

# **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement and Anti-Discrimination Policy**

As a Higher Education institution, we recognize the importance of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) for the success of our institution and our community. A diverse and inclusive environment encourages creativity, innovation, and growth, and fosters an atmosphere of learning. We believe that every individual has the right to be treated with respect and dignity, regardless of their race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, political views, social background, or any other personal characteristic.

EDI is a shared responsibility among the student body, the staff and the institution. Our EDI policy is based on: equal opportunity, education, a culture of dialogue and belonging, and accountability.

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:** We strongly believe equal opportunity should be a cornerstone of any community or society, out of fairness and also our common welfare. This is why we are committed to make it happen at Forward College:

- In our admissions process: we take into account elements of personal context that may have affected applicants' performance and explain gaps between potential and observable performance.
- We invest 10% of our revenue to financially support students coming from underprivileged backgrounds.
- In our hiring process: where qualifications and personal abilities are deemed equivalent, preferences are given to candidates from underrepresented groups.

**EDUCATION:** Education is key to fostering a more inclusive and equitable community. It is a shared responsibility; all members of our community have a role to play in creating an inclusive environment, regardless of their position, role or influence. We strongly believe in the power of raising awareness on biases and nurturing empathy, dialogue, active listening and non violent communication to empower our staff and students in fostering a respectful and inclusive culture. This is how we weave together an open culture of free speech, mutual respect and

inclusion. We are committed to fostering such a culture by providing development opportunities (training in personal development and during induction, events, conferences...) led by Forward and the student body that support DEI training for faculty, students, and staff, some of them being compulsory. Members of the student council who are elected to represent student life on campus will participate in additional training to prepare them (along with staff) on how to respond appropriately in situations regarding EDI.

**CULTURE OF DIALOGUE AND BELONGING:** We value open and honest communication, grounded in mutual respect, as a means to promote understanding and inclusivity among all members of our institution. Therefore, we are strongly committed to supporting staff and student-led events and initiatives, striving to create an environment where diverse perspectives are welcomed and celebrated, and where everyone feels a sense of belonging. We believe that extra-curricular/campus life activities are essential for our community to express their multiple identities and interests, learn from each other, and grow together. Complementary to that, such initiatives also help foster academic excellence, innovation, and social progress.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** Our EDI policy is grounded in a culture of accountability, where measurable outcomes<sup>1</sup> guide our efforts. Forward EDI task force consists of campus managers and student representatives trained for this role. We will establish an EDI review within our Annual Evaluation Report that will be made public. We also encourage feedback from our campus community.

**ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PROCEDURE:** We are committed to investigating allegations of discrimination, and we take complaints seriously.

### **Definition of discrimination**

Discrimination involves treating an individual or group unfairly based on their personal characteristics. Such behaviour is not tolerated at Forward, and anyone found guilty of discrimination will face escalating levels of disciplinary action. Discrimination can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Verbal abuse or derogatory comments, denial of opportunities or access to resources, unfair evaluations or grading
- Demeaning or inappropriate stereotyping
- Creating a hostile or intimidating environment

### **Reporting and Confidentiality**

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<sup>1</sup>Such as the number of discrimination related incidents investigated, diversity of nationalities, diversity of social background, results on EDI related questions in the student survey.

We encourage - and will protect from any form of retaliation - anyone who feels that they have been subjected to such behaviour to report the incident. To the extent possible, Forward will protect the confidentiality of the people involved in any investigation.

The outcome of the formal investigation could range from verbal or written warnings for those involved, or more serious consequences such as discipline, suspension, or even dismissal, based on the severity of the incident (see our code of conduct).

The process for reporting a student incident of discrimination is as follows:

- The student would bring the alleged incident to the attention of the campus manager and a student representative. The student has the option of bringing the incident only to the attention of the campus manager if he/she feels it is more appropriate. They will ask questions to establish any factual evidence or behaviours that make up the complaint being brought. The Campus Manager will determine if the situation can be addressed by the student representative alone or if the situation requires additional support. If the incident is between Forward students and happens outside of the campus, students may bring the incident to the attention of the student council members to determine the appropriate course of action. If an incident were to happen off campus between a Forward College student and a non-student, there would be little that Forward could do to address the incident, but we would still offer support services for the students impacted by the incident. Any off campus incidents between Forward students and others should be reported to the local authorities for investigation.
- The Campus Manager and/or student representative would be required to interview the students involved in the incident and determine what appropriate action should be taken. The purpose of this discussion is to ascertain facts and any difference of perceptions, promote understanding and if possible, de-escalate the situation and promote dialogue that seeks a mutual resolution to the incident. If the incident can be resolved by student discussions, that is the first and most desirable course of action. If the incident cannot be resolved through student discussions, the case would be brought back to the campus manager to determine the course of action.
- Once the incident has been investigated, if the issue can be resolved without formal discipline, the campus manager will execute the recommended discussions, document the steps and outcome, and file the incident in the students' records.
- If a more formal disciplinary process is called for, the campus manager will execute this process according to the code of conduct, document the incident

and then file the documents in the students' records. Any possible cause for dismissal or suspension must be brought to the attention of the senior team for final arbitration of the disciplinary action.

If the incident is among staff the same process will be led by HR.

See additional resources:

- [Code of conduct](#)
- [Disciplinary policy and procedure](#)
- [Forward values](#)

### **Support for Students**

[Campus Manager Lisbon](#)

[Wellness Contact: Lisbon](#)

[Campus Manager: Paris](#)

[Wellness Contact: Paris](#)

Campus Manager: Berlin

Wellness Contact: Berlin