

AIMS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND IT
(PVT) LTD

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY



Introduction

As part of its ambitious business Vision 2028, 5-year strategy, AIMS aspires to reform its curriculum, pedagogy, research impact, and collaborations to improve students, graduates, and community success. The mission is to become the top career-focused, entrepreneurial university in Sri Lanka, preparing our students for future occupations while also providing the innovation to drive that future in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

To realize this goal, AIMS must prioritize equity, diversity, and inclusion as an employer, in addition to providing excellent service to students. This entails recruiting and developing employees who have the knowledge and commitment to establish and sustain an organizational culture that realizes the advantages of equality and inclusion while maintaining zero tolerance for discrimination and exclusionary behavior.

This vision is based on creating an inclusive, egalitarian, and respectful workplace in which every individual member feels appreciated, can fully realize their potential, and contributes to the success of the organization.

A Statement of Policy

Inclusion will be achieved through leveraging the best of AIMS diverse community and encouraging equality and equity in the experiences and results of staff and students. The fundamental purpose of this strategy is to enable AIMS to be recognized as one of Sri Lanka's most inclusive higher education institutes, in order to promote the realization of the strategic vision - 2028.

This entails really welcoming the diverse identities and distinctions that exist in our community, in acknowledgment of the good value that may be obtained through accepting variety. It also includes tackling and eliminating sexism, racism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and other oppressive attitudes and beliefs that marginalize and exclude. AIMS recognizes and respects the intersectionality of these qualities in the context of individually lived experiences.

Creating a culture that encourages inclusion and belonging in order to maximize everyone's contribution also necessitates a commitment to free speech and academic freedom, as well as the

abolition of hate speech. A culture of inclusion prioritizes psychological safety so that real and reasonable differences of opinion (which will arise) may be addressed constructively and with dignity and respect. This is a dynamic, continuing process that requires everyone's participation.

This paper outlines AIMS policy on equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), which will serve as a driving force for the aforementioned goals. It also acts as a reference point for additional policies, which will be linked throughout the text.

Institutional Context

The strategic vision 2028 and operational frames of the institutional environment for EDI at AIMS. This policy's key ideals are inclusion, courage, and passion. As a result, this strategy is based on the purpose of accelerating inclusive talent by realizing potential wherever it is discovered.

This will entail becoming:

- the first choice of AIMS for employers, entrepreneurs, and problem-solvers seeking creative talent
- consistently recognized for delivering outstanding teaching, learning, and equitable student outcomes

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) produced to measure plan progress and achievements will be organically related to equality and diversity and will reflect the demographic composition of AIMS community.

Scope

This policy applies to all AIMS community members, including the Executive Board, employees and students, visitors, contractors and subcontractors, service providers, and anyone else involved with the institute operations. This comprises members of the general public who utilize

AIMS-managed facilities (for example, sports docks and conferences). It encompasses all of the locations where AIMS conducts its operations.

The policy establishes a framework for incorporating EDI concepts into all elements of AIMS operations and services. Because of its broad reach, this framework is linked to a wide range of other plans and programs.

Each strategy and policy will have its own set of objectives and activities, and a separate Equality Action Plan will be developed and updated on a regular basis to give a single point of contact for identifying and monitoring EDI initiatives throughout AIMS relevant to staff and student-facing functions.

The following are key tactics and policies related to this policy:

Academic Strategy

- Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Strategy
- Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy
- People Strategy
- Access and Participation Plan
- Student Code of Conduct
- Non-Academic Misconduct Policy
- Institutional Equity Strategy
- Disability Policy

Governance Frame

Our Executive Board has ultimate accountability and supervision for EDI, and they will get the legally necessary Equality & Diversity Annual Report, as well as crucial reports such as gender/ethnicity pay discrepancies. Our Executive Board shall ensure that its own actions promote equality and diversity as part of its Public Sector Equality Duty. The governors will advocate for and promote equality, diversity, and inclusion. The Chairman, as well as the AIMS Executive Board, shall be delegated day-to-day administration and execution of this policy by the Board of Management.

When considering its own composition and filling vacancies, the Board of management will strive to ensure that its membership represents the broadest possible range of backgrounds and points of view, consistent with the need to maintain a Board with the skills and experience required to carry out its responsibilities.

The Executive Board will devote time to their continuing personal development on issues around equality, diversity and inclusion.

Responsibilities

While every member of our community has a moral and legal obligation to promote an inclusive, courteous, and fair culture, the Chairman, Executive Board and Board of Management bear overarching day-to-day responsibility for achieving these goals.

In terms of operation, the Ethics and Advisory Committee will coordinate on EDI issues and head the AIMS Ethics and Advisory Committee. This committee will provide operational supervision, coordinate EDI-related policies and action plans, and accelerate progress toward institution-wide EDI initiatives such as Gender Equality and Race Equality.

The Ethics and Advisory Committee will assist members of the AIMS Executive Board in ensuring delivery and oversight of EDI objectives as they pertain to business concerns pursued through the Executive Board and its major subcommittees.

The Board of Management is responsible for implementing this EDI policy, identifying local equity and diversity difficulties, and devising local initiatives to address identified issues such as academic performance.

All employees and students are accountable for ensuring that their activities are consistent with this Policy, with compliance being an express expectation of the relevant contractual relationship with AIMS. This implies that all staff and students should be aware of the policy and strive to behave in line with it, recognizing the benefits of fostering a culture of equity and inclusion. This includes taking advantage of chances for learning and education, as well as being acquainted with accessible resources. It also means that if standards of behavior fall short of expectations, all AIMS regulations governing conduct and capacity may be relied on.

The Ethics and Advisory Committee will assist in the development and monitoring of this policy in collaboration with the Executive Board, which is responsible for leading new initiatives that promote respect for diversity, genuine equality of opportunity, and the removal of any barriers to fulfilling equality. These activities will be designed in collaboration with faculty and students, who will be reminded of their roles in connection with EDI objectives.

Principles of Implementation

This Policy is connected to a number of particular policies and strategies, each of which will detail action plans for achieving strategic and policy objectives. The following are the core concepts behind policy implementation to maintain coherence and consistency of approach.

Based on extensive research and stakeholder interaction, an evidence-based approach will be used.

AIMS will employ quantitative and qualitative equality and diversity statistics, comparing against external data when possible. Consultations will be an important part of EDI planning, including the Race Equality self-assessment procedures. Data dashboards for staff and students will allow for progress tracking and the identification of future activities.

Evidence sources will include

- Consultation - study of staff and student demographic data
- Consultation - analysis of staff survey answers
- Results of institutional self-evaluation mechanisms (Race Equality)
- Consultation with specialized EDI teams, as well as a general EDI strategy survey and focus groups

Definitions

Equality

Refers largely to statutory compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the efforts that AIMS takes to prevent direct and indirect discrimination through its policies and procedures. It involves

ensuring that everyone at AIMS has an equal opportunity to make the most of their abilities and that no one is disadvantaged because of where they come from, what they believe, whether they are disabled, or their age, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Discrimination in the open

Occurs when one person is regarded less favorably than another because of a protected attribute they possess, are suspected of possessing, or associate with someone who possesses a protected characteristic.

Discrimination by inference

Occurs when a condition, rule, policy, or practice applies to everyone yet disadvantages persons who have a protected attribute in particular. However, if the regulation can be demonstrated to be a reasonable way of reaching a lawful goal, it may not constitute indirect discrimination.

Associational Discrimination

This is direct discrimination against someone because they are friends with someone who has a protected feature.

Perception discrimination

This is direct discrimination against someone who believes they have a protected feature.

Victimization

Occurs when someone is treated unfairly as a result of filing or supporting a discrimination complaint.

Diversity refers to AIMS discretionary activities in fostering, honoring, and appreciating a varied staff community that is reflective of the local community, the city, and the students, and recognizes that each individual is unique.

Inclusion

AIMS dedication to accepting all persons regardless of color, gender, handicap, or any other protected feature. The declared goal of AIMS is to provide equal access and opportunity to everyone, to eliminate prejudice and intolerance, and to build an inclusive environment.

Bullying that is homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic

Is described as the targeted abuse of a person who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT+) or who is thought to be LGBT+. It can manifest itself in a variety of ways, including unfavorable views and beliefs about, aversion to, or prejudice towards bisexual, lesbian, gay, trans, and gender non-binary persons. Making harsh remarks about someone's identity or looks, or purposefully 'outing' someone as LGBT+ without their permission, are two examples.

Bullying against Trans people includes intentionally 'misgendering' (using improper pronouns) or utilizing someone's prior name ('dead naming'). Bi-specific bullying involves behaviors that obliterate their identity, such as claiming they are no longer bi if they are in a long-term relationship or dismissing bisexuality as a "phase." Exclusion of same-sex partners from social occasions or use of homophobic stereotypes as 'banter' are examples of homophobic bullying.

Racism

People who are minorities because of their skin color, nationality, ethnicity, or national origin may face many forms of racism. It includes laws, behaviors, or norms that continue to provide certain people with an unfair advantage while treating others unfairly or negatively depending on race.

Individual racism

To an individual's views, attitudes, and behaviors, and includes unpleasant or unjust things that people say, do, or think because they believe their own race makes them more intellectual, decent, moral, and so on than people of other races, such as name calling, slurs, and prejudices.

Institutional racism

Refers to racism at the organizational level and may involve discriminatory treatment because of unjust policies and prejudiced practices based on racial difference, resulting in disparities in outcomes.

Structural racism

The underlying system of racial prejudices that may exist throughout institutions and society, enacting privilege based on ethnicity and hence leading to unequal results and experiences.