

Managing Diversity Unit (UAD)

Vice- Rector's Office of Teaching & Research



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a shift in the role played by Spanish universities, which no longer focus exclusively on teaching and research, but also on generating social value\*. In this context, the Spanish university system has an extensive legal basis that aims to ensure equal opportunities and non-discrimination for people with functional disabilities or special educational support needs.

Universidad Europea de Madrid is no exception in this respect, and one of its strategic pillars is its engagement with society, through which it promotes inclusive education. This aspect is particularly linked to its three essential aims: generating and disseminating knowledge, promoting training and professional development, and playing an active role in social transformation. To this end, since the 2000-2001 academic year, and through the Managing Diversity Unit since 2007, we have been working on educational support for students with special educational needs.

\*Fundación Universia, 2017

## 2. REGULATORY CONTEXT

In 2006, the United Nations published the **UN Convention** on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and on November 27, 2000, the Council **Directive 2000/78/EC** of November 27, 2000, establishing a general framework for the equal treatment in employment and occupation, was adopted at European level.

The **Spanish Constitution** of December 27, 1978 recognizes the right to education in its Article 27, Chapter II, Rights and Freedoms of Heading 1, on Fundamental Rights and Duties. It makes the public authorities responsible for the implementation of "*welfare, treatment, rehabilitation and integration*" policies in relation to persons with disabilities, which it covers in its Article 49 of Chapter III, The Guiding Principles of Social and Economic Policy.

As regards the implementation of this, there are various laws that promote compliance with the provisions of the Constitution. In particular, on November 29, 2013, **Royal Legislative Decree 1/2013** was issued, approving the Consolidated Text of the General Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and their Social Inclusion, which has a twofold purpose:

- a) Guarantee the right to equal opportunities and the treatment of persons with disabilities, as well as the real and effective exercise of their rights.
- b) Establish a system of violations and sanctions that guarantees the basic conditions for equal opportunities, non-discrimination and universal accessibility for persons with disabilities.

The aforementioned Royal Decree establishes inclusive education as part of the process of comprehensive care for persons with disabilities, which is to be provided through the support provided by the Royal Decree itself, in its chapter IV, “The Right to Education”, and the Organic Law on Education, Organic Law 2/2006, of May 3.

Article 18 of chapter IV states that *“persons with disabilities have the right to an inclusive, free and quality education on an equal basis with others”*. Article 19 establishes the concept of free education, article 20 covers additional guarantees, and article 21 the assessment of educational needs.

With regard to university studies, section c) of article 19 of the Royal Decree states that *“persons undertaking university studies, whose disability makes it extremely difficult for them to adapt to the general system of exam sittings established, may request an increase in the number of sittings, with a view to compensating for their difficulty, and without this reducing the required level. The universities must grant this, in accordance with the provisions of their corresponding student retention regulations which, in any case, must take into account the situation of persons with disabilities studying at the university. The tests shall be adapted, where appropriate, to the characteristics of the disability presented by the person concerned.”*

Likewise, the realization of awareness, information and training programs for professionals and educational management teams is also as an additional guarantee for persons with disabilities.

In addition to those already mentioned, there is specific legislation concerning the University. Article 46 of **Law 6/2001, of December 21, on Universities (LOU)** recognizes the right of all students to “equal opportunities and non-discrimination on the grounds of personal or social circumstances, including disability” and to counseling and assistance from professors.

**Organic Law 4/2007**, of April 12, amending Organic Law 6/2001, of December 21, on Universities (LOMLOU), aims to make certain changes in the structure and organization of university education, with a view to adapting it to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Many points cover modifications for the desired adaptation, but here we will mention only those related to disability.

Royal Decree 1393/2007, of October 29, amended by Royal Decree 861/2010, which establishes the organization of official university education, seeks to make university education more flexible and to diversify curricula in order to adjust university degrees to the process of convergence with the EHEA.

It notes compliance with the principles of universal accessibility and design for all, as well as the existence of “support and advisory services,” which will have to assess the needs of students with special educational needs arising from disabilities, for curricular adaptations and, in the case of official university Master’s and PhD programs, for specialization branches or alternative studies. This decree should be understood as the starting point of the current situation of convergence to the EHEA, and as the driving force behind new measures.

- Additional provision seven. Development of plans for people with special needs. The universities, within one year of the entry into force of this Law, and after consulting the representative organizations of the respective social sectors concerned, shall draw up plans to comply with the mandate provided for in additional provision twenty-four of Organic Law 6/2001, of December 21, on Universities, in the wording set forth in this Law.
- Additional provision fourteen. Statute of the university student. Within one year of the entry into force of this Law, the Government shall approve the Statute for university students provided for in article 46.5 of Organic Law 6/2001, of December 21, as amended by this Law.

In addition to structural and methodological changes, it sets the acquisition of skills as the ultimate goal of the learning process. It covers ECTS credits, and marks student mobility as one of its major milestones.

Article 4 of **Law 24/1995 of July 17**, recognizing “Universidad Europea de Madrid” as a Private University, with its headquarters in Madrid, establishes the requirements for access, expressly stating that UEM has the following obligation: “with regard to the right of access and student continuity there is no de facto regulation or practical situation that implies discrimination on the grounds of birth, race, sex, religion, opinion or any other personal or social condition or circumstance.”

Royal Decree 1791/2010, of December 30, approving the **University Student Statute**, covers issues of mobility, the participation of disabled students, and the responsibility of the Disabled Student Care Units as the main actors in the coordination and supervision of “*the precise methodological adaptations and, where appropriate, the establishment of specific advisory sessions according to their needs.*” Similarly, Chapter VI on teaching programming and student assessment for education leading to an official degree, deals with the need for coordination between the relevant centers and departments in order to adapt the assessment tests.

#### **DIVERSITY CHARTER**

In 2017, Universidad Europea signed the Diversity Charter, promoted in Spain by the Diversity Foundation. This charter contains a set of principles to which voluntary commitments are made by organizations that wish to promote equality, respect for the right to inclusion of all people in the workplace and in society in general, regardless of their diverse profiles, and recognition of the benefits of cultural, demographic, and social diversity. The principles in the Charter include: raising awareness about equal opportunities and respect for diversity; advancing towards hiring diverse staff; promoting inclusion with effective integration; and considering diversity in all human resources policies.

Finally, and regarding the elimination of architectural barriers, state and regional regulations apply, among others: [Law 26/2011, of August 1](#), on the adaptation of regulations to the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; [Royal Decree 314/2006, of March 17](#), approving the Technical Building Code; [Law 8/2013 of June 26](#), on urban rehabilitation, regeneration and renovation; and [Law 15/1995 of May 30](#) on limits of property ownership to eliminate architectural barriers for people with disabilities.

The legislation presented herein will be taken as a reference for the actions undertaken by UEM to meet the support needs of its students, according to their reality, in terms of organization and resources.

### 3. MANAGING DIVERSITY UNIT

The Managing Diversity Unit aims to promote the inclusion and equal opportunities of students with functional disabilities or specific educational support needs, encouraging their development of skills, their full participation in the educational community, and their integration into the world of work.

This primary objective is represented through the following specific objectives:

- Promote **universal accessibility** in the University's different campuses.
- Offer students with specific educational needs the **technical and human resources** to enable them to make the most of their education and training at the University within the actual possibilities available at Universidad Europea.
- Make the necessary **curricular adjustments** depending on the needs of each case, which do not imply alterations in the development of competencies for obtaining the academic degree.
- Raise awareness in the educational community by **organizing conferences and seminars** on specific educational needs.
- **Train students and professors** on the inclusion of students with specific educational support needs at the University.
- Collaborate with **support institutions**.

This Unit comprises a team of professors who assess the needs of students, and manage and coordinate all the actions necessary to ensure students are afforded equal opportunities. This team works in coordination with the Admissions, Student Services, Medical Service, Academic Management, Department Management, Ombudsperson departments and with faculty in order to offer advice to students with specific educational support needs arising from:

- Neurodevelopmental disorders (oral and written language disorders, autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit disorder with or without hyperactivity, etc.).
- Sensory, organic, physical and motor disability.
- Psychological and/or psychiatric disorders (obsessive compulsive disorder, anxiety disorders and depressive disorder, etc.).

To access any of the services offered by the Unit, **the student will need to send the Managing Diversity Unit ([unidad.diversidad@universidadeuropea.es](mailto:unidad.diversidad@universidadeuropea.es))** the following:

- Personal data sheet (documentation to be provided by the Managing Diversity Unit)
- Diagnostic, medical, psychological, or neuropsychological information (as appropriate), reliable and updated (from the previous academic year), certifying their diagnostic and, therefore, justifying the adoption of curricular measures (to be specified subsequently) in favor of bringing their opportunities into line with those of other students:
  - The document must be signed and issued by an association member.
  - The document must be no more than one year old.
  - If the document is in a language other than Spanish, the original must be submitted, along with a sworn translation into Spanish.

Should a student not agree with the measures taken by the UAD and the application of these measures, the student may reject them by signing the corresponding document.

The personal data of students with functional disabilities or specific educational support needs will be processed in accordance with the LOPD (Personal Data Protection Law) and with high-level security measures. In this regard, with the prior consent of the student, the relevant information may be communicated by Universidad Europea de Madrid's Managing Diversity Unit to whichever University departments and faculty members are deemed necessary for the purpose of introducing such measures and adjustments as may be considered necessary to meet their support needs. In this respect, the student will inform the Managing Diversity Unit of their continuity in the program, either each semester or trimester (depending on the curriculum).

Should a student approach the teacher in the classroom to inform them of their situation as a student with special educational needs, the teacher must inform them about the Managing Diversity Unit, so that they can register and be informed about the different services that UEM provides.

## 4. LIST OF SERVICES

The Managing Diversity Unit offers the necessary support and advice so that its students with specific educational support needs can lead a university life on an equal footing. To do this, the faculty, academic coordinator and mentor assess each case individually to propose the adjustments deemed necessary to achieve this objective.

In line with the procedure defined by the University, the student should request an interview with the technical staff of the Unit in charge of the care, who will assess any needs they may have. Once the specific information has been collected in each case, the academic coordinator, mentor and the faculty for the trimester or semester will recommend the curricular adjustments the student needs in relation to the subject in order to optimize their follow-up.

Students with special educational needs for educational support will be assigned a first-year mentor and, from their second year onwards, an academic mentor, thus promoting positive discrimination and personalized care. The student may, however, waive this right by signing the appropriate document.

The technical staff of the Managing Diversity Unit will address the needs of the faculty in terms of strategies to adjust educational measures to match the opportunities of students with functional disabilities or specific educational support needs. These measures take the form of elements of accessibility and resources, and the curricular aspects of methodology and assessment, as well as the prioritization and sequencing of objectives without altering the quality of the curricula.

## 4.1. Types of UEM aid

### 4.1.1 Curricular adaptations:

The Managing Diversity Unit will take into account the principles of standardization and inclusion, guaranteeing non-discrimination and effective equality of access to and continuity in the education system. Student identification, assessment, and intervention will be promoted as early as possible.

The curricular and organizational adjustments derived from the idiosyncrasies of each particular case will be made to ensure that the students make progress, without this involving the alteration of their competency development or thus compromising their obtainment of the degree.

### 4.1.2 Loan support products:

In collaboration with [Fundación Universia](#), students providing proof of 33% or more permanent disability are provided with a catalog of support products on loan. These must be managed through the Managing Diversity Unit, and the end user is ultimately responsible for caring for these products. Some of the loan support products are listed below:

- **For people with visual impairment or who are blind**

- Spoken Braille or PC-Spoken
- Special PDA for the visually impaired
- Mouse Emulators
- Braille Line
- Braille Printer
- Screen magnification (Zoomtext, etc.)
- Voice Synthesizer
- Virtual keypad-predictor
- Text converter

- **For people with hearing difficulties**

- FM single piece of equipment
- Sound amplifier
- Headphones

- Speakers
- Text telephone
  
- **For people with Reduced Mobility**
  - Adapted furniture
  - Adapted mice
  - Ergonomic and adapted keyboards
  - Adjustable arms for screen and mouse

We recommend that you consult [Fundación Universia's Support Products Bank \(BPA\)](#) through the Managing Diversity Unit for further information.

In addition, and as determined by the UAD technical advisor, the Managing Diversity Unit can provide students with:

- **Carbonless** paper for students with note-taking difficulties.

#### **4.1.3 Other aid:**

People with disabilities who are studying at UEM and who certify a disability of 33% or more may apply for the status of “**buddy student**” in order to facilitate their participation in the university community throughout the academic year. To request this support, the student must contact the Managing Diversity Unit and submit the required documentation to register the service.

The Managing Diversity Unit will inform them of the institutions that offer assistance programs, in the event that they need their support.

In addition, like all other students at UEM, students with functional disabilities or specific educational support needs are supported by a professional mentor and the [Professional Careers Department](#) to help them integrate into working life, find internships, and set up their own companies.

## 5. INFORMATION ON ACCESSIBILITY

Any person in need will be informed about the aspects related to the accessibility of the campus, as well as about the technical aids available at Universidad Europea.

Proposals for improvements will be heard and sent to the relevant department within UEM.

## 6. CONTACT

Email: [unidad.diversidad@universidadeuropea.es](mailto:unidad.diversidad@universidadeuropea.es)

Telephone no.: 91 211 53 53

\*List of Services approved by the Academic Council on December 20, 2017.