



# **Inclusive Education in Higher Education in Uzbekistan: A Good Practice Guide**

**2024**

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# 1. Executive Summary and Acknowledgements

This Good Practice Guide derives from an **Inclusive University Initiative (UI)** launched in 2022 by the British Council in Uzbekistan, Westminster International University in Tashkent (WIUT), and the University of Westminster, in partnership with the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovations of the Republic of Uzbekistan (MHESI), with support from the Legislative Chamber of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan. It is intended to support the enhancement of **inclusive education in Higher Education in Uzbekistan**. It is the product of a national **Inclusive University Working Group (IUWG)**, established under the Ministry.

The Guide is a scholarly review created in dialogue with major Higher Education (HE) partners in Uzbekistan, UK Transnational Education (TNE) providers, and other key organisations. It draws on the expertise of these and other bodies, and is informed by consultation with a number of Uzbek universities. It brings together perspectives from Uzbekistan and the United Kingdom that reflect the sociocultural, higher educational, and legislative contexts of these nations. It recognises that the development in Uzbekistan of inclusive education in HE will and must reflect national sociocultural, legislative, and educational environments, imperatives, and sensitivities. It illustrates context-specific examples of good practice related to strategy and policy; the inclusive curriculum; inclusive student support; environments, tools, and technologies for inclusive education; and engagement with external stakeholders and frameworks. It contains an implementation process chart and a bibliography, further reading, and resource list. The Guide will be a living document, subject to ongoing discussion with stakeholders and to review.

Throughout the Guide, **inclusive Higher Education** is understood to embrace all those HE practices that recognise difference, address discrimination, and promote equality of opportunity and access for all. Inclusivity in HE enables all students to ‘have an equal opportunity to succeed, regardless of their background, demographic characteristics or current circumstances’<sup>1</sup>.

The Working Group would like to thank all those colleagues, institutions, and organisations that shared valuable insights, materials, and time in support of the creation of the Guide.

## **List of abbreviations:**

**EDI** - Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

**HE** - Higher Education

**HEI** - Higher Education Institution

**IUI** - Inclusive University Initiative

**IUWG** - Inclusive University Working Group

**MHESI** - Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovations of the Republic of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/membership/collaborative-enhancement-projects/equality-diversity- and- inclusion/the-inclusive-education-framework>

Uzbekistan

**SDGs** - Sustainable Development Goals

**TNE** - Transnational Education

## 2. Context of the Guide

In 2022, to support Higher Education reform in Uzbekistan and contribute to the development of **inclusive Higher Education (HE)**, the British Council in Uzbekistan, Westminster International University in Tashkent (WIUT), and the University of Westminster launched an **Inclusive University Initiative (IUI)**. This was done in partnership with the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovations (MHESI) of the Republic of Uzbekistan, with support from the Legislative Chamber of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The initiative began with a 'Towards the Inclusive University – Widening Access in Uzbekistan' Conference, in May 2022. The conference addressed issues related to women's empowerment and girls' education and access to education for people with disabilities and those from low-income families.

After the Conference, a national **Inclusive University Working Group (IUWG)** was established, under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovations, to share good practice and coordinate work on inclusive HE. The group focuses specifically on:

- **Embedding inclusion in university strategies**
- **Shaping an inclusive curriculum**
- **Inclusive student support**

Inclusive HE in Uzbekistan is a key project, and one that feeds powerfully into the academic and cultural life of universities, as well as enhancing their institutional standing, locally, nationally, and internationally. Embracing inclusive education helps to:

- **Attract talent;**
- **Engender an inclusive culture for all;**
- **Support wellbeing;**
- **Promote innovation and growth;**
- **Diversify communities and thinking;**
- **Create opportunities for students and staff;**
- **Enable and/or deepen collaborative relationships with HE and other partners, bodies, and agencies.**

The working group has adopted a systemic and consultative approach, prioritising a **mapping** of major inclusive education **stakeholders** and the creation of a **Good Practice Guide**, based on national and international experience and expertise.

This Good Practice Guide has been developed in dialogue with major HE partners in Uzbekistan; UK TNE providers; and other key organisations. It references examples of good practice drawn from these and other bodies and institutions. Combining perspectives from Uzbekistan and the UK, it recognises that inclusive education in HE in Uzbekistan will and must reflect national sociocultural, legislative, and educational contexts, imperatives, and sensitivities. Presented at the Uzbekistan-UK Education Conference in March 2024, it will be disseminated through workshop, conference, and seminar activity.

The Guide will be a living document, subject to ongoing review and development as the project moves forward. The IUWG will be responsible for that work.

### **3. Aims and Objectives of the Guide**

**Aim:** to help support and champion inclusive education in Higher Education (HE) in Uzbekistan and beyond, and to share national and international good practice.

**Objectives:**

- To identify priority areas for the development and enhancement in Uzbekistan of inclusive education in HE;
- To provide guidance on the implementation, in priority areas, of inclusive education in HE;
- To illustrate processes for the implementation of inclusive education in HE;
- To share national and international examples and models of inclusive education in HE.

## **4. Enhancing Inclusive Education in HE in Uzbekistan**

### **4.1. Priority Areas**

There are three priority areas for immediate attention in HE in Uzbekistan:

- Empowerment of women and girls;
- Widening access for people with disabilities;
- Widening access for people from low-income families.

The present Guide is focused around these areas but also supports work on inclusion more widely.

### **4.2. Inclusive HE: Strategy and Policy**

Suggested action points for universities:

- **Develop a dedicated university strategy and policy for inclusive education, or**

equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), with senior leadership support;

- Link the policy to relevant national legislative frameworks;
- Link the strategy to national legislative frameworks and draw on good practice, national and international;
- Use institution-wide consultation to ensure the strategy is fit for purpose;
- Ensure senior management champions are in place to support the strategy;
- Create a university-level committee to help develop, deliver, and review the strategy, ensure its progress, and monitor and report on its implementation;
- Create an action plan, linked to strategy and policy, and ensure its delivery is monitored;
- Use project groups to progress specific issues;
- Engage with sector-wide initiatives, national and international, to enhance work on inclusion/EDI;
- Develop and use data to identify and address priority areas for attention and action.

#### 4.2.1 Strategy

A **strategy for inclusion** is a mechanism that enables Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to put **equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)** at the heart of everything they do, allowing students and staff to feel safe and supported, regardless of characteristics or situation. When such strategies are established and implemented, an environment is created in which discrimination has no place, difference is respected, and equitable treatment for all is championed.

University **strategies for inclusion** may be known as **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strategies**. They should guide and be incorporated into overarching university strategy but also be **standalone entities**. They may reflect national or international frameworks and requirements and good practice guidance from sectoral bodies and experts. (In the UK, for instance, such strategies, grounded in equality legislation, may draw on frameworks and guidance materials provided for instance by the Quality Assurance Agency and Advance HE). Depending on their particular focus, areas covered by such strategies may include:

- **student and staff recruitment, retention, and progression;**
- **student access and participation;**
- **student and staff support;**
- **staff development and training;**
- **equality, diversity, and inclusion in teaching and learning and research;**
- **curriculum development and design;**
- **the university environment, facilities, and community;**
- **university organisational structures and governance.**

A university strategy for inclusion, or EDI, should be **institution-wide** and reflect the context, culture, and values of the HEI developing it. In order to ensure that such a strategy is comprehensive and fit-for-purpose, **consultation** with university leaders, staff, students, and other key stakeholders is critical, as is the active support of university senior leadership and management. Senior management champions are vital for the successful delivery and embedding of inclusion strategies.

An example of an EDI strategy rooted in consultation is that of the [University of Westminster](#)<sup>2</sup>. Structured around the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion, the strategy is grounded in **focused implementation and regular progress monitoring**. This takes place through annual **EDI action plans**, reviewed twice yearly by the university's **EDI Committee**<sup>3</sup>.

**EDI committees** play a critical role in developing, embedding, and monitoring work on diversity and inclusion. As the **Terms of Reference** of Westminster's EDI Committee suggest, they typically include representatives from the academic, administrative, and student communities of the university, have senior-level institutional commitment and leadership, and report to the university's Executive Board or equivalent.

#### 4.2.2 Policy

Alongside strategies for inclusion, or EDI, clear university **policy** in this area is key. HE EDI policy should reflect **legislative requirements**, especially in relation to discrimination, and be clear on how they will be engaged with. In Uzbekistan, these requirements reflect strong and ongoing governmental commitment to supporting people with disabilities and empowering women and girls, including in the HE context. They are situated within the **Uzbekistan-2030 Strategy and relevant laws, decrees, orders, and resolutions**. These include that regarding the admission to HE of disabled people (Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers 417, June 2018), that regarding state support for persons with disabilities (Presidential Decree PF 5270, December 2017), that regarding the rights of persons with disabilities (Law 641, September 2020) and those regarding women's affairs (Presidential Decree PF 87, March 2022, and Ministerial Order 311, July 2023). Key too are linked action plans such as the comprehensive model work plan developed by the Council on Women's Affairs of the MHESI for the academic year 2023-4.

In the UK, the **2010 Equality Act** is a primary driver of HE EDI policy. Materials related to HE EDI

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/sites/default/public-files/general-documents/Equality-Diversity- and- Inclusion-Policy-and-Strategy.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/sites/default/public-files/general-documents/EDI-Terms-of-reference-and-membership-2023-24-Jan-24-Version.pdf>

policies, guided by the 2010 Act and the Public Sector Equality Duty, include **Access and Participation** plans of the kind English HEIs are required to produce by the Office for Students. These are intended to improve equality of opportunity for students from underrepresented groups, and to enable access to, success in, and progress from HE<sup>4</sup> Examples of such plans from UK TNE partners include those of the [University of Westminster](#)<sup>5</sup> and the [Royal Agricultural University](#)<sup>6</sup>

### 4.2.3. Working Practices

Along with **EDI Committees**, **project groups** or **task forces** provide an effective means to address specific issues of inequality and discrimination and produce policy or guidance materials. Including student representatives on such groups is critical. Equally valuable is engagement with **sector-wide HE initiatives** related to issues of inequality and discrimination. In the UK, these include the Athena Swan Charter<sup>7</sup> focused on gender equality, and the Race Equality Charter<sup>8</sup>

Finally, identifying, collating, and working with **data** associated with inclusion is crucial. Data collection typically reflects legislative requirements related to EDI. Data driven action enables HEIs to identify challenges and inequalities, including those related to attainment gaps, faced by different student groups (specifically students from disadvantaged backgrounds), and to find solutions. It is a powerful way to effect change, support and promote inclusive HE, and engage the commitment of staff and students. Advance HE provides invaluable guidance in this area, reflective specifically of the legislative and reporting context in the UK<sup>9</sup>

#### Checklist questions for universities:

- **Has your institution developed a strategy and policy for inclusive education in HE?**
- **Does the strategy cover all relevant areas?**
- **Does it draw on good practice, national and international, and reflect relevant legislation?**
- **Does it have an action plan that ensures progress is delivered and monitored?**
- **Is it supported by a committee or task force, with senior leadership?**
- **Does policy reflect relevant legislation?**
- **Are policy and strategy informed by staff and student consultation?**

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/access-and-participation-plans/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/about-us/our-university/corporate-information/policies-and-documents-a-z/access-and-participation-plans>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.rau.ac.uk/access-agreements-and-access-and-participation-plans>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan-charter>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/equality-charters/race-equality-charter>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/using-data-and-evidence>

- Are senior management champions in place to support the strategy?
- Does your institution collect and use data to ensure improvements in inclusive education?
- How and where are strategy and policy for inclusive education making an impact and producing change for the better?

### 4.3. Inclusive HE: The Inclusive Curriculum

Suggested action points for universities:

- Identify and implement priority areas for the development of an inclusive curriculum. These include, but are not limited to, curriculum, syllabus, and course content, design, and delivery; teaching and learning materials and resources; learning activities; teaching methodologies; assessment and feedback practices; staff development and training.
- Use student co-creation to support the development of an inclusive curriculum;
- Ensure that curriculum inclusion is a core part of wider teaching and learning strategy, and staff development activity;
- Ensure all students and staff, academic and administrative, are aware of the benefits of an inclusive curriculum, and engage with its implementation;
- Ensure financial resources are made available to support the provision of inclusive teaching and learning materials; staff development; and the development of an inclusive curriculum;
- Engage with sector-wide initiatives, national and international, and good practice and self- evaluation materials to enhance work on the inclusive curriculum;
- Support pedagogical research on curriculum inclusion.

**Teaching and learning** is a key area of HE in which inclusion is critical, and the **curriculum** is at its core. An **inclusive curriculum** is structured to enable **students from all backgrounds and circumstances** to learn, progress, and succeed. It recognises and engages with the variety of characteristics and experiences that students bring to universities. **Curriculum, syllabus, and course content and delivery; teaching and learning materials and resources; learning activities; teaching methodologies; assessment and feedback practices; staff development and training** designed to be accessible and relevant to all students are hallmarks of an inclusive curriculum.

An inclusive curriculum can be developed through **partnership with students**, as exemplified by work at the **University of Westminster** on decolonising curricula<sup>10</sup> **Student co-creation** is a key

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<sup>10</sup> <https://blog.westminster.ac.uk/psj/>

tool in work on inclusive curriculum design and is itself a practice of inclusion<sup>11</sup>.

The UK Higher Education Academy's 2011 guide to **inclusive curriculum design in higher education** provides an invaluable resource for the development of inclusive curricula. It includes material on context, rationale, principles, and core components.<sup>12</sup>

Further key resources, focused on **EDI in the curriculum** and incorporating **checklist and self-evaluation materials**, are Advance HE's 'Embedding EDI in the curriculum: a programme standard'<sup>13</sup> and the Inclusive Education Framework referenced [here](#)<sup>14</sup>

An inclusive curriculum recognises that students have **diverse characteristics and requirements**. Approaches to its design will acknowledge the different circumstances, competencies, and experiences that students bring to their HE learning, and take account of those differences in **course design and delivery, teaching methodology, and learning materials, including case study material and course reading lists**. Such approaches also produce **assessment practices** that entail a range of methods, traditional and non-traditional, to cater for the diverse needs and learning styles of a diverse student body. Applied effectively, they make learning and teaching more meaningful and enabling for students, and more likely to lead to successful outcomes.

Work on curriculum inclusion may have specific focuses. One such is **disability**.

In Uzbekistan, the [University of World Languages](#) has developed a unique 'Light by Knowledge' project dedicated to the development of methods of teaching foreign languages for blind and partially impaired language learners and centered around the enhancement not only of learning but also of motivation and participation. In relation to **assessment practice**, a key area of curriculum inclusion, to support students with visual impairments, entrance examinations at [Gulistan State University](#) include a representative from the Society for the Blind on the examination panel and Braille writers and notebooks can be used in written and oral examination processes. Likewise, the [Gulistan State Pedagogical Institute](#) allows blind students to be assessed orally during mid-term and final examinations: having been given the exam questions verbally by the subject teacher, blind students are able to take notes and prepare answers using Braille notebooks, with answers given orally. At [Westminster International University in Tashkent \(WIUT\)](#), a **Disability and Inclusivity Support (DIS) Unit** advises staff on appropriate alterations to assessment formats for disabled students. These modifications are intended to accommodate students' specific challenges

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/university-life/get-involved/students-as-co-creators>

<sup>12</sup> [https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/hea/private/resources/introduction\\_and\\_overview\\_1568037036.pdf](https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/hea/private/resources/introduction_and_overview_1568037036.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-09/Assessing%20EDI%20in%20the%20Curriculum%20-%20Programme%20Standard.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/membership/collaborative-enhancement-projects/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/the-inclusive-education-framework>

whilst enabling them to demonstrate the same level of learning outcomes as their peers, thereby ensuring that academic standards are upheld. They include adjustments such as additional time in time- constrained assessments for dyslexic students and the use of written reports rather than oral presentations for students with speech-related disabilities.

Attention to **gender bias** and to gender responsive curricula, pedagogies, and learning and teaching resources is another significant aspect of work on curriculum inclusion. It ensures that the experiences and needs of women students are reflected in learning and teaching design, delivery, practice, and materials. Gender responsive curricular and cocurricular provision is illustrated by the Business Training for Women Entrepreneurs course organised in June 2021 by **Westminster International University in Tashkent (WIUT)**<sup>15</sup> in reflection of changing professional choices and requirements of women in Uzbekistan and beyond<sup>16</sup>

The benefits of an inclusive curriculum should be shared with colleagues, students, and other institutional stakeholders through **staff development activity** and **teaching and learning events**. As well as enhancing educational quality and equality and the experience of each and every student, the development and delivery of an inclusive curriculum helps to grow the reputation of HEIs, empowering their engagement with social challenges and their commitment to social responsibility. Curriculum inclusion requires significant resource input from HEIs, especially in relation to learning resources and professional development for university staff. The benefits of such investment far outweigh the cost.

Checklist questions for universities:

- **Has your institution developed a plan for making the curriculum more inclusive?**
- **Does the plan cover all relevant areas?**
- **Does it draw on good practice, national and international, and checklist and self- evaluation materials?**
- **Does it reflect the characteristics and learning requirements of all students?**
- **Is it informed by staff and student consultation?**
- **Is it supported by pedagogical research in your institution?**
- **Is staff training and resource provision in place to ensure its delivery?**
- **How is its progress monitored?**
- **How and where is the plan making an impact and producing change for the better?**

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<sup>15</sup> <https://exedu.wiut.uz/component/k2/item/21- business-training-for-women-entrepreneurs>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/uz/064a4e902764e6b957a6c12b6fcb536f4c20314ecc097fb9882bddc8ab50a4e4.docx>

## 4.4. Inclusive HE: Student Support and Accessible Environments

### Suggested action points for universities:

- Ensure that inclusive student support and environmental accessibility are core and coordinated elements of university strategy and planning;
- Ensure that attention to diversity and inclusion is central to student support provision (welfare, IT, library, accommodation, finance);
- Ensure that attention to inclusion and access is central to resources, facilities, and campus planning, so that all university environments are accessible to all and learning resources and infrastructure support full participation by all students;
- Consult with students and staff to ensure that environmental and facilities developments and support mechanisms meet needs;
- Deliver staff training related to diversity, inclusion, and student support;
- Ensure that inclusive student support and access provision is clearly communicated to students, prospective students, and staff;
- Ensure that financial resources are available to enable the delivery of inclusive student support, accessible environments, and assistive tools and technologies;
- Engage with sector-wide initiatives, national and international, with good practice materials, and with specialist organisations to enhance work on inclusive student support and access for all.

Inclusive education in HE goes beyond curriculum content and design. No less important are **inclusive student support services** and **accessible environments and facilities** that allow for the **equitable treatment of, and full access for, all students**.

Student support services and facilities (welfare, IT, library, accommodation, estates) and campus planning processes that prioritise inclusion allow universities to combat discrimination and challenge barriers to student wellbeing, access, and participation. **Consultation with students and staff** is key to their development. They enable HEIs to anticipate, plan for, and support the requirements of **students from all backgrounds and circumstances**, allowing **all students to participate fully in, and reach their full potential through**, the educational, cultural, and social life of the university.

Likewise, they enable measures ('**reasonable adjustments**') to be put in place that meet the specific needs of particular student groups/individual students. But a core objective should always be the **removal, where possible, of obstacles to the inclusion, access, and participation of all students, rather than simply the creation of special arrangements for some**.

Work on equality of opportunity, access, and support for students with disabilities is a key aspect of

inclusive HE. Areas of attention of such work include but are not limited to:

- **Physical disability/impairment**
- **Visual and hearing impairment**
- **Dyslexia**
- **Learning differences**
- **Autism spectrum conditions**
- **Mental health conditions**
- **Long-term medical conditions**

Illustrating this work, a number of HEIs in Uzbekistan<sup>17</sup> including the **Tashkent University of Information Technologies**<sup>18</sup> have participated in DECIDE, an Erasmus+ project focused on combating discrimination and fostering the right of individuals with special needs in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan to access education and participate in society<sup>19</sup> Grounded in a curriculum composed of eight modules, focused on areas such as disability support and specialist staffing requirements, DECIDE is intended to stimulate and enhance regional cooperation around special needs provision<sup>20</sup> providing a vital catalyst for good practice sharing, joint initiatives, and skills development.

As the work of DECIDE demonstrates, **attention to staff competencies** is a critical element of inclusive student support. Delivering staff training in partnership with specialist organisations can be invaluable, as shown by the training on disability inclusion and awareness organised by **Westminster International University in Tashkent (WIUT)**'s Centre for Professional and Lifelong Education and Student Support Services in May 2022, in collaboration with Sharoit Plus, the Public Association of Disabled People of Tashkent City<sup>21</sup>

No less important is clear and effective **communication**, to university staff, students, and prospective students, of available support. Examples from UK TNE partner universities include the advisory material for disabled students provided online by **Bangor University**<sup>22</sup> and by the **University of Westminster**<sup>23</sup> Detail on the availability of support services, assistive technologies, and facilities for physical and digital access is critical<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> <https://decideproject.ie/partners/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://tuit.uz/en/post/decideloynhasi>

<sup>19</sup> <https://decideproject.ie/about/aims-and-objectives/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://decideproject.ie/modules/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://exedu.wiut.uz/component/k2/item/30-training-on- inclusivity-persons-with-disabilities>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.bangor.ac.uk/student-services/disability/index.php.en>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/support-and-services/disability- learning-support>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/sites/default/public- files/general-documents/access-guide-for-disabled- students.pdf>

As Dilmurad Yusupov indicates in here<sup>25</sup> environmental accessibility and inclusive student support will not be achieved unless all university buildings and structures are accessible to all students - through the provision of functioning **elevators, ramps, and lifts** - and fixtures, tools, and assistive technologies for students with disabilities and/or sensory impairments are available. The latter include **braille signage, textbooks, and specialist materials; specialist sign interpretation provision; specialist software; screen magnifiers and readers; and induction/hearing loops**. Enabling **students** to reach the level of **technical literacy** required to use assistive technologies effectively is critical, as is raising **staff awareness** of their function and role in the classroom. Inclusive learning structures such as **flexible timetable, learning pathway, and lecture capture arrangements, tailored to diverse student needs**, are likewise key. Committed to making buildings navigable for students with disabilities and addressing specialised equipment and facilities needs, the **Tashkent State University of Economics** has developed facilities and services to ensure environmental accessibility and inclusive support, detailed here<sup>26</sup> These include provision for visually- and hearing-impaired students and the introduction of disabled toilets and ramps to university buildings and residences.

**A coordinated approach** to inclusive student support is critical. **Westminster International University in Tashkent (WIUT)** has set up a dedicated **Diversity and Inclusivity Support (DIS) Unit** to initiate and coordinate the efforts of all university departments to provide such support for students at all stages of the student life cycle, including admission, enrolment, study, and assessment, enabling them to benefit from a variety of services and facilities. The DIS serves an important learning support function, as well as providing advisory support to students with disabilities. The DIS has initiated anticipatory adjustments in the physical learning environment. It likewise enables **reasonable adjustments** to be made to accommodate individual students with special needs in the processes of admission, teaching and learning, assessment, and in the use of learning resources and other university facilities.

**Dedicated funding** enabling access for students with disabilities or those from socially vulnerable groups such as low-income families is a vital component of inclusive student support. With this in mind **WIUT** offers full-tuition scholarships to applicants with disabilities as well as partial scholarships to students whose personal circumstances such as parental disability or a single-parent or no-parent background inhibit their ability to afford HE study. **WIUT** also supported with full scholarships the participation of several young learners from underprivileged families in the 2023 WIUT for Kids Creative Summer School.

Finally, creating a sense of **community**, where all students and colleagues feel they belong, is key to achieving inclusion. Student peer-to-peer support and interaction, student projects, and events

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<sup>25</sup> <https://cabar.asia/en/uzbekistan-how-to-ensure-higher-education-accessibility-for-people-with-disabilities>

<sup>26</sup> <https://tsue.uz/en/static/facilities-for-the-disabled>

programmes and practices of representation that raise awareness of and celebrate diversities within the student and staff population, are all ways in which universities can help ensure that they are welcoming environments for everyone, regardless of circumstances. **Staff networks** that bring together, for instance, women colleagues and/or disabled colleagues can make a significant contribution to inclusive university life, creating supportive and safe spaces in which experiences can be shared and through which diverse voices can be heard and championed. So too can **student groups** that perform the same function.

Checklist questions for universities:

- Has your institution developed a plan for making its student support services, environments, and facilities inclusive?
- Does the plan cover all relevant areas?
- Does it reflect current legislation?
- Does it draw on good practice, national and international?
- Does it reflect the requirements of all students?
- Is it informed by student and staff consultation and needs analysis?
- Is staff training and resource provision in place to ensure its delivery?
- Does it include work with specialist organisations?
- Does it encourage the creation of staff and student networks?
- How is its progress monitored?
- Is the support provision enabled by the plan clearly communicated to students and staff?
- How and where is the plan making an impact, producing change for the better, and creating an inclusive university community?

#### **4.5. Inclusive HE: Working with External Partners and Stakeholders**

Suggested action points for universities:

- Work with external partners and stakeholders to reinforce the development and delivery of inclusive education in HE;
- Use TNE and international HE partnerships to share good practice and develop collaborative projects in inclusive HE;
- Engage external partners and stakeholders in mentoring students, particularly students from disadvantaged and marginalised groups.

**Partnership working** strengthens inclusive HE in multiple ways. It can entail work with specialist

organisations focused on specific issues of inclusion; external training providers; national and international educational advisory bodies; national and international HE partners; national and international research consortia engaged with EDI; or alumni and employers able to offer skills development and career progression routes to students from disadvantaged groups. Such collaborative activity enables fresh thinking on inclusion in Higher Education, and provides fresh opportunities for universities to plan for, develop, and deliver inclusive education.

**Transnational educational partnerships (TNE)** provide a valuable route through which good practice can be shared between partner institutions and joint projects can be developed that enhance the inclusive scope of the education offered by both partner universities.

**Mentoring** is a significant area in which input from external partners and stakeholders, including alumni and employers, supports the provision of inclusive education. For students from disadvantaged groups - for instance, women students, disabled students, and students from low-income families - working with and learning from inspiring mentors, especially those whose backgrounds and characteristics reflect their own, can be a transformative experience. A model that demonstrates the impact of and illustrates different forms taken by mentor support is the Future Ready mentoring scheme run by the [University of Westminster](https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/employability-and-career-development/exploring-careers/future-ready-mentoring)<sup>27</sup>

Checklist questions for universities:

- **Has your institution developed a plan for working with partner organisations to enhance inclusive education?**
- **Does your institution work with partner organisations, employers, and/or alumni to improve support for students from disadvantaged groups?**
- **How and where is partnership working making an impact and producing change for the better?**

## **4.6. Inclusive HE: International Positioning**

**Suggested action points for universities:**

- **Use the UN SDG agenda as a tool to support the development of inclusive education in HE, promote its importance, and grow international collaborations;**
- **Engage with global benchmarking/ranking mechanisms related to the SDGs/EDI to enhance global positioning.**

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/employability-and-career-development/exploring-careers/future-ready-mentoring>

Gender equality, the reduction of inequalities, and the provision of quality education are central tenets of the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**<sup>28</sup> Engagement with the SDGs is a priority for HEIs across the globe. Such engagement enhances the educational, cultural, and community life of universities, empowers their external collaborations, and grows their global standing. This is reflected in the **Times Higher Impact Rankings**<sup>29</sup> which assess HEIs against the SDGs.

Supporting SDGs such as 5 (Gender Equality), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and 4 (Quality Education), through the delivery of inclusive HE helps HEIs to fulfil not only their **educational objectives**, but also those objectives related to **performance benchmarks** such as the Impact Rankings. Moreover, engaging with SDGs related to educational quality and equality allows HEIs to position themselves within an international network of societally responsive institutions committed to global change, opening up new international connections.

#### **Checklist questions for universities:**

- **Has your institution developed a plan for engaging with the SDGs?**
- **How does the plan support and enhance inclusive education?**
- **How and where is the plan making an impact and producing change for the better?**

## **4.7. Inclusive HE: Implementation**

Achieving and sustaining inclusive education in HE is an **ongoing** project. It requires rigorous implementation process, with built in monitoring, review, and development elements. A model for this is outlined here.

Draft university **policy and strategy** for inclusive education in HE → Ensure **senior level leadership and support** → Reflect relevant national **legislative frameworks** in the policy → Reflect **legislation and national/international good practice** in the strategy → **Include core areas** in the strategy such as inclusive learning and teaching, inclusive curriculum, inclusive student support, and inclusive culture, environments, and facilities → **Consult key stakeholders** to finalise the strategy → Establish a **committee** responsible for delivering, reviewing, and developing the strategy, with key stakeholder members → Create **committee terms of reference** with clear objectives, review and reporting responsibilities, and reporting lines → Create an **action plan**, with built in monitoring, reporting, review, and development processes → Ensure that **data informs action** related to inclusive HE → Encourage **awareness and engagement with inclusive education** through staff development for academic and administrative staff, especially those with leadership roles → Ensure

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<sup>28</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/impactrankings>

ongoing implementation of review processes for strategy, policy, and action plans → Use external partners and stakeholders to support the development and delivery of strategy and action plans.

## 5. Mapping the Terrain of Inclusive Education in HE

### 5.1. Specialist Organisations in Uzbekistan/Training Providers in Inclusion

- Association of Disabled People of Uzbekistan <https://ozna.uz/> Uzbek Society of Disabled People (UzOI) <https://www.uznj.uz/>
- Society of the Blind of Uzbekistan (UzKOJ) <https://uzkoj.uz>
- Society of the Deaf of Uzbekistan (OGUz) <https://t.me/DeafsocietyofUzbekistan>
- Public Association of Disabled People of Tashkent City SHAROIT PLUS <https://sharoitplus.uz/en/homepage/>
- LLC PRAXIS PLUS <https://praxis.uz/>

### 5.2. UK Organisations engaged with Inclusive HE

- Advance HE <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/>
- Quality Assurance Agency <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/membership/collaborative-enhancement-projects/equality-diversity-and-inclusion>
- Office for Students <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/equality-and-diversity/>
- Sutton Trust <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-priorities/higher-education/>

# **Bibliography, Further Reading, and Resource List**

## **General**

<http://blog.insidegovernment.co.uk/higher-education/what-is-inclusion-in-higher-education>

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/membership/collaborative-enhancement-projects/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/the-inclusive-education-framework>

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/student-recruitment-retention-and-attainment>

## **Inclusive Curriculum**

[https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/hea/private/resources/introduction\\_and\\_overview\\_1568037036.pdf](https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/hea/private/resources/introduction_and_overview_1568037036.pdf)

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-09/Assessing%20EDI%20in%20the%20Curriculum%20-%20Programme%20Standard.pdf>

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/membership/collaborative-enhancement-projects/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/the-inclusive-education-framework>

## **Inclusive Student Support**

<https://decideproject.ie/about/aims-and-objectives/>

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/creating-inclusive-environment/accessible-estates-and-facilities>

## **Disability**

<https://lex.uz/docs/5049549>

<https://lex.uz/docs/3436196>

<https://lex.uz/docs/3765162>

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/creating-inclusive-environment/disabled-people>

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/checklist-making-disability-inclusion-reality-higher-education>

<https://cabar.asia/en/uzbekistan-how-to-ensure-higher-education-accessibility-for-people-with-disabilities>

<https://dilmurad.me/webinar-on-inclusive-education-how-to-combat-ableism-in-uzbekistan/>

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// Gazeta.uz 02.03.2019, <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2019/03/02/disabled/>

Abdukhalilov, A., Yusupov, D. (2021) Why are blind teachers discriminated against?

// Gazeta.uz 18.08.2021, <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2021/08/18/teachers/>

## **Gender**

<https://gender.edu.uz/Hujjatlar/%D0%9F%D0%A4-87.pdf>

<https://lex.uz/uz/docs/-5899498>

<https://gender.edu.uz/>

[https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/gender\\_equality\\_in\\_higher\\_education\\_report.pdf](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/gender_equality_in_higher_education_report.pdf)

[https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/gear\\_roadmap\\_02\\_successfactors\\_obstacles\\_0.pdf](https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/gear_roadmap_02_successfactors_obstacles_0.pdf)