



University of Stuttgart  
Germany

# Intelligent through diversity

Diversity concept

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*Diversity is essential: for excellent science, for successful teams, and for our personal development. The variety of perspectives is the basis for successful learning and respectful action, and it is an important part of our university culture.*

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## Mission statement

Different faculty cultures, the heterogeneity of our students, the high number of international students and researchers as well as all employees with their personal life story characterize our university. It is therefore very important to us that we integrate the individual history of each person into our everyday university life.

Dealing with different ways of life and worldviews broadens our perspective and offers opportunities that we appreciate and seize. As an intelligent system for a sustainable society, the University of Stuttgart is in a position to identify and overcome scientific, technical, and social challenges at an early stage. In accordance with its vision, the university is adaptable and agile, and uses the potential of its members efficiently and profitably.

At the University of Stuttgart, we bring the best minds together and work across disciplines. The university educates personalities for science, business, and society who act responsibly and think globally and inclusively. At the same time, the university is a system that learns and benefits from individual strengths and experiences, the wealth of ideas, and the commitment of all its members and owes its quality and success to them. This makes it an attractive education and research institution, and a reliable employer on a global scale.

## The diversity model of the University of Stuttgart

The **Stuttgarter Weg (Stuttgart Way)**, the guiding principle of networked disciplines, characterizes the special profile of the University of Stuttgart and has become one of its trademarks. Cultural diversity and consistent cooperation of complementary disciplines facilitate the use of different approaches. In combination with an agile administrative structure, this opens up unique opportunities and increases the competitiveness of the University of Stuttgart. Therefore, the University of Stuttgart strengthens the networking of different thematic and methodological approaches to knowledge in research and teaching. This is achieved by integrating engineering and natural sciences, humanities and social sciences, and economic and business sciences on the basis of cutting-edge research in the various disciplines. In addition, it promotes the cooperation of the research institutions with the science support areas in technology and administration, and wants to continue to focus on enrichment through dialog and exchange across all fields of action and status groups.

The University of Stuttgart will continue to promote diversity as a research topic in the future. In late 2009, the **Institute for Diversity Studies in Engineering (IDS)** was established at the University of Stuttgart for this purpose. The IDS investigates the innovation potential of diversity and distinctions between socio-technical systems in the context of digital transformation.

## The diversity strategy at the University of Stuttgart

As an employer, the University of Stuttgart provides support to all its employees and enables them to reach their individual potential. It encourages diversity and equal opportunities as well as treating one another fairly, regardless of status, age, religion skin color, disabilities, sexual orientation, or gender. The importance of diversity is laid down in the mission statement of the University of Stuttgart. It is also expressed in the slogan **Intelligent through diversity**. The logo of the University of Stuttgart also symbolizes the university as a pluralistic entity that consists of a multitude of institutions, people, and opinions.

The University of Stuttgart can look back on numerous successes of its gender equality policy, and there are many institutions and individual measures that are constantly being developed further. Some actions and milestones related to diversity are:

- 1985: Logo of the university showing diversity
- 1988: Advisory Committee for the Promotion of Women
- 1990: Senate Committee for the Promotion of Women
- 2009: Institute for Diversity Studies in Engineering (IDS)
- 2012: audit family-friendly university
- 2014: Signing the Diversity Charta
- 2015: Accessible Campus working group
- 2015: Corporate Health Award
- 2016: Internationalization audit
- 2017: Education and Social Inequality working group
- 2017: Signing of the Charta for Diversity
- 2017: Diversity Roundtable
- 2018: Corporate Health Award
- 2018: Vice Rectorate for Early Career Researchers and Diversity
- 2019: Diversity Tag

For its diversity management, the University of Stuttgart has chosen the following fields of action: **Research & Science, Studies and Teaching, Human Resources & Development as well as Infrastructure & Agility**. As a cross-cutting topic, diversity refers to all of these fields of action. In the future, measures will be derived from them that contain or touch on several dimensions in their multifaceted nature. The diversity concept thus supplements the gender equality plan and covers all dimensions.

The field of action "Infrastructure and Agility" includes not only buildings and accessibility but also digitalization and mobility in the broadest sense, such as flexible personnel and administrative structures, interdisciplinarity, and internationalization.

## The organizational structure of diversity management

In order to strategically develop as well as efficiently shape and expand diversity management at the University of Stuttgart in line with its great importance, the **Vice Rectorate for Early Career Researchers and Diversity** has been in place since 2019. By anchoring diversity in its management structures, the university wants to use synergies from existing activities, derive goals, and actively promote diversity measures.

The **Diversity Roundtable** serves as a discussion forum for the various players. It promotes the exchange between the institutions, the faculties, and the Rectorate. This type of networking enables the flow of information, the concentration of existing measures, and the development of new measures and projects. The Vice Rector for Early Career Researchers and Diversity and the Gender Equality Officer invite all those who have a connection to the topic of diversity to join. Participation in the Roundtable is flexible. From the Roundtable, dynamic and agile working groups can be formed that consider specific diversity issues from different perspectives. In addition to the faculty gender equality representatives, the faculties, the Stuttgart Centers, and the research networks can also appoint **diversity representatives**. Recommendations for diversity measures can be submitted to the Senate via the **Diversity and Gender Equality Senate Committee**, which is jointly headed by the Vice Rectorate for Early Career Researchers and Diversity and the Gender Equality Officer. In the future, external expertise will be integrated into the diversity management of the University of Stuttgart through the planned **Diversity Advisory Council**.

You can find all diversity actors at the University of Stuttgart on the website <https://www.uni-stuttgart.de/universitaet/profil/chancengleichheit/diversity-akteurinnen-und-akteure/>

## Our understanding of diversity

The University of Stuttgart is committed to open-minded cooperation. Openness, tolerance, respect, and fairness are the basis for the common work in everyday university life and the achievement of organizational goals.

The University of Stuttgart provides a space for its members to develop their personal potential and be successful in their tasks and goals. Diversity, equal opportunities, and inclusion provide the framework for a productive and effective work and study environment. With its diversity concept, the university addresses the dimensions **Gender, Life Plan, Age, Health, Social Background, Nationality & Culture** as well as **Disciplinary Orientation**, which all affect their fields of action, and views them from an intersectional perspective. From these dimensions, we derive a variety of diversity measures at the University of Stuttgart, such as mentoring programs, Uni & Family Service, accessible campus and internationalization programs.

### Gender

The University of Stuttgart offers equal opportunities to everyone, regardless of their gender. It therefore promotes equal opportunities for women, men, and persons of other genders as well as inter- and transgender persons in their university studies and at all levels of science, science management, administration, and technology. The overall goal of the Gender dimension is to establish a culture of appreciation and equal opportunities. In accordance with the principle of gender mainstreaming, all university members are mindful of the different life situations and interests of people of all genders in their actions and decisions.

Due to the technical orientation of the University of Stuttgart, special attention is being paid to equality between men and women in studies and science. In cooperation with the faculty gender equality representatives, the **Gender Equality Officer** and the **Gender Equality Office** support students and academic staff in implementing the statutory equal opportunities mandate and the "Research-Oriented Equal Opportunities Standards" of the German Research Foundation. In order to support women in science and university studies, the University of Stuttgart pursues a life cycle concept with tailor-made offers for schoolgirls, female students, female early career researchers, and female professors. The **Equal Opportunities Officer** is the contact person for the various concerns and interests of women at the University of Stuttgart in the fields of administration and technology.

The **Gender Consulting Service** of the University of Stuttgart advises scientists on the integration of gender aspects into research proposals and supports them in the planning and implementation of gender equality measures. Furthermore, it contributes to the sensitization of academic leaders to gender issues, so that they will be motivated to integrate the principles of gender mainstreaming into their portfolio of leadership.



## Life Plan

The University of Stuttgart sees gender as closely linked with life planning and thus with the compatibility of university and private life. Since there are different life plans, there are different strategies for combining life and work or life and study. The University of Stuttgart therefore wants to enable all its members to individually design and live the balance that is optimal for them. Only in this way can performance be maintained and potential be best utilized.

## Age

The Center for Higher Education and Life-Long Learning makes it possible for students of all ages to study and thus to receive personal and professional training. A wide range of **extra-mural courses** is offered, which facilitate lifelong learning. The center also puts a focus on other aspects of the personal life plan, such as extra-curricular activities and part-time continuing education, and on the challenges that arise from family commitments. This open approach to diversity in lifestyles is part of an appreciative management culture at the University of Stuttgart and results in a wide range of target group-specific services and measures as well as flexible working time models and study conditions. The University of Stuttgart sees itself as a **family-friendly university** and continuously strives towards implementing this ethos into its structures, processes, and instruments, so that the conditions for its employees and students can be improved in the long term. The aim is to make the university's attractiveness more visible to new students and highly qualified scientists through **welcome events**. This also includes the expansion of personnel development concepts, **workplace health management**, and the **leadership program**.

## Health

Physical and psychological impairments can be a temporary or a permanent part of a person's life situation. Creating healthy work and study conditions as well as ensuring the participation of persons with disabilities and chronic illnesses in all areas of university life are a part of the University of Stuttgart's self-image. Various services, measures, and structures have been established that take the individual health situation of university members into account, compensate for disadvantages, and enable equal participation in university life. The officers and representatives for the impaired employees and students, as well as those responsible for health promotion, support the university in implementing its goals as well as the legal requirements and in sensitizing its members to the issue of disabilities.

Accessibility in the various areas of working, studying, and researching is a declared aim of the University of Stuttgart. This refers to both the structural-technical area and the electronic and print media, and also includes structural-organizational accessibility. Previous projects and measures are therefore to be pooled for all fields of action of the university, and to be developed further according to target group-specific needs and requirements.

## Social Background

The University of Stuttgart stands for cosmopolitanism, individuality, and a sense of community, and benefits greatly from the diverse backgrounds of its members, whether through their regional and international origins or their cultural identity.

Students and their approach to studying are also affected by their family and cultural backgrounds. Later, a person's own and conveyed values and traditions accompany them in their professional life or scientific career. Since the University of Stuttgart wants to provide all its members the space to develop according to their potential, numerous teaching programs and projects support students right from the beginning of their studies, with the aim of counteracting obstacles created by social and educational-cultural inequality. The cooperation with ArbeiterKind.de is to be intensified to that effect, and existing measures with the focus on the social background are to be developed further.

Regardless of whether it concerns a professional or a personal issue, students can turn to reliable contact persons at the university with their questions. Various working groups as well as language mentoring programs and other mentoring programs establish contact between the individual target groups and appropriate services, and support not only university students but also high school students at the start of and during their university studies.

## Nationality & Culture

We believe that excellent science is made possible through a multi-perspective approach, in which international and intercultural perspectives are discussed in problems, methods, content, programs, and working practice and are lived in a wide range of collaborations. Therefore, the University of Stuttgart promotes its internationalization. It attracts students and scientists from all over the world and produces graduates who know how to act responsibly in the most diverse contexts in Germany and abroad. Our international students and scientists broaden our perspective on a daily basis. They are also important ambassadors for our understanding of diversity.

In addition, we support the mobility of our students as well as that of our academic staff and science support staff from the technical and administrative areas in order to facilitate international exchange with the respective communities.

Our goal is to further develop intercultural competence in administration and to provide comprehensive services for the needs of an internationally oriented university. A diverse workforce should be able to access an attractive range of services that are also multilingual.

## Disciplinary Orientation

As one of the university's unique features, the intensively practiced **Stuttgarter Weg (Stuttgart Way)** shows what can be achieved when scientists from a variety of top-level disciplines work together in an interdisciplinary manner. In this sense, the success of the University of Stuttgart is only possible through the cooperation of all university members with their different disciplinary orientations and talents.

## Outlook

The purpose of this first diversity concept is the concentration of activities and the positioning of the University of Stuttgart. The concept will be integrated into the Structural and Development Plan 2021-2025. Once the new organizational structure has created the organizational prerequisites, diversity needs will be identified, development goals will be set, and measures will be derived and implemented during this period. In the implementation of the concept and its integration into the various fields of action, the University of Stuttgart wants to actively support its members, promote dialog and exchange across all status groups, and increase the visibility of its diversity strategy. This is to be achieved by setting up a diversity fund to support successful existing, planned, and new activities and to evaluate their success in the future. The aim is, therefore, also to define measurable criteria and to develop a quality assurance concept.