

APPROVED  
by Vilnius University Senate  
Decision No SPN-6  
as of 18 February 2020



**Vilnius  
University**

# VILNIUS UNIVERSITY DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STRATEGY 2020-2025



For more than four centuries, a variety of fields and disciplines of science and study have been getting along and inspiring each other under the roof of Vilnius University (hereinafter – the University). Fostering the diversity of disciplines is an unquestionable strength of the University and a deeply significant value. Today, we have the opportunity to learn from yet another source of diversity – our vast community of over 25,000 students and employees – and to honour the potential that lies in it.

Each of us, both women and men, being unique in our abilities, individual, social and other experiences, is part of that diversity.

Seeking to be open not only to the diversity of scientific ideas and disciplines but also to the diversity of the community members in terms of gender, language, nationality, citizenship, social origin or status, faith, beliefs, convictions, sexual orientation, family status and disability, the University possesses invaluable potential for synergies that can undoubtedly contribute to implementing all three substantial missions of the University: studies, science and service to the public. The individual, social and cultural diversity of the University's community is and must remain an inexhaustible source of creativity and innovation for the University and its research and study activities.

# FOUNDATIONS FOR STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

The strategy is based on international human and civil rights law<sup>1</sup>, laws of the Republic of Lithuania<sup>2</sup>, the University's internal documents<sup>3</sup>, the University's strategy for 2018-2020<sup>4</sup>, the study "Diversity and Equal Opportunities in Vilnius University in 2018-2019" and the following values:

- **Equality.** Every member of the University's community shall enjoy all human rights and freedoms regardless of gender, race, nationality, citizenship, language, origin, social status, faith, beliefs or convictions, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, religion, family status or intention to have a child (children).
- **Respect for human dignity and diversity.** Students, staffs and guests of the University shall foster individuality and diversity, realise their potential and feel accepted, respected and secure.
- **Integrity.** The principles of diversity and equal opportunities shall be embedded in all the University's strategic, management, study and research organisation documents and processes, which involve the entire community of the University.
- **Responsibility.** The entire University's community shall be consciously committed to discrimination and hostile environment prevention and assume both collective and individual responsibility not to, through actions or words, engage in discrimination and contribute to creating a hostile environment for an individual person or a group.
- **Inclusion.** The strategy shall be applicable to anyone who is studying, working, visiting or otherwise engaged with the University.
- **Sustainability.** Consistent planning, implementation and monitoring of diversity and equal opportunities activities shall be ensured and activity continuity shall be promoted.

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<sup>1</sup> The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

<sup>2</sup> The Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Equal Treatment of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the Republic of Lithuania and the Guidance on Ensuring Equal Opportunities in Lithuanian Research and Higher Education Institutions by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania.

<sup>3</sup> The Statute of Vilnius University, the Code of Academic Ethics of Vilnius University, the General Principles for Selection, Recruitment (Adaptation) and Activity Assessment of Non-Academic Staff at Vilnius University, the Procedures for Consideration of Work Duty Violations by Employees at Vilnius University, the Procedure for Vilnius University Study Process Adjustment to Individual Needs Arising from Disability and other legal documents of the University.

<sup>4</sup> Section 7.4 "Openness to equality and diversity (of employees' gender, culture, origin, social status, religion, age, etc.)" of the strategic direction 7 "Improve working conditions" and section 8.2 "Openness to equality and diversity (of students' gender, culture, origin, social status, religion, age, etc.)" of the strategic direction 8 "Improve study conditions" under the strategic priority "University motivating its community" set out in the Strategic Plan of Vilnius University 2018-2020.

# AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY

**The aim of the strategy** is to create a study and work environment at the University that promotes individual, social and cultural diversity and ensures equal opportunities for members of the University's community.

Particular attention shall be paid to ensuring equal opportunities in the areas of disability, gender equality, different cultures and social status through the implementation of the following **objectives**:

1. Strive for dignified, need-oriented and high-quality study and work conditions at the University for people with **disability**;
2. Strive for **gender equality** in individual areas of science and studies at the University through implementing gender equality plans with respect to students and staff and through pursuing gender balance in the University's governing bodies;
3. Promote **cultural diversity** in the University and seek equal inclusion of foreign students and staff in the University's community;
4. Search for ways to enable people experiencing **social exclusion** due to financial or other social circumstances to pursue higher education at the University;
5. Develop measures that help members of the University's community better balance **study and (or) work commitments with personal commitments** (maternity, paternity, caretaking of relatives, etc.);
6. Develop **anti-discrimination** measures at the University to reduce direct and indirect discrimination on all the prohibited grounds of discrimination, enshrined in the legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania, and to foster an organisational culture that values diversity and respects each member of the University's community.

## AREAS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The entire University's community and its representative organisations are responsible for the sustainable implementation of the strategy. All the functions and activities of the University shall be based on the values of the strategy:

- The University's management and leadership culture;
- Research activity;
- Study process;
- Human resources management;
- Legislation and application of law;
- Formation of communicative discourse;
- Development of the University's community;
- Development and delivery of services to the University's community and society.

# STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The strategy is a long-term commitment of the University to consistently and systematically pursue diversity and equal opportunities in its study and work environment. The strategy will be implemented in accordance with the strategy implementation plan. It will

be drawn up in two stages: firstly, for the period of 2020-2022, and secondly, for the period of 2023-2025. The strategy and its implementation plan shall be approved by the University's Senate.

## MONITORING AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

**Data monitoring.** The University shall regularly collect quantitative and qualitative data on the different grounds of discrimination. The diversity and equal opportunities data analysis reports will be provided to the Senate, the Rector and the University's community every two years.

**Impact assessment.** The Senate of the University shall oversee the strategy implementation plan. Each year, an annual report on the realisation of the strategy implementation plan will be given at the Senate.