



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

2026 - 2030



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1. Foreword

Australian University (AU) is committed to building a campus community in which every student, academic and member of staff can participate, contribute and succeed on an equal footing, regardless of gender, nationality, disability, socio-economic background or belief. This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy sets out the University's commitment for the period 2026–2030, translating that commitment into defined goals, measurable indicators and a time-bound action plan.

The Strategy has been developed with reference to international good practice in higher education, the requirements of Kuwait's Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, and the equality-related benchmarks used in global university rankings, including the QS Sustainability Rankings' Equality indicator and QS Stars DEI rating, which assess institutions on measures such as gender balance among students, faculty and leadership, the public availability of an EDI policy, disability support, and scholarships for underrepresented groups.

This document is intended as a living strategy: progress will be reviewed annually, reported to University Council, and used to refine the action plan year on year.

2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this Strategy is to:

- Establish a clear, publicly available institutional commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Set measurable goals across the student and staff lifecycle, recruitment, progression, leadership, support and campus experience.
- Provide a time-defined action plan with named responsibility and success indicators for each action.
- Strengthen the University's performance against recognised EDI benchmarks, including QS ranking indicators.
- Ensure alignment with applicable Kuwaiti law and regulation, including provisions relating to disability access administered by the Public Authority for Disability Affairs.

The Strategy applies to all students, faculty, administrative staff, contractors and visitors across all AU campus, programmes and activities, and covers admissions, employment, teaching and learning, research, student life, facilities and governance.

3. National and International Context

3.1 Kuwaiti context

AU operates within the regulatory framework of the State of Kuwait, including the requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and national labour law. The Strategy is designed to be fully consistent with these requirements while extending institutional practice on inclusion, accessibility and equal opportunity in ways appropriate to the local cultural and legal context.

3.2 QS ranking alignment

Global rankings increasingly assess universities on social impact alongside academic reputation. The QS Sustainability Rankings' Equality indicator evaluates the proportion of female students, faculty and leaders, the availability of a public EDI policy, and disability support; QS Stars similarly rates institutions on demographic diversity and equitable access initiatives such as scholarships for underrepresented groups. This Strategy is structured so that its evidence base published policy, disaggregated data and defined outcomes directly support AU's performance against these indicators.

4. Vision and Guiding Principles

4.1 Vision

By 2030, Australian University will be recognised as an institution where equality of opportunity, respect for diversity and genuine inclusion are embedded in every policy, decision and everyday interaction supporting the success of all students and staff.

4.2 Guiding Principles

- Equality of opportunity: fair access to admission, employment, progression and leadership.
- Respect for diversity: valuing differences in gender, nationality, culture, belief, ability and background.
- Inclusion by design: policies, curricula, facilities and services designed to work for everyone from the outset.
- Evidence and transparency: decisions informed by disaggregated data, published openly wherever possible.
- Shared accountability: EDI is the responsibility of every leader, not a single office.

5. Strategic Goals

The Strategy is organised around seven strategic goals, summarised below. Each goal has a defined objective and success indicators; the detailed time-bound actions that deliver each goal are set out in Section 6.

Strategic Goal	Defined Objective	Success Indicators
1. Governance & Policy	Embed EDI as a formally governed institutional priority with clear ownership, public policy and accountable reporting to Council.	EDI Policy publicly available; EDI Committee active; annual reporting to Council
2. Gender Equality	Achieve balanced representation and equal opportunity for progression across students, faculty and leadership populations.	Year-on-year improvement in gender balance
3. Disability Inclusion & Accessibility	Ensure the physical, digital and academic environment is accessible to students and staff of all abilities.	Completed accessibility audit; operational Disability & Learning Support Office; annual faculty training
4. Cultural, Nationality & Linguistic Diversity	Foster a respectful, harassment-free community that values Kuwait's diverse student and staff population and international outlook.	Published non-discrimination policy; functioning reporting channel; annual intercultural training uptake
5. Equitable Access & Scholarships	Widen access to higher education for underrepresented and financially disadvantaged students.	Scholarships reaching 1–5% of student body; published annual equity outcomes
6. Inclusive Curriculum & Campus Life	Ensure teaching, learning materials and campus life reflect and welcome diverse perspectives.	Completed curriculum reviews; active EDI student societies; adopted inclusive-language guidelines
7. Data, Monitoring & Accountability	Use robust data to track progress, ensure transparency and drive continuous improvement.	Live EDI dashboard; mid-strategy independent review; published end-of-strategy evaluation

6. Time-Defined Action Plan (2026–2030)

The action plan below translates each strategic goal into specific actions with a target timeline, lead responsibility and KPI or milestone. Timelines are expressed by academic quarter/year from the strategy's launch in Q3 2026 (aligned to the 2026/2027 academic year) through to the end-of-strategy evaluation in 2030.

Strategic Goal	Action	Timeline	Lead Responsibility	KPI / Milestone
Governance & Policy	Approve and publish the EDI Strategy and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy on the university website	Q3 2026	President's Office / EDI Committee	Policy publicly accessible
Governance & Policy	Establish EDI Committee with Council-level reporting line and Terms of Reference	Q3 2026	Assistant to the President for Academic Affairs	Committee constituted; ToR approved
Governance & Policy	Appoint a Director/Lead for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	Q4 2026	President's Office	Role filled and resourced
Governance & Policy	Conduct baseline EDI audit (staff, students, governance, facilities)	Q4 2026	EDI Office / HR	Baseline report completed
Governance & Policy	Embed EDI KPIs into annual institutional planning and QS Stars/Sustainability submissions	Q1 2027 (annual)	Planning & Quality Office	KPIs included in annual report
Gender Equality	Analyse and publish gender ratios for students, faculty and leadership positions	Q1 2027 (annual)	HR / Institutional Research	Annual gender data published
Gender Equality	Introduce mentoring and leadership-development programme for women faculty and staff	Q3 2027	HR / Assistant to the President for Academic Affairs	Cohort of participants enrolled annually
Gender Equality	Review recruitment, promotion and tenure criteria for gender-neutral language and equitable process	Q4 2027	HR	Revised policy approved

Strategic Goal	Action	Timeline	Lead Responsibility	KPI / Milestone
Gender Equality	Set target for increased representation of women in senior leadership and decision-making bodies	2028–2030	President's Office	Progress toward target reported annually
Disability Inclusion & Accessibility	Complete campus accessibility audit (physical, digital, learning environments)	Q1 2027	Facilities / IT	Audit report and remediation plan
Disability Inclusion & Accessibility	Establish a Disability & Learning Support Office aligned with Kuwait's Public Authority for Disability Affairs standards	Q3 2027	Student Affairs	Office operational
Disability Inclusion & Accessibility	Implement priority accessibility upgrades (ramps, signage, assistive technology, accessible digital platforms)	2027–2029	Facilities / IT	% of priority items completed
Disability Inclusion & Accessibility	Train faculty on inclusive teaching and reasonable-accommodation procedures	Q1 2028 (annual)	Centre for Teaching & Learning	% of faculty trained
Cultural, Nationality & Linguistic Diversity	Publish and communicate a non-discrimination and anti-harassment policy covering nationality, religion and background	Q4 2026	HR / Legal & Compliance	Policy published; induction sessions held
Cultural, Nationality & Linguistic Diversity	Establish confidential reporting and resolution channel for discrimination/harassment concerns	Q1 2027	HR / Student Affairs	Channel operational; response-time SLA met
Cultural, Nationality & Linguistic Diversity	Run annual intercultural awareness and inclusion training for staff and student leaders	Q3 2027 (annual)	EDI Office / HR	% of staff/leaders trained

Strategic Goal	Action	Timeline	Lead Responsibility	KPI / Milestone
Cultural, Nationality & Linguistic Diversity	Diversify recruitment channels for faculty and staff to widen the nationality and gender pool of applicants	2027–2029	HR	Increase in applicant pool diversity
Equitable Access & Scholarships	Establish needs-based and merit scholarships targeted at underrepresented and financially disadvantaged students	Q2 2027	Admissions / Financial Aid	Scholarships representing 1–5% of student body
Equitable Access & Scholarships	Review admissions criteria and outreach to widen access from underserved schools/communities in Kuwait	Q4 2027	Admissions	Outreach programme launched
Equitable Access & Scholarships	Monitor and publish scholarship uptake and equity outcomes	Q1 2028 (annual)	Financial Aid / Institutional Research	Annual equity report
Inclusive Curriculum, Pedagogy & Campus Life	Review curricula for inclusive content, case studies and representation across disciplines	2027–2028	Assistant to the President for Academic Affairs / Deans	Curriculum review completed per academic program
Inclusive Curriculum, Pedagogy & Campus Life	Support student-led EDI societies, cultural events and awareness weeks	Q3 2027 (annual)	Student Affairs	Number of events/participation rate
Inclusive Curriculum, Pedagogy & Campus Life	Introduce inclusive-language and universal-design guidelines for course materials and communications	Q1 2028	Centre for Teaching & Learning	Guidelines adopted institution-wide
Data, Monitoring & Accountability	Implement an EDI data dashboard (demographics, pay/role equity, complaints, outcomes) reviewed by Council	Q4 2027	Institutional Research / IT	Dashboard live; reviewed quarterly

Strategic Goal	Action	Timeline	Lead Responsibility	KPI / Milestone
Data, Monitoring & Accountability	Commission an independent mid-strategy review of progress against goals	Q3 2028	EDI Committee	Review report to Council
Data, Monitoring & Accountability	Conduct end-of-strategy evaluation and publish outcomes; set 2030–2034 strategy	Q2 2030	EDI Committee / Council	Evaluation published; next strategy approved

7. Implementation Timeline at a Glance

Year 1 - 2026/2027 Foundation

- Publish EDI Policy and Strategy; establish EDI Committee and appoint EDI Lead.
- Complete baseline audit of demographics, accessibility and policy gaps.
- Publish non-discrimination and anti-harassment policy; open confidential reporting channel.

Year 2 - 2027/2028: Building Capability

- Launch women's mentoring/leadership programme and revised recruitment/promotion criteria.
- Open Disability & Learning Support Office; begin priority accessibility upgrades.
- Launch needs-based/merit scholarships for underrepresented students.
- Roll out annual intercultural awareness and inclusive-teaching training.

Year 3 - 2028/2029: Embedding

- Complete curriculum reviews for inclusive content across academic programs.
- Launch EDI data dashboard reviewed quarterly by Council.
- Commission independent mid-strategy review.

Year 4 - 2029/2030: Evaluation and Renewal

- Complete accessibility upgrade programme; assess progress against gender and diversity targets.
- Conduct end-of-strategy evaluation and publish outcomes.
- Approve successor EDI Strategy for 2030–2034.

8. Governance and Accountability

Clear governance ensures the Strategy is resourced, monitored and owned at every level of the institution.

Body / Role	Responsibility
University Council	Ultimate oversight and approval of EDI Strategy; receives annual and mid-strategy reports
EDI Committee (chaired by Director of EDI)	Drives implementation, monitors KPIs, coordinates across departments, reports quarterly to the President's Office
Director/Lead for EDI	Day-to-day leadership of the strategy, policy development, data reporting, staff/student liaison
Deans & Heads of Department	Embed EDI within curricula, faculty recruitment and student support in their units
Human Resources	Recruitment, promotion, pay-equity monitoring, staff training and grievance handling
Student Affairs	Student support, disability services, societies, campus climate and reporting channel
Institutional Research / Planning & Quality	Data collection, dashboard maintenance, QS and accreditation reporting

8.1 Reporting Cycle

- Quarterly: EDI Committee reviews KPI dashboard and action-plan progress.
- Annually: Progress report submitted to University Council, including updated gender, disability and diversity data.
- Mid-strategy (2028): Independent review of progress against all seven goals.
- End of strategy (2030): Public evaluation report and launch of the next strategy cycle.

9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Data

Progress will be tracked through a core set of indicators drawn directly from the goals in Section 5, including: the proportion of women among students, faculty and senior leadership; the number and share of students receiving equity-related scholarships; accessibility audit completion rates; staff training completion rates; and the number and resolution time of discrimination or harassment reports handled through the confidential channel. Data will be disaggregated where legally and practically possible, and reported both internally to Council and, where appropriate, published externally to support transparency and ranking submissions.

10. Risks and Mitigations

- Resourcing risk, mitigated by appointing a dedicated EDI Lead and allocating a ring-fenced annual budget from Year 1.
- Data availability risk, mitigated by the Year 1 baseline audit and phased introduction of the data dashboard.
- Cultural change risk, mitigated by mandatory training, visible leadership sponsorship and regular communication of progress to the community.
- Regulatory alignment risk, mitigated by ongoing liaison with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Public Authority for Disability Affairs to ensure all actions remain compliant.

11. Next Steps

- Present this Strategy to University Council for formal approval.
- Publish the approved Strategy and EDI Policy on the University website.
- Convene the first meeting of the EDI Committee within 30 days of approval.
- Commence the Year 1 baseline audit.

