

Guidelines for Inclusive Una Europa In-person Events

Una Europa Diversity Council



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If you have any questions or comments relating to this publication, please contact authors. This is a living document and can be updated when necessary.

Pictures

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About Una Europa Diversity Council

Una Europa's Diversity Council has been established as a permanent entity dedicated to supporting Una Europa in its mission to embed diversity in every aspect of its collaborative efforts. The Diversity Council plays both a consultative and operational role, ensuring that diversity and inclusion are integral to all levels of decision-making and activities within Una Europa.

The Council is composed of professionals from both academic and administrative fields, representing the diverse perspectives and expertise of Una Europa's 11 universities. The primary goal of the Diversity Council is to promote equity and social justice for all, with a special focus on minoritised groups. The Diversity Council is working towards creating a diverse and supportive environment that upholds the values of Una Europa.



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For Reader

Una Europa hosts a wide range of events for its community, including Staff Week, Student Congress, General Assembly, Summer and Winter Schools, Workshops, Una.Lectures, and more. This document serves as a framework and provides guidelines aimed at assisting Una Europa in-person event organizers in creating events that are both diverse and inclusive. By following these guidelines, organizers can enhance the overall experience of the events for all participants.

While this document offers comprehensive recommendations, it's essential for organizers to realistically assess their ability to meet participants' needs and expectations. Some participants may have unique requirements, and in such cases, organizers should consider reaching out to them directly to discuss their needs with reasonable accommodations. Additionally, ensure compliance with relevant national legislation. For further support, organizers are encouraged to consult the Una Europa Diversity Council or the Diversity and Inclusion office or team (or equivalent) at their university.

What is an Inclusive Event?

An inclusive event is one where every attendee feels welcomed, visible, and valued, regardless of aspects such as race, ethnicity, citizenship, migration status, religion, gender identity, age, class, diverse abilities and health status, sexual orientation, or family/relationship status¹. Organizing an inclusive event is a shared responsibility between individuals and the institution. This includes careful attention to diverse representation, cultural sensitivity, language inclusivity, accessibility, and other factors.

What are the Benefits of Inclusive Events?

Inclusive events offer many advantages, including:

- Broader appeal to diverse audiences, leading to increased attendance and greater participation in discussions
- A richer diversity of perspectives, fostering creativity and innovation
- A stronger sense of community and belonging among attendees
- Enhanced networking opportunities
- More enjoyable experiences for all attendees as they feel included and respected
- Higher satisfaction rates among participants
- An improved reputation for event organizers
- To meet equality legislative requirements



¹See [Engaging with Diversity in European Universities](#) for more on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Guidelines for a more diverse and inclusive events

Project Team

Ensure a diverse planning team. This can also include engaging people from diverse backgrounds in all aspects of event planning to ensure various voices and representations. Embracing these differences can lead to more innovative solutions and better decision-making. If your planning team is small, and it is not possible to have diversity represented, alternative option is to engage with stakeholders such as your local Diversity and Inclusion office (or equivalent), networks to have their contribution to oversee the details of the event. Consider remunerating the networks assistance to your event (e.g. student associations) when necessary.

Communications

Inclusive communication means sharing information in a way that everybody can understand.

Inclusive means that no one in your intended audience feels they are not welcome. **Accessible** means ensuring that your message formats do not create barriers for the audience. Be mindful of diversity in your communication. For inclusive event, it is essential to know your audience.

Who are they? What are their expectations? Are you aware of any specific disabilities?

- In images, show diversity of age, race, gender, backgrounds and ability that represents the diverse Una Europa community.
- In language, use inclusive language that does not discriminate or exclude people. Avoid jargon and abbreviations, and gendered language. Consider jokes carefully – humour might be insulting to some of your participants.
- In international settings, use more common English words and avoid complex sentence structures. Be aware that participants are coming from countries where English may not be their first language.
- Pay attention to visuals and appearance of text. Be mindful of colour in design. In general, use black text on a plain white background. When using high contrast colours that stand out from the background. [Use a colour-contrast checker](#) for guidance if unsure.
- When preparing a booklet, include information on the venue's accessibility details

When marketing your event, add Diversity Statement clause in the official call. As for example, use following statement: *Una Europa is committed to fostering an inclusive and diverse environment where everyone feels valued and respected. We value open dialogue and differences in perspective are essential for an ambitious research and educational environment. We welcome applications from individuals with diverse abilities, of any gender, linguistic and cultural background, or other minority groups.*

In the event communication, please send out our **Una Europa Code of Conduct** to participants prior to the event. In the beginning of your event, announce that your event follows the Una Europa Code of Conduct that can be found written at the event. You can find the Code of Conduct under “Resources and Materials” of this document.

In events that do not require registration, such as public lectures, ensure the following sentence is included in all event communication: *‘Una Europa strives to be an inclusive community and values everyone's participation. If you*

have any dietary restrictions, accessibility needs or other requirements that may need to be facilitated, kindly inform us in advance of the event'. You can adapt this text e.g. removing dietary restriction in case of no catering is offered at your event.

Procedures for Selecting Participants

Some of the events have a cap of participants, which requires a competitive process of selecting participants. For the selection of participants procedures,

- Consider gender balance and other diversity amongst participants
- Think about how to attract diverse participants
- Think about how to ensure there is diversity amongst those chosen to the event
- Avoid a long list of criteria or requirements
- Keep the application form simple
- Bear in mind the visa processes - especially when expanding the call outside EU/EEA – visa processes can be complicated and time-consuming, so reserve enough time

Registration Procedures

For the registration to the event (different than applying) please take into consideration collecting following information

- Ask participants for their "preferred name/alias" to be used during your event and to be displayed in the badge, as not everyone's official name aligns with their preferred name (leave it optional)
- Ask pronouns (she/her; he/him; they/them), to be displayed in the badge, but leave it optional, so participant can decide if they wish to use pronouns
- If you request gender, please insert all gender options (woman, man, non-binary, do not prefer to say)
- Consider asking about dietary restrictions of all kinds including food allergies, dietary preferences, intolerances as well as those related to religious or personal reasons
- Ask about accessibility and disability issues (e.g. physical, hearing/vision, learning disabilities, neurodiversity)
- Ensure that the form questions are clear and navigable from both mobile and computer devices
- Ask only relevant information

Inviting Speakers

- Aim that there is gender balance of speakers at events
- Encourage members of minoritized groups to attend and speak at events relevant to their discipline or work and support their ability to participate to guarantee diverse voices and different perspectives
- There might not be a need to include a senior speaker, please provide opportunities for others.
- Avoid tokenism².
- Consider what barriers may prevent people from underrepresented groups from attending or speaking at events
- Consider appointing members of underrepresented groups as chairs of events
- Encourage speakers to incorporate Diversity, Equity and Inclusion aspects into their speeches and talks

² Tokenism is the act of incorporating a small number of people from underrepresented groups to give the false impression of diversity, without genuinely tackling underlying inequalities. For instance, a company might appoint one person of color to a high-profile role while the rest of the leadership team remains uniform. This creates a facade of inclusivity without genuinely uplifting marginalized communities. Source: [Unpacking the Impact of Tokenism in the Workplace | FDM Group UK](#)

Venue and Catering

- Increase the number of food items for diverse diets (such as vegetarian, vegan, lactose-free, gluten-free and halal) so that most attendees are catered for.
- Make sure that the dishes are clearly labeled and that there is available information about potential allergens and content of ingredients.
- Ensure that non-cafeinated options such as herbal teas are also available, and if serving alcohol beverages, please offer non-alcohol options as well.

Accessibility and Inclusion

Is your event accessible? Does it have accessible entrances or ramps? Please bear in mind that registration or reception area, elevators – also stages should have a ramp. Besides, consider following:

- If possible, avoid the use of pod tables which are not suitable for wheelchair users
- Ensure you allocate sufficient time for transportation, as participants with disabilities may require additional time to travel between venues.
- Clear signs where the nearest accessible WC facilities are located
- If possible, availability of gender-neutral WC facilities
- Allow for different means of asking questions during event e.g. Mentimeter for anonymous participation
- If possible, provide written materials prior to the event for people with learning disabilities
- Ensure there is clear signage around the venue
- If requested, consider having a sign language interpreter

Preparations for a more inclusive event

- Liaise with your local Diversity and Inclusion team (or equivalent) if advice is required
- Prepare badges with participants preferred names and pronouns
- Keep the Code of Conduct presentable all the time and ensure having contact information and guidelines what to do in cases of inappropriate behavior
- Try to find a suitable date(s) that does not clash with key religious holidays
- Accommodation – reserve accommodation near venue if possible
- Childcare – can a childcare facility be provided at the conference & nursing room if available
- Provide a quiet space that people can avail of if they wish to retreat for a brief period e.g. individuals who are neurodiverse may wish to take a quiet break away if available
- Taking religion into account: Could there be prayer rooms in the vicinity?
- Consider creating opportunities for a cultural exchange
- Consider creating safer space & brave space strategies in classroom. You can find these guidelines in the end of this document.

Evaluation

- Make material available afterwards
- Send out a feedback survey
- Offer online and in-person feedback channels with options for anonymity

Resources and Additional Material

Una Europa Code of Conduct

Una Europa Code of Conduct establishes the principles for professional conduct and interaction to create a supportive, collaborative, and respectful environment. These principles serve as a shared framework to guide interactions, foster mutual understanding, and ensure that everyone involved feels heard and respected. By agreeing on these principles, we aim to create a safer space where collaboration can thrive as a community.

We commit to constructive and respectful communication

We commit to listening and expressing diverse viewpoints in a constructive and respectful manner. This includes criticism as much as trying to understand the position of the other participant(s) during discussions.

We approach discussions with a willingness to learn and critically examine our own assumptions and preconceptions. We are aware of the differences of language and concepts used in different disciplinary contexts and are willing to enter into a constructive dialogue about them. We are ready and willing to be uncomfortable and to discuss critical matters, and open to being challenged in a spirit of mutual growth and understanding.

We, as a community, a group and as an individual, share a collective duty to uphold respectful dialogue and encourage open exchange of views.

We are mindful that not all participants have English as their first language. This may create inequalities in communication, and it is important to exercise patience and understanding.

We maintain a safer and inclusive environment

The Una Europa community consists of diverse individuals. We understand that assumptions, discomfort, and tolerance often depend on the positionality of the individuals involved and consider how power dynamics and perspectives influence these interactions. We also recognize that people may have different experiences in reflexive learning and unlearning in prior educational, societal, and disciplinary contexts. While we acknowledge existing power dynamics, we are committed to creating an environment where all contributions are equally valid, respected and valued.

We do not, based on external appearances, make assumptions or generalisations about someone's background or abilities. We don't accept harassment, racism, ableism or discrimination based on personal characteristics or background. We do not make offensive remarks or touch other people without their permission.

We respect other community members and their experiences, diverse perspectives and other people's boundaries. We recognize and value the unique strengths and contributions that arise from each person's perspectives and experiences.

If you experience or observe harassment, discrimination or inappropriate behaviour, contact the event organisers.

We are courageous, and to give and receive feedback.

We are courageous in giving and receiving feedback, recognizing it as a vital part of building an equitable and respectful workplace. We understand that our words and actions, even when well-intentioned, can have unintended impacts. In a professional setting shaped by broader systems of power, we acknowledge our responsibility to be aware of how these dynamics show up in our interactions.

We approach each other with humility and care, knowing that accountability is not about blame, but about growth, trust, and mutual respect. We see accountability as a practice rooted in relationship: it means taking ownership of our impact, being open to learning, and engaging in repair when harm occurs.

We commit to cultivating a culture where feedback is shared thoughtfully, received openly, and used as a tool to foster inclusion, equity, and collective wellbeing. Accountability, in this context, is an expression of commitment—to each other, to our values, and to a more just and liberatory future.

Creating safer space & brave space strategies in classroom

Incorporating diverse perspectives and materials into education requires creating a safer and brave space where students feel supported in engaging with complex and sometimes uncomfortable topics. Creating a safer space is essential for critical discussion and to facilitate discussions that encourage students to reflect on and challenge critical topics.

A **safer space** fosters mutual respect, minimizing harm and exclusion. A safe space is an environment where individuals feel respected, psychologically safe, and comfortable to be themselves without fear of judgment or discomfort. While essential for fostering inclusion and emotional well-being, safe spaces may not always promote active learning or critical engagement, as they prioritize comfort over challenging conversations or growth.

While a **brave space**³ encourages participants to step out of their comfort zones to confront biases, challenge inequities, and engage in meaningful dialogue. It also aims to meet the specific needs of people who face inequalities, racism, and discrimination with everyone responsible for upholding same values. These environments are crucial because they empower minoritized voices, ensure a sense of belonging, and enable critical reflection and growth. Without such spaces, efforts to diversify educational materials risk perpetuating tokenism or alienating participants, undermining the goal of fostering equity and inclusion.

Examples for creating a safer space environment in classroom:

Example 1:

- o Creating a shared agreement. Depending on the group size, this can be done individually or in small groups on the first day. The idea is to allow each person or a group to share their thoughts on what creates a safer space and together compile these ideas in a collective agreement. This agreement can be displayed in the room as a visible reminder or revisited regularly. Encourage students to amend or add to the agreement as needed if new issues arise that may impact the feeling of safety of the space.
- o In the final session of the course, revisit the safer space agreement for reflection and discussion. Encourage students to share whether the agreement was upheld, which parts may have been broken, and how the space can be improved into a safer space. This is also an opportunity to identify any additional considerations for creating a safer space in the future, ensuring that the lessons learned are applied also into other environments.
- o Remind students that if they feel uncomfortable sharing certain incidents or feedback in the group setting, especially if the situation was sensitive or difficult, they can approach certain offices on campus that handle matters regarding discrimination and racism.

Example 2:

- o If you are facilitating a one-day workshop/teaching session: Begin the session by distributing post-its to each student. Ask them to write down two points on one post-it about what makes them feel safe in a space, and on another post-it, what makes them feel unsafe. Give them a few minutes for reflection, then have them share their thoughts with the person next to them. Afterward, ask students to stick their post-its on the wall, grouping the "safe space" notes together and the "unsafe space" notes together. As the facilitator, take a few minutes to review the points and keep them in mind throughout the session, offering gentle reminders as needed throughout the session.

For classrooms that have a big number of students, you can still use a simple approach that is time-efficient and ensures the concept of safer spaces is introduced meaningfully, even in a large classroom. It sets the tone for respect and inclusivity without requiring extensive activities:

Example 3:

In a large classroom setting with around 100 students and limited time to cover the material, dedicate a few minutes at the beginning of the session to acknowledge the importance of creating a safer space. Briefly explain what a safer space entails and its significance in fostering respect and inclusivity. Share a single slide with practical examples to help students understand what it means in practice and how they can contribute to maintaining such an environment throughout the course. Here are some practical suggestions, you can choose to follow all of them or just a few:

- o Briefly explain the importance of safer spaces (2-3 minutes).
- o Share why safer spaces matter in a learning environment. For example:
 - o Feeling respected and valued in a classroom can enhance learning. A safer space means everyone feels they can share ideas without fear of judgment. It is not about avoiding challenges but creating a respectful and inclusive environment where we can grow together.
 - o Propose a simple guideline (2 minutes):
- o Offer one clear and actionable classroom guideline, such as:
 - o One way we can contribute to a safer space is by listening actively when others speak. That means refraining from interruptions and being open to different perspectives.
 - o Ask for a quick show of hands or nods to agree on this as a shared goal for the class.
 - o Explain to your students what constitutes a non-safe space, emphasizing environments where people may feel excluded, silenced, or judged.
- o Even with the best intentions, it's possible to create an unsafe environment without realizing it. Here are common behaviours to be mindful of which you can share with your students. This is also a good reflection process for you:
 - o Silencing others. Dismissing or blocking someone's thoughts or contributions can make them feel unheard and excluded.
 - o Inappropriate jokes. Be cautious about humour, jokes can reinforce stereotypes or target sensitive issues, often without awareness of the harm they cause.
 - o Unconscious judgment. Passing judgment, even unintentionally or unconsciously, can make people feel scrutinized or devalued.
 - o Reinforcing cultural norms. Referring to certain practices or behaviours as "normal" upholds cultural hegemony and reinforces dominant power structures, that marginalizes those who don't fit the mold.
 - o Making assumptions. Be aware of assumptions based on race, gender, culture, or background. Assumptions, no matter how subtle, can perpetuate bias and exclusion.

- Taking up space. When only a few students regularly engage in discussions, it can discourage quieter or minoritized participants from sharing their perspectives. This leads to a less diverse exchange of ideas, and some viewpoints may never surface, limiting the learning experience for everyone.
- Being conscious of how often you speak can help create a more balanced and inclusive environment. You can practice this by:
 - Pausing after making a point to invite others to contribute.
 - Encouraging quieter students by directly asking for their input in a supportive way.
 - Being open to different communication styles, including those who might take more time to reflect before speaking.
- Facilitators can also help by actively ensuring a range of voices are heard. This could include rotating who gets to speak first, using small group activities to encourage more participation, or setting guidelines that remind everyone to be aware of how much space they are taking up.
- Be mindful and recognize emotional labour and that discussions on racism can be emotionally heavy, especially for students from minoritized groups. Be mindful of this and offer support, whether through classroom policies, content warnings, or creating spaces for reflection, so that students who face racism and discrimination feel seen and respected without being burdened by the responsibility of educating others.