

Guide to implementation of the Unite! Policy on Multilingualism and Multiculturalism

1 Introduction

- Unite! is committed to valuing and promoting multilingualism and multiculturalism in order to foster among its students and staff global competence, i.e., the ability to understand, communicate, and work effectively and appropriately with people from different backgrounds to address global challenges, in line with the aims and values of the EU and the Alliance's mission statement.
- English is the common language in Unite!. At the same time, functional multilingualism is encouraged in order to leverage the linguistic richness offered by the Alliance, maximise outreach and facilitate inclusivity.
- Unite! promotes global competence education to acknowledge and benefit from existing cultural diversity and to provide industry and society with graduates equipped with the competences needed to contribute to solving global challenges.
- To achieve its objectives, Unite! will strive to integrate multilingualism, multiculturalism and global competence education into its educational provision, research activities and daily activities, and will monitor and evaluate its efforts.
- Implementing this policy offers benefits to you as an individual, including increased cognitive flexibility, problem-solving skills, cultural awareness, personal growth and improved relationships. It also offers wider career opportunities, enhanced employability and better preparation for effective participation in diverse and international teams.
- This guide is designed to help you implement the policy and contribute effectively to our common project by providing helpful ideas and advice, without claiming to be exhaustive. All change takes commitment, time and effort, but even small changes can make a big difference. The collective impact of our efforts depends on the responsibility and initiative of each of us. You are best placed to determine what works in your own context.

2 Strategies for good practice

How to use this guide

The strategies for good practice are divided into four sections. The first three deal with what you can do on your own (personal development), what you can do with others (collaborative engagement) and what you can do for others (community enhancement). The first two sections are aimed at everyone, while the community enhancement section has specific subsections for students, teachers, researchers, and administrative and support staff to provide more targeted content. Finally, there is a section with general suggestions for management.

When you have read through the guide, think about – or discuss with others – which part you would like to focus on. What can you do immediately? What help might you need to implement the other parts? We have provided some explanations, definitions and links to resources and good examples, but the items in this guide, as helpful as we hope they will be, are deliberately not an exhaustive list and should be read as inspiration and encouragement to continue to discuss, explore and experiment with different ways of implementing the Unite! Policy on multilingualism and multiculturalism.

Personal Development

What you can do on your own: Focus on your individual learning and growth in language, culture, and global awareness.

Collaborative Engagement

What you can do with others: Benefit from co-creating and engaging in activities and projects that foster intercultural and linguistic exchange and learning.

Community Enhancement

What you can do for others: Support and facilitate other people's or groups' multilingual and multicultural development.

2.1 Personal Development

What you can do on your own: Focus on your individual learning and growth in language, culture, and global awareness.

Stay curious and open-minded

Practice being open-minded, respectful and curious in your interactions with others. Make a habit of trying to understand other people's points of view, especially when they differ from your own, to enhance cognitive flexibility and problem-solving skills.

Commit to continuous learning about different cultures, perspectives and worldviews. Develop cultural awareness and understanding through observation and self-reflection, for improved mental agility and personal growth. [1]

Strengthen your competences

Assess your language skills for your current and future study and work needs, to identify areas for improvement and to tailor your learning journey effectively. [2]

Assess your intercultural competence for your current and future study and work needs to better understand your strengths and areas for growth. [2B]

Strengthen your language skills, e.g., through language courses and apps, to enhance your ability to understand and connect with people from various backgrounds.[3]

Keep a journal to reflect on your interactions with people from different backgrounds in order to learn more effectively and develop your intercultural competence.

Take advantage of language and intercultural training offered by your institution or community, such as language cafés or language tandems, to improve both verbal and non-verbal communication skills. [4]

Participate in global competence workshops, seminars and courses that are beneficial for personal growth, professional effectiveness and intercultural collaboration. [6]

Take advantage of existing opportunities

Explore new languages and cultures through media, reading, and interactive experiences, to enrich your personal knowledge and cultural understanding.

Engage with new people through events, clubs, online platforms or everyday interactions to broaden your cultural horizons and improve your social and communication skills. [7]

Seek opportunities for internships or different forms of mobility to experience new and different environments, at home or abroad, as these experiences can lead to valuable personal and professional growth and broaden your global perspective. [8]

Apply your language and cultural competence in everyday life

Use all your language skills and intercultural competence in your everyday personal and professional life to communicate more effectively and improve your intercultural skills.

Make the most of Unite! events, projects and programmes to learn and contribute to the richness of the Alliance's linguistic and cultural fabric, enhancing relationships and making interactions more meaningful and productive.

Use the most appropriate and helpful languages for communication. English is the common language of the Alliance, but feel free to use or mix other languages where they help to promote inclusiveness and engagement.

2.2 Collaborative Engagement

What you can do with others: Benefit from co-creating and engaging in activities and projects that foster intercultural and linguistic exchange and

Benefit from a diverse, welcoming and inclusive environment

Form diverse teams across identities and backgrounds, creating study groups, teacher teams or research teams for a richer learning experience and more innovative and effective solutions to complex problems.

Ensure that everybody feels safe, included and valued for their individual perspective and contribution. Base collaborative initiatives on mutual respect and a willingness to learn, facilitating cultural and linguistic exchange.

Help create a supportive community where English, the local language as well as all other languages are welcome, enhancing mutual understanding, learning and integration. [9]

Benefit from multilingual and multicultural engagement

Support the organisation of seminars or workshops that combine academic content with language and cultural exchange. Include topics on global challenges and opportunities for diverse collaboration to enhance your understanding of global issues and improve your ability to work with diverse teams.

Join projects that showcase cultural diversity, using interdisciplinary or international approaches to contribute and gain experience and insights, preparing you to work effectively in global and multicultural contexts.

Help create opportunities and networks for intercultural and linguistic knowledge-sharing to promote understanding and collaboration, build stronger relationships and foster mutual respect between participants.

Plan and run events that celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity and promote spaces for learning and interaction. Support and take advantage of multicultural festivals or institutional events to develop your organisational and leadership skills and deepen your intercultural understanding and appreciation. [10]

Actively involve external stakeholders. This can generate rich interactions, and enhance the quality and impact of your collaborative efforts. [11]

2.3 Community Enhancement

What you can do for others: Support and facilitate other people's or groups' multilingual and multicultural development.

For students

Volunteer in extra-curricular activities promoting peer learning and cultural exchange: For example, participate in mentoring programmes for new or international students or help run language cafés to support peers in their learning journey, while developing your leadership skills and gaining valuable teaching experience. [12]

Contribute to linguistic and cultural events: Get involved in events designed to offer opportunities for exchange, mutual understanding and learning, e.g., international parties or other Internationalisation at Home activities, to foster a sense of community and cultural appreciation while also developing your organisational and interpersonal skills. [13]

Engage in campus diversity initiatives: Support and advocate for initiatives that promote a diverse and inclusive campus environment to create a welcoming atmosphere that benefits all students, while also building your advocacy and teamwork skills. [14]

Welcome newcomers by providing insights to help them understand and navigate the local academic, linguistic and cultural environment, to help them integrate smoothly and feel more supported, while also enhancing your cultural competence. [15]

Document and share good practices to contribute to a culture of continuous improvement and collective learning, benefiting the entire academic community and also enhancing your own professional development.

For teachers

Include language and cultural integration in courses: Ask your students about their different language skills, and encourage them to use and improve these skills in reading, writing and research activities. This will help students to improve their language skills and intercultural competence, and also make the classroom more dynamic and engaging. [16]

Create a shared academic culture: Include time and space to reflect together with your students about academic culture and clarify mutual expectations in your context to create a good learning environment and foster mutual respect, which can also lead to smoother and more effective course management. [17]

Design intercultural learning activities: Use international case studies and problem-solving activities where participants' diverse cultural backgrounds in teamwork are a real asset. Share your own experiences and insights as examples to prepare students

for future global collaboration and to enhance their problem-solving skills, while also making your teaching more engaging and rewarding. [18]

Integrate intercultural training: Embed intercultural engagement and global competence training in your courses, projects and programmes to prepare students for future collaboration, enhance their readiness for international work environments and improve their professional skills, while keeping your teaching relevant and forward-looking. [19]

Mentor cross-disciplinary or global projects: Mentor students in projects to support their development as international scholars, providing guidance and fostering their academic growth and intercultural skills, which can also lead to fulfilling mentoring relationships. [20]

Develop inclusive resources: Create and/or use teaching materials and assignments that reflect and celebrate cultural and linguistic diversity. Use plain and inclusive language to make learning accessible and relevant to all students, which can also enhance your teaching effectiveness. [21]

Welcome newcomers by providing insights to help them understand and navigate the local academic, linguistic and cultural environment, to help them integrate smoothly and feel more supported, while also enhancing your cultural competence. [22]

Document and share good practices to contribute to a culture of continuous improvement and collective learning, benefiting the entire academic community and also enhancing your own professional development.

For researchers (including doctoral candidates)

Share international experiences: Offer insights from teaching or research abroad to inspire global perspectives in research and collaboration, enriching the academic community with diverse viewpoints and practices that can also enhance your own understanding and expertise.

Facilitate multicultural team building: Lead efforts to build international and multicultural research teams that enhance intercultural collaborative potential, improving research quality and fostering innovation through diverse perspectives, while also enhancing your leadership skills.

Promote multilingual and international programmes: Support the development of research projects and study programs that includes or encourage intercultural and multilingual engagement, including local languages for broader societal impact and deeper integration.

Welcome newcomers by providing insights to help them understand and navigate the local academic, linguistic and cultural environment, to help them integrate smoothly and feel more supported, while also enhancing your cultural competence.

Document and share good practices to contribute to a culture of continuous improvement and collective learning, benefiting the entire academic community and also enhancing your own professional development.

For administrative and support staff

Support transnational meetings: Help organise meetings with colleagues from partner universities to facilitate international dialogue and collaboration, while also enhancing your organisational skills.

Provide support for cultural activities: Provide logistical and organisational support for cultural events and activities on and off campus to promote a vibrant and inclusive campus culture, which can also enhance your organisational skills and professional satisfaction.

Support inclusive campus initiatives: Participate in efforts to create a more inclusive campus environment for all students, faculty and staff, fostering a welcoming and supportive community that can also enhance your teamwork and communication skills.

Welcome newcomers by providing insights to help them understand and navigate the local academic, linguistic and cultural environment, to help them integrate smoothly and feel more supported, while also enhancing your cultural competence.

Document and share good practices to contribute to a culture of continuous improvement and collective learning, benefiting the entire academic community and also enhancing your own professional development.

2.4 Strategies for management

Institutional development

Promote diversity and international mobility: Aim to attract students and staff from diverse backgrounds to create a multilingual and multicultural academic community. Actively promote both physical and virtual international mobility for students, staff, and

faculty. Recognise its value in developing global competence and enhancing intercultural understanding to create a dynamic and enriching academic environment.

Comprehensive internationalisation: Set clear objectives for internationalisation, including the promotion of “internationalisation at home”. Ensure that all members of the Unite! communities benefit from a diverse and rich cultural environment, not just those participating in mobility programmes. This includes embedding international perspectives in the curriculum and fostering a globally engaged campus culture to enhance the academic experience and prepare everyone for global engagement.

Develop and support training programmes

Actively support and encourage customised language learning: Tailor language courses to the needs of students, staff and faculty, focusing on English for global reach, local languages for community integration, and additional languages to broaden perspectives, ensuring that everyone is equipped with the necessary skills for diverse interactions.

Actively support and encourage global competence education: Implement hands-on workshops and co-curricular activities to enhance global competence for students, staff and faculty, ensuring relevance to institutional goals and stakeholder priorities, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

Actively support accessibility and recognition of language and cultural learning: Ensure equal access to language and cultural studies for EU/EEA and non-EU/EEA students, staff, and teachers. Allocate working time for participation in courses and provide appropriate recognition of their learning through certificates and other forms of acknowledgement, promoting a culture of lifelong learning and inclusiveness.

Fostering an inclusive campus culture

Add multilingual and multicultural orientation: Integrate multilingualism and multiculturalism into the onboarding process for new staff and students. This includes familiarising them with the local academic and non-academic culture, languages, and the diverse cultural landscape of the campus to help them integrate smoothly and feel more connected.

Create spaces for social interaction: Develop areas that encourage social interaction, such as club rooms, lounges and open spaces. These spaces are ideal for cultural exchange, language learning and fostering informal interactions that contribute to a

united community and enhance the overall experience and sense of belonging for students and staff.

Implement Internationalisation at Home programmes: Initiate on-campus programmes that reflect an international environment and engage the entire community in global learning and cultural exchange. These programmes should be designed to bring the benefits of internationalisation to those who do not participate in mobility programmes, while also effectively integrating international students and staff to create a vibrant and inclusive campus culture.

Encourage collaborative diversity projects: Support projects that capitalise on cultural diversity and encourage interdisciplinary and global methodologies. These projects can enrich campus life and promote a deeper understanding of global issues and enhance the academic and social environment.

Establish mentoring programmes: Initiate mentoring to help navigate multicultural interactions. Encourage experienced faculty, staff and students to mentor newcomers, thereby promoting knowledge sharing and intercultural understanding across the campus and fostering a supportive and inclusive community.

External collaboration and community engagement

Demonstrate multilingual and multicultural engagement: Pursue partnerships that reflect the institution's commitment to diversity. Collaborate with local, regional and international organisations to draw on diverse linguistic and cultural resources and enhance global competence and expand the institution's network and resources.

Encourage community initiatives: Support grass-root projects that align with Unite!'s vision, contribute to broader community engagement and offer diverse learning experiences. As Unite! is an emergent project, supporting grassroots initiatives is crucial to fostering innovation, inclusivity and active participation in building a cohesive academic environment, enhancing the institution's impact and community engagement.

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