disadvantages and discrimination based on (ascribed) gender affiliation beyond the binary gender model.

The overarching aim of the further development of strategies and measures designed to promote diversity at the University of Oldenburg is to emphasise and strengthen the interaction between the various subject and work areas and to utilise the resulting synergy effects in order to continuously and sustainably improve the framework conditions for studying, researching and working for everyone.