



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI) POLICY DIRECTIVE

SECTION ONE

Purpose, Scope, Legal Basis, and Definitions

1. Short Title

“Arkin University of Creative Arts and Design (ARUCAD) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Directive.”

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this Directive, the following terms shall mean;

- a) University: Arkin University of Creative Arts and Design (ARUCAD),
- b) Rector: The Rector of Arkin University of Creative Arts and Design,
- c) Unit: The relevant Faculty, Institute, School, or Vocational School of the University,
- d) Diversity: The coming together of individuals with different backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, ages, beliefs, disability statuses, and experiences,
- e) Equity: Ensuring that every individual has access to education, resources, and opportunities, regardless of their differences,
- f) Inclusion: The creation of an environment that not only accepts diversity but embraces it, where everyone is respected, feels valued, and is able to participate,
- g) Discrimination: Unequal treatment of an individual on the basis of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, language, disability, age, socioeconomic status, or other protected characteristics,
- h) Participation: The University’s collaboration with all stakeholders to promote policies, processes, and cultures that reflect its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion,
- i) Accountability and Transparency: The continuous monitoring and improvement of the University’s diversity, equity, and inclusion policies based on the quality assurance cycle (Plan – Do – Check – Act), and making these policies, processes, and cultures visible to all stakeholders,
- j) Sustainability: The sustainable commitment of the University to creating a fair, equitable, inclusive, safe, creative, and synergistic environment and culture that enables all stakeholders to realize their potential, regardless of religion, language, race, color, gender, age, nationality, gender identity or expression, marital status, citizenship, disability, or other matters protected by law.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this Directive is to affirm Arkin University of Creative Arts and Design’s commitment to promoting diversity, ensuring equitable practices, and creating an inclusive working, learning, and creative environment for all students, academic and administrative staff, members of the University, and stakeholders. Through this approach, the University aims to build an institutional structure in which every

individual is valued for their identity, culture, perspectives, and experiences, and is protected against discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion.

4. Scope

This Directive applies to all academic and administrative staff, students, stakeholders, and business partners of Arkin University of Creative Arts and Design. These policies are valid and applicable within the campus, on online platforms, during University events, and in all contexts where the University is represented.

SECTION TWO

Protected Characteristics and Fundamental Principles

5. Protected Characteristics

Under this policy, the characteristics guaranteed protection from discrimination include the following:

- (1) Gender,
- (2) Gender identity and gender expression,
- (3) Sexual orientation,
- (4) Race, color, culture, and ethnic origin,
- (5) Language,
- (6) Religion, belief, or worldview,
- (7) Disability status,
- (8) Age,
- (9) Socioeconomic status,
- (10) Marital status and family responsibilities,
- (11) Citizenship or immigration/refugee status,
- (12) Political opinion or affiliation,
- (13) Digital inequality status.

6. Fundamental Principles

Arkin University of Creative Arts and Design (ARUCAD) adopts the following fundamental principles **in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, applicable national legislation, and international human rights standards:**

- (1) **Diversity and Excellence:** Academic and administrative processes are designed by taking into account the diverse perspectives, identities, experiences, and characteristics of all stakeholders of the University. Diversity is recognized as an enriching element, and excellence is pursued in all areas.
- (2) **Equity and Justice:** All students and academic and administrative staff have equal rights. No individual may be subjected to discrimination on the basis of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic origin, religion, language, age, socioeconomic status, refugee status, or any similar characteristic. Equal opportunity on campus is ensured not only by providing the “same conditions,” but also by developing inclusive language, accessible spaces, and structures that enable equal participation for all.
- (3) **Inclusion and Participation:** The University encourages the admission and participation of groups that are underrepresented in higher education (such as women in STEM fields, ethnic minorities, low-income or immigrant students, etc.). Participation is achieved not merely by invitation, but by having a meaningful voice in decision-making processes.
- (4) **Gender Equality:** Increasing the representation of women and all individuals who may be subject to gender-based discrimination in academic and administrative staff, leadership

positions, and educational activities is a strategic priority. A zero-tolerance policy is applied toward gender-based discrimination, inequality of opportunity, harassment, and violence.

- (5) **Disability-Friendly Campus:** The University focuses on improving disability-friendly infrastructure to ensure the full participation of individuals with disabilities or special needs on campus. By observing universal design principles and creating environments in compliance with accessibility standards, the mobility and campus experience of individuals with disabilities are supported.
- (6) **Student Rights:** Equal opportunities are guaranteed for students throughout admission, enrollment, education, assessment, access to support services, participation in community life, and graduation processes.
- (7) **Staff Rights:** Fairness and equity are upheld in recruitment, promotion, remuneration, professional development, and working conditions for academic and administrative staff. Transparency is ensured in performance evaluations, and discrimination, mobbing, or exclusionary practices are not tolerated.
- (8) **Diversity of Thought and Academic Freedom:** Diversity of thought and academic freedom are guaranteed, and these freedoms may not be restricted under the pretext of harassment, threat, or discrimination. Academic content shall reflect multiple perspectives, and differing views shall be expressed respectfully.
- (9) **Zero Tolerance:** All forms of discrimination, harassment, bullying, exclusionary behavior, and actions that cause harm or victimization are strictly prohibited and subject to disciplinary sanctions.
- (10) **Individual and Institutional Responsibility:** Every member of the University community is obliged to refrain from behaviors that may lead to discrimination or harassment. The University not only adopts these principles but also enforces them through education, reporting, and sanction mechanisms.
- (11) **Complaints and Protection / Data Confidentiality and Evidence-Based Decision-Making:** Reporting of policy violations is encouraged. Individuals who submit reports are guaranteed confidentiality and are protected against retaliation. Complaints are handled in a fair, sensitive, timely, and confidential manner.
- (12) **Accessible Communication and Inclusive Language:** Clear, understandable, unbiased, and non-sexist language is used in all internal and external communications. Visual and auditory materials are accessible and inclusive of diverse identities and experiences.
- (13) **Social Engagement and Multiculturalism:** The University extends diversity and inclusion beyond the campus by collaborating with local and international stakeholders (such as civil society organizations, public institutions, municipalities, and bicomunal initiatives). In doing so, the University contributes to strengthening multiculturalism and social responsibility.

SECTION THREE

Reporting and Protection Mechanism, Review and Disciplinary Process

7. Reporting and Protection Mechanism

- (1) All suspicions and allegations related to discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, mobbing, exclusionary behavior, or actions causing harm or victimization within the University may be reported through a secure, confidential, and accessible reporting system.
- (2) Reports may be submitted in written form, online (via grievance@arucad.edu.tr), in person, or through anonymous channels. This mechanism is open to use by students, academic and administrative staff, suppliers, and all stakeholders affiliated with the University.

- (3) The identities of individuals submitting reports shall be protected under the principle of strict confidentiality. Information shall be processed solely by authorized bodies for the purposes of the investigation process.
- (4) Individuals who submit reports shall not, under any circumstances, be subjected to retaliation, pressure, discrimination, or loss of rights. This protection applies to students, academic and administrative staff, and all parties associated with the University. Allegations of retaliation shall be investigated separately and independently.
- (5) An independent committee responsible for receiving, reviewing, and concluding reports shall be appointed by the Rectorate within the University.
- (6) The review, verification, and finalization of reports shall fall under the responsibility of the Rectorate and/or the Board of Trustees.

8. Review and Disciplinary Process

- (1) All complaints submitted to the University concerning practices or behaviors that are contrary to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion shall be examined by the appointed Committee in a prompt, fair, impartial, and confidential manner.
- (2) Complaints shall first be formally accepted and recorded. An initial assessment shall then be conducted to determine the seriousness, scope, and parties involved. Where deemed necessary, temporary protective measures may be implemented to ensure the safety of the parties and the proper conduct of the process.
- (3) Following the preliminary review, the Committee shall conduct a detailed investigation. Within this scope, statements from the parties and witnesses shall be collected, relevant documents and digital records shall be examined, and evidence shall be gathered. Equal opportunity to be heard shall be granted to all parties, and the investigation shall be conducted in accordance with the principle of confidentiality.
- (4) Upon completion of the investigation, the Committee shall reach a decision regarding the nature of the violation and submit its report to the Rectorate. Depending on the severity of the violation, different sanctions may be imposed. For students, sanctions may include a warning, reprimand, temporary suspension, prohibition from campus activities, revocation of scholarships or special privileges, or dismissal from the University. For personnel, sanctions may include a warning, reprimand, temporary suspension from duty, removal from academic or administrative positions, or termination of the employment contract. In cases involving third parties, sanctions such as termination of contractual relations or prohibition of access to campus may be applied.

9. Notification and Right to Appeal

- (1) Decisions taken shall be communicated to the parties in writing, together with their justifications. The parties shall have the right to appeal against such decisions. Appeals shall be submitted to the Rectorate within three (3) business days following notification of the decision and shall be reviewed in a prompt, fair, and impartial manner. The decision rendered at the conclusion of the appeal process shall be final and binding, and no further administrative remedy shall be available within the University.

10. Record-Keeping and Reporting

- (1) All review and disciplinary processes shall be documented in accordance with the principle of transparency. Personal data shall be protected in line with confidentiality principles. Summary data relating to these processes (such as the number of applications and resolution rates) shall be included in the annual report and submitted to the Rectorate. Where deemed necessary, this report may also be shared with the public.

11. Monitoring and Review

- (1) The University shall regularly monitor the implementation of all diversity, equity, and inclusion policies. This scope is not limited to combating discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, mobbing, and bullying, but also includes equal opportunity, balance of representation, accessibility, use of inclusive language, education and awareness-raising activities, participation mechanisms, and stakeholder collaborations.
- (2) The effectiveness of the policy shall be evaluated at regular intervals and, where necessary, updated and further developed.
- (3) Feedback received from students, academic and administrative staff, business partners, and other stakeholders shall be incorporated into the evaluation process.

12. Training and Awareness

- (1) The University shall conduct regular training and awareness-raising activities to ensure that all academic and administrative staff and students are informed about DEI principles and practices. These activities shall cover topics such as diversity, equity, inclusion, inclusive language use, bias awareness, and accessibility, and shall be integrated into orientation programs, in-service training, seminars, and online informational materials.
- (2) The University may organize joint activities in which its stakeholders (including the private sector, civil society organizations, and public institutions) may also participate.
- (3) The content of the training programs shall encompass national legislation, international standards, academic ethics, and principles of good governance.

SECTION FOUR Other Provisions

13. Haller Matters Not Regulated

In cases not explicitly regulated by this Directive, the relevant provisions of other applicable regulations of Arkin University of Creative Arts and Design (ARUCAD), as well as the decisions of the Board of Trustees, the Senate, or the relevant Administrative Boards, shall apply.

14. Entry into Force

This Directive shall enter into force on the date of its adoption by the Senate of Arkin University of Creative Arts and Design.

15. Authority for Enforcement

The provisions of this Directive shall be enforced by the Rector of Arkin University of Creative Arts and Design.