

DIVERSITY INCLUSION STRATEGY

VMI **CONSERVATORY
OF CONTEMPORARY
MUSIC**

VIENNA MUSIC INSTITUTE

Diversity Inclusion Strategy

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The Vienna Music Institute's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy aims to create an open, respectful, and diverse learning and working environment. This strategy emphasizes the importance of respect and appreciation for different cultural, social, and individual backgrounds in order to ensure an inclusive atmosphere for all students, faculty, and staff. As a universal language, music is particularly well-suited to promoting diversity, and our institute is committed to making this a conscious and integral part of its identity.

Principles and Objectives

Diversity as an Asset

The VMI stands for a lived culture of diversity and appreciation, viewing diversity as a valuable resource for creativity and artistic expression. Equal opportunity, non-discrimination, transparency, inclusion, and a positive, prejudice-free environment for students, faculty, and staff are explicit goals of the VMI.

By actively promoting diversity, the institute brings together a variety of cultural and musical perspectives. This not only broadens the personal horizons of everyone involved but also serves as a vital driver for innovation and artistic development. Collaboration among individuals from diverse backgrounds fosters a dynamic and inspiring learning environment where everyone has the opportunity to contribute their uniqueness and fully realize their potential.

The VMI – Vienna Music Institute views diversity as a source of creativity and innovation. Through the active promotion of diversity, a wide range of cultural and musical perspectives can be united, enriching the experience for all participants.

Inclusion as a Core Principle

For us, inclusion means that all members of our institute—regardless of origin, nationality, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, cultural background, social circumstances, or individual abilities—are given equal opportunities to develop both personally and artistically within the educational framework of the VMI – Vienna Music Institute.

Inclusion also requires the removal of barriers that hinder equal participation. This applies not only to our internal educational environment but also to participation in external programs such as Erasmus+, where inclusion and equal opportunity are likewise top priorities.

Respect and Equal Opportunity

We promote a culture of mutual respect and ensure that all students, faculty, and staff feel valued. Equal opportunity is supported through transparent processes, fair evaluations, and a supportive learning environment.

Measures to Promote Diversity and Inclusion

Attracting Diverse Talent

Our institute is committed to fostering diversity among faculty, staff, and students, as a diverse team enriches both the quality of education and creative processes. This includes the active promotion and targeted outreach to students from various social and cultural backgrounds, collaboration with international partner institutions through the Erasmus+ program, and the recruitment of educators who represent different musical styles and cultural traditions to offer a broader range of learning approaches and musical knowledge

Barrier-Free Access and Support

To ensure everyone has access to our programs, we are committed to removing existing barriers and promoting the inclusion of individuals with disabilities, impairments, and diverse learning styles

Our measures include:

- Accessible buildings and classrooms
- Individual counseling on options for compensating disadvantages
- Adapted application and study processes for people with impairments
- Adjustment of teaching materials and methods to accommodate different learning needs
- Modification of examination procedures if needed due to physical or other impairments
- Support in daily academic life or everyday challenges through buddy programs
- Special financial grants and advising for participation in accessible Erasmus+ mobility for students with disabilities or reduced opportunities to participate in the Erasmus+ program

Promoting an Inclusive Work Environment

In addition to our students, we place great importance on ensuring that staff and faculty also experience a supportive and appreciative work environment.

This includes:

- Training opportunities for faculty on topics such as diversity, intercultural competence, and inclusion
- An open communication culture
- Measures for conflict prevention and resolution: Structures are established to ensure fair and respectful interactions and to provide support in resolving conflicts
- Professional development and continuing education: Staff have access to training and workshops that strengthen both their professional and personal skills in the areas of inclusion, diversity, and equal opportunity

Awareness Raising and Further Education

Awareness Campaigns

Initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion. Our institute regularly offers events and programs that highlight the importance of diversity and inclusion, such as:

- Theme days focused on music and culture
- Discussions on social and cultural issues in music education
- Concert series that showcase diverse musical identities and traditions
- Gender-sensitive language – fair phrasing as a guideline for gender-inclusive communication
- Creating safe spaces: advising on the design of facilities (e.g., gender-neutral restrooms) and event organization to foster a gender-inclusive and welcoming atmosphere

Training Opportunities

All staff and faculty are given the opportunity to further their education in inclusion and intercultural competence. Workshops and training sessions are designed to deepen understanding of different learning styles and cultural backgrounds.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Progress Review

To ensure the effectiveness of the diversity and inclusion strategy, regular reviews are conducted. These include, for example, events with discussion sessions on the perception of diversity and inclusion at the institute, in which students and staff can participate.

Adjustments and Further Development

Based on the results of relevant evaluations, we will continuously adapt our measures. We want to ensure that new social developments and challenges are incorporated into our strategy to always pursue a contemporary and inclusive approach.

Partnerships and Networks

We seek collaboration with other music institutions, international partner universities, cultural organizations, and non-profit initiatives that share similar goals. These cooperations aim to promote the exchange of best practices and jointly achieve a broader societal impact.

Examples include:

- Joint events and projects with other institutions or associations that also focus on diversity and inclusion (e.g., VMI - HOUSE OF EUROPE)
- Participation in networks committed to equal opportunities in the music sector

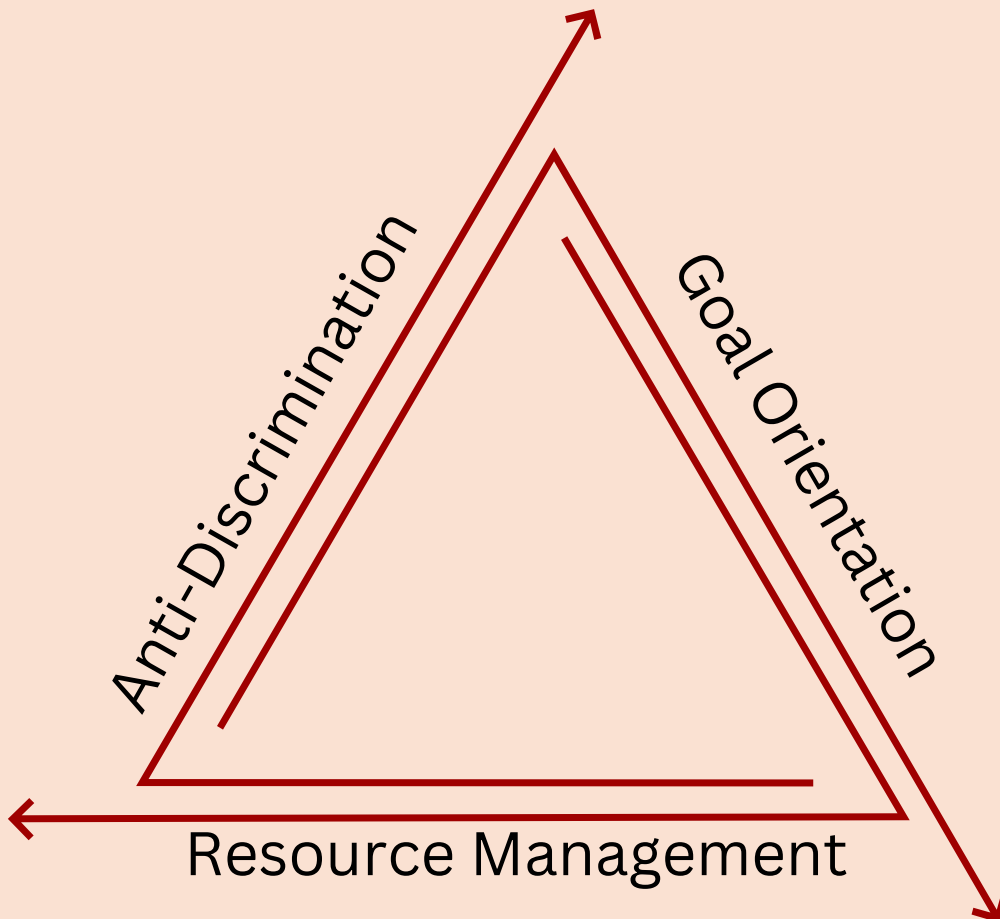
Inclusion and Diversity Contact Point

Our officer for inclusion and diversity actively advocates for equality and social participation of people with special needs and represents their interests in various areas.

This includes, among other things:

- Providing advice and information for students and prospective students with impairments or chronic illnesses on all study-related matters
- Offering individual support to students with impairments or chronic illnesses to ensure an optimal study experience and adaptation to their specific study situation
- Assisting faculty in making courses and facilities accessible
- Advocating for disability-friendly accessibility and equipment of buildings and infrastructure
- Serving as a contact person for students and staff with special needs seeking advice or support
- Advising and supporting international mobility for students and staff to promote inclusion and equal opportunity abroad as well

DIVERSITY - INCLUSION - STRATEGY



POSITIVE APPROACH
TO
DIVERSITY

The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy of the VMI – Vienna Music Institute is designed to create an environment where all individuals—regardless of their differences—are respected, supported, and valued. Our goal is to build bridges between different cultures, generations, and social groups through music, thereby making a positive contribution to society.

Music connects people, and our institute aims to actively harness this unifying power to foster a harmonious and diverse community characterized by respect, creativity, and mutual support.

Our Approach:

Openness and Respect: Recognizing Diversity

This means accepting the differences among people, whether related to culture, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, abilities, or social background. Respectful interaction is the foundation for creating an open and constructive atmosphere. Different opinions or ways of life should not be devalued but seen as valuable contributions.

Inclusion Instead of Exclusion: All people, regardless of their differences, should have equal opportunities to participate in social or professional life. This means removing barriers that exclude people and creating spaces where everyone feels welcome and valued.

Intercultural Competence: Successfully engaging with diversity requires the ability to understand other cultures and ways of thinking. Intercultural competence means developing the skills to communicate and collaborate effectively with people from different backgrounds.

Communication and Dialogue: Constructive handling of differences requires continuous communication. People should be encouraged to openly share their opinions and perspectives without fear of discrimination or negative consequences.

Empathy and Listening: It is important not only to express one's own views but also to understand and respond empathetically to the perspectives of others.

Conflict Resolution: Different perspectives can lead to tensions. Constructive conflict management means viewing conflicts as opportunities for improvement. Instead of ignoring or suppressing differences, common solutions should be sought.

Promoting Diversity: Seeing Diversity as a Strength

Differences should be viewed not as problems but as enrichment. Diversity can lead to innovative solutions because various perspectives often bring creative ideas and new approaches.

Awareness of Prejudices: Engaging with diversity requires awareness that everyone can have prejudices. It is important to recognize and work on reducing them. Measures against discrimination should be clearly defined and implemented to ensure that no one is disadvantaged because of their differences.

ERASMUS+

VMI aims to create an inclusive and supportive environment where all students—regardless of their individual challenges—have equal opportunities to successfully participate in mobility activities. As part of the 2022 project, a Diversity and Inclusion Officer was appointed, responsible for developing and implementing our inclusion strategy.

This strategy includes both qualitative and quantitative goals to increase the participation of students with fewer opportunities:

- ***Increase mobility activities among students with fewer opportunities by 10% during the next program implementation.***
- ***Organize at least four informational events per year to inform students about inclusion opportunities and available support.***
- ***Host at least three events per academic year focused on diversity and inclusion in music education.***
- ***Create an inclusive learning environment in which all students, regardless of background or ability, can participate equally.***
- ***Raise awareness among faculty and students about diversity through workshops and training sessions.***
- ***Develop training programs for faculty and students to strengthen awareness of cultural differences and inclusion.***
- ***Implement inclusive teaching strategies to ensure that all students can actively participate in class.***
- ***Strengthen international collaboration: form partnerships with institutions specializing in inclusion to share best practices and resources, thereby improving the quality of the programs.***
- ***Establish mentorship programs for students with fewer opportunities.***
- ***Social media campaigns: Use social media to disseminate information about inclusion strategies and support services. This will also include showcasing success stories to inspire other students.***

CONTACT



Erasmus+

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