



ROADMAP AND ACTIVITIES FOR AN EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) PLAN

Covering Protected Characteristics | 2024 – 2027

Age • Disability • Race • Religion or Belief • Pregnancy & Maternity

GENERAL CONTEXT

The University of Carthage (UCAR) aims to implement a comprehensive Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Plan. This plan expands upon UCAR's existing Gender Equality Plan (GEP) to encompass all recognized protected characteristics, allowing UCAR to fully align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in particular SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and to adopt a holistic Corporate Social Responsibility approach.

An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Plan is defined as a structured set of institutional commitments and actions aimed at:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimization in all its forms
- Advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Fostering good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Creating a culture of respect, dignity, and inclusion across all university activities

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

Create an inclusive university environment that promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion for all members of the UCAR community. The University of Carthage recognizes the importance of equity and respect for all individuals in the academic setting and is committed to striving towards full EDI integration at all levels. While respecting national values and applicable Tunisian law, this plan aims to integrate equity into all university activities, enhance the representation of underrepresented groups in leadership roles, and ensure an inclusive and respectful environment for every student, researcher, and member of staff.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Promote equity across all protected characteristics in every area of the university.
- Strive for balanced representation in leadership and decision-making positions.
- Raise awareness and train staff and students on EDI principles, unconscious bias, and inclusive practice.

- Create mechanisms to identify and minimize inequalities in research, teaching, and employment.
- Implement a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination, harassment, bullying, and victimization.
- Establish transparent reporting, monitoring, and accountability mechanisms.
- Ensure physical, digital, and attitudinal accessibility for all.

IMPLEMENTATION PHASES

To achieve the above objectives, the University of Carthage will adopt the following four phases:

Phase 1 <i>Planning and Awareness</i>	Stakeholder consultation, needs assessment, formation of the EDI Committee, and initial awareness campaigns.
Phase 2 <i>Policy Development and Implementation</i>	Formal adoption of the EDI Plan, allocation of resources, launch of training programs, and deployment of support services.
Phase 3 <i>Strengthening and Sustainability</i>	Ongoing monitoring, periodic audits, corrective actions, and embedding EDI into institutional culture.
Phase 4 <i>Celebration and Dissemination</i>	Publication of results, sharing of best practices, institutional recognition, and partnerships with peer institutions.

PRACTICAL MEASURES

The EDI Plan is not only a series of objectives but also includes the following practical measures:

1. Implementing a Formal EDI Document

- Preparing a document that best suits the University, taking into account the national context, university policy, and benchmarking against successful international EDI frameworks.
- Validation by the competent university authorities.
- Signature by top management.
- Publication, dissemination, and active communication to all staff and students.

3. Diagnosing, Analyzing, and Monitoring EDI Activities

- Analyzing and evaluating the current state of UCAR to obtain a comprehensive overview of measures that need to be implemented.
- Establishing performance indicators (quantitative and qualitative) to measure the impact of initiatives.
- Conducting periodic evaluations and adjusting strategies based on results obtained.
- Performing periodic EDI audits to assess the current situation in terms of recruitment, promotion, salaries, and representation across all protected characteristics.

- Collecting disaggregated data on the experiences of underrepresented groups at the university.
- Defining corrective and preventive actions following each audit cycle.

4. Organizing Training, Awareness-Raising, and Dissemination Activities

- Periodically organizing workshops and training sessions on unconscious bias, discrimination, and inclusive practice for all staff and students.
- Disseminating information on EDI through internal communications (newsletters, posters, digital platforms, emails).
- Integrating the EDI approach into the university's external communications and institutional partnerships.
- Launching communication campaigns to promote equal opportunities across all protected characteristics.
- Including dedicated EDI content on the university's platforms and websites, with resources, testimonials, and information on ongoing initiatives.
- Publishing an annual EDI Report detailing actions taken, results achieved, and lessons learned.
- Disseminating results and best practices through conferences, academic publications, and partnerships with other institutions.

COMMITMENTS BY PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC

The University of Carthage affirms its commitment to equality, dignity, and inclusion for all individuals across the following nine protected characteristics:

1. Age	
Definition	Age equality means ensuring that individuals are not discriminated against on the basis of their age — whether young or old — in access to education, employment, promotion, or university services. UCAR recognizes that both younger and older members of the community bring valuable perspectives and experience.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure that no individual faces discrimination in recruitment, promotion, or access to university services because of their age. ● Foster an intergenerational community that values the contributions of all age groups. ● Address specific barriers faced by mature students and older members of staff.
Key Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include an explicit age non-discrimination clause in all HR and admissions policies. ● Provide flexible learning and working arrangements to accommodate life-stage differences. ● Develop mentoring and reverse-mentoring programs to promote intergenerational exchange. ● Collect age-disaggregated data on staff and student experiences and outcomes.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Raise awareness of ageism and age-related bias through EDI training programs.
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2. Disability

Definition	Disability includes physical, sensory, cognitive, mental health, and other long-term conditions that have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. UCAR is committed to removing barriers physical, attitudinal, and informational that prevent disabled individuals from participating fully in university life.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure full physical, digital, and academic accessibility for all disabled students and staff. ● Provide timely and appropriate reasonable adjustments in both academic and employment settings. ● Promote a culture that recognizes disability as a dimension of human diversity, not a deficit. ● Increase the visibility and representation of disabled individuals in all areas of the university.
Key Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish a confidential disability registration and support service for students and staff. ● Ensure all digital platforms, course materials, and communications comply with accessibility standards (WCAG 2.1). ● Provide mandatory disability awareness and inclusive teaching training for all academic and administrative staff. ● Develop a reasonable adjustments procedure with clear timelines and accountability. ● Incorporate disability perspectives and the social model of disability into curriculum design. ● Publish annual data on the accessibility improvements implemented.

3. Race, Ethnicity, and Cultural Background

Definition	Race equality encompasses equal treatment and opportunity regardless of race, color, nationality, ethnic origin, or national origin. UCAR is committed to being an anti-racist institution that actively challenges structural inequalities and celebrates cultural diversity.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Actively challenge and eliminate racial discrimination, harassment, and systemic inequality within the institution. ● Ensure equitable access, attainment, and progression for all students and staff regardless of ethnic background. ● Celebrate and integrate diverse cultural perspectives into the academic and social life of the university. ● Build institutional accountability for race equality through transparent data and reporting.

<p>Key Measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement anonymous or blind-review processes in recruitment to minimize racial bias. ● Collect and publish disaggregated data on student attainment and staff progression by ethnicity. ● Establish a dedicated anti-racism working group as part of the EDI Committee. ● Integrate non-Western epistemologies and culturally diverse content into the curriculum. ● Provide mandatory anti-racism and cultural competency training for all staff. ● Support race-based student and staff networks and affinity groups. ● Apply zero tolerance to racial harassment with clear, confidential, and accessible reporting mechanisms. ● Develop strategic partnerships with organizations supporting ethnic minority communities.
<p>4. Religion or Belief</p>	
<p>Definition</p>	<p>Religion or belief includes any religion, religious or philosophical belief, or lack of belief. In the Tunisian context, UCAR recognizes the importance of respecting deeply held religious values while simultaneously upholding the principle of non-discrimination and ensuring that all individuals regardless of faith or absence of faith can participate fully in university life.</p>
<p>Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure that no individual is disadvantaged on the grounds of religion or belief in access to education, employment, or promotion. ● Provide reasonable accommodation for religious observances and practices. ● Foster mutual respect and understanding between different faith communities and non-believers.
<p>Key Measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include explicit protection on grounds of religion or belief in all HR and student-facing policies. ● Provide quiet, multi-faith spaces on campus for prayer, reflection, or meditation. ● Accommodate religious observances (e.g., prayer times, fasting periods, religious holidays) in scheduling and assessment where reasonably practicable. ● Raise awareness of religious diversity and freedom of belief through EDI training. ● Establish clear procedures for reporting religion-based discrimination or harassment.

6. Pregnancy and Maternity	
Definition	Pregnancy and maternity protection ensure that no individual is disadvantaged due to pregnancy, childbirth, or maternity leave. UCAR recognizes that pregnancy and the transition to parenthood can significantly impact academic and professional trajectories and commits to providing an equitable and supportive environment for all.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure that no student or member of staff is disadvantaged due to pregnancy, maternity, or paternity leave. ● Provide flexible and supportive arrangements for new and expectant parents. ● Protect individuals from pregnancy-related discrimination in any form.
Key Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitor and review maternity and paternity leave entitlements regularly to ensure compliance and equity. ● Provide flexible academic arrangements (e.g., extensions, remote attendance) for pregnant students and new parents. ● Ensure adequate on-campus facilities including private nursing/feeding rooms. ● Train staff on pregnancy-related rights and obligations to prevent inadvertent discrimination. ● Establish a clear policy protecting pregnant students and staff from disadvantage in assessments, promotions, or contract renewals. ● Include pregnancy and maternity data in annual EDI monitoring reports. ● Promote a culture of support and openness around parenthood through awareness campaigns.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT

A. Establishing the EDI Committee

The University of Carthage will establish a dedicated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, expanding the mandate of the existing Gender Equality Committee. This committee will oversee the implementation of all nine protected characteristic commitments.

- Forming a diverse committee composed of faculty members, administrative staff, and students representing the full breadth of protected characteristics.
- Defining the roles and responsibilities of the committee, including a designated EDI Officer.
- Holding regular meetings (minimum quarterly) and systematically following up on decisions.
- Reporting annually to the University President and publishing results publicly.

Proposed founding members: Mongi Besbes, Syrine Douik, Marwa Zouari, Ibtihel Saidi, Tahar Jallouli, Rania Bengriche to be supplemented by additional members with expertise or lived experience across all nine protected characteristics.

B. Quantitative and Qualitative Indicators

Quantitative Indicators

- Representation: Percentage of each protected group in leadership positions, research teams, project coordination, and decision-making committees.
- Participation in training: Number and percentage of staff and students completing EDI training annually.
- Career progression: Rate of promotion and career advancement disaggregated by protected characteristic.
- Accessibility improvements: Number of physical, digital, and administrative accessibility measures implemented per year.
- Incident reports: Number of discrimination, harassment, and bullying reports received, investigated, and resolved.
- Research integration: Number of RDI projects integrating EDI perspectives.

Qualitative Indicators

- Staff and student satisfaction: Annual surveys on institutional EDI climate across all nine characteristics.
- Focus group findings: Qualitative insights from underrepresented communities.
- Case documentation: Records of support provided to vulnerable groups (anonymized).
- Training quality: Post-training evaluations measuring changes in knowledge and attitude.

C. Research, Development, and Innovation (RDI) Activities

- Inclusive research projects: Encouraging research teams to integrate EDI perspectives across all nine characteristics into their methodologies, questions, and outputs.
- Innovation for equality: Supporting innovation initiatives aimed at solving specific problems related to inclusion such as accessible technologies, support platforms, or social entrepreneurship.
- Strategic partnerships: Establishing partnerships with national and international institutions, NGOs, and public bodies to promote EDI in RDI activities.
- Knowledge dissemination: Publishing research findings on equality and inclusion and presenting at national and international conferences.

COMPLAINTS, REPORTING AND SUPPORT

UCAR maintains a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment, bullying, and victimisation in any form across all nine protected characteristics. Any member of the university community who experiences or witnesses such behaviour is encouraged to report it through the following mechanisms:

- Direct reporting to a line manager, faculty EDI representative, or the EDI Committee.
- Anonymous online reporting tool (to be established on the university intranet).
- Confidential one-to-one meetings with the designated EDI Officer.
- External escalation to an independent ombudsman or relevant national body where institutional conflict of interest arises.

All reports will be handled with strict confidentiality, sensitivity, impartiality, and in full accordance with applicable Tunisian law. Retaliation against any person who makes a good-faith report will itself constitute a disciplinary offence subject to formal proceedings.

POLICY REVIEW AND SUSTAINABILITY

This EDI Plan will be reviewed annually by the EDI Committee. Updates will reflect changes in applicable legislation, institutional priorities, and emerging international best practice.

The plan will be published on the UCAR official website and communicated actively to all staff and students upon adoption and after each revision. Results and progress will be reported publicly each year through the Annual EDI Report.

This roadmap aims to create lasting, structural change by fostering a genuine culture of equality, dignity, and inclusion within the University of Carthage for every person, in every role, across every dimension of their identity.