Association Internationale des Écoles Supérieures d'Éducation Physique
International Association for Physical Education in Higher Education

AIESEP: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy

1. Understanding the Purpose and Relevance of the EDI Policy

The purpose of the EDI policy is to endorse AIESEP's commitment to nurture a community of Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy scholars and professionals that reflect, respect and promote the rich diversity of heterogeneous communities while promoting equitable opportunities for all.

Grounded in the AIESEP mission to create spaces to empower a global community of professionals to promote high-quality research in physical education, physical activity and sport pedagogy, this policy guides our efforts to:

- Foster an <u>inclusive and diverse scholarly community</u> that values diverse perspectives, actively supports diversity and inclusion, and implements equitable practices across all areas of our organisation, while simultaneously actively challenging discrimination/exclusion.

- Promote <u>inclusive leadership</u> by nurturing diverse talent and ensuring equitable pathways for meaningful participation in decision-making.

- Advance collaborative, sustainable, and relevant <u>high-quality research</u> by creating equitable opportunities for participation and amplifying underrepresented voices in shaping knowledge, policy, and practice, and supporting continuous professional learning.

In our pursuit of turning this EDI policy into a reality within the AIESEP organisation, we are cautious of 'microwave equity'[1], and we fully acknowledge that this will require time, patience, and persistence.

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[1]Cornelius Minor, a US-based educator, coined the term 'Microwave Equity,' which means teachers and educators attempting to achieve equity quickly or overnight (Minor, 2019). As Minor cautions, meaningful equity work requires time, patience, and persistence. In his book *We Got This*, Minor argues that to be equitable and inclusive, educators must intentionally listen to students, decentralise power by empowering student voices, and engage in self-reflection without placing blame on students.

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This policy aligns with the AIESEP Strategic Plan (Figure 1) and goals and reflects its core values, including:

- Strength and relevance through diversity
- Equity through respect, inclusion, dignity and friendship
- Rigorous and ethical research and scholarship
- Joy of human movement for life
- Acknowledgment and nurturing of individual and collective potential

Leadership

Our aim is to become a global leader in research on physical education and sport pedagogy. Additionally, we are dedicated to nurturing talent to foster sustainable leadership within our community.

Quality Research

To ensure sustainable, relevant, high-quality research that shapes policy and practice in physical education and sport pedagogy. To establish a dynamic collaborative global research network.

Inclusion and Diversity

Our goal is to actively promote a diverse, inclusive, and equitable community of scholars. We are committed to fostering an environment where all scholars feel welcome and supported.

Figure 1. AIESEP strategic goals

Background and development process

We are living in an increasingly complex and rapidly evolving world that influences our personal lives, our communities, and our work as researchers and educators in physical education and sport pedagogy. In many academic and institutional contexts, growing emphasis on performance indicators, funding competitiveness, and institutional visibility creates significant demands that can affect wellbeing and professional development. Within this context, access to support, mentorship, and resources is not evenly distributed. Those with structural advantages—such as established networks, financial stability, or institutional backing—often find it easier to navigate academic systems. While AIESEP has long embedded Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in its mission and strategic direction, disparities in participation and representation persist. These disparities reflect structural conditions that exist across many of the contexts where our members live and work.

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In this landscape, AIESEP's EDI policy is especially important as a guiding framework for fostering inclusive participation, fair access to development opportunities, and a strong sense of belonging across our international academic community.

This EDI policy aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4, which calls for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all. As a global research association, we commit to advancing this goal by promoting fair access, inclusive participation, and meaningful representation across all aspects of our work and community. As such, this policy is grounded in a human rights-based approach. It aims to recognise and support the diverse individuals and organisations within AIESEP, with particular attention to those who are marginalised. The policy encourages new perspectives that reflect the complexity of our global communities and challenges dominant or one-sided ways of thinking and working.

This EDI policy was developed over an eight-month collaborative process, from September 2024 to October 2025, involving eleven scholars currently living and working across eight countries: Australia, Chile, Greece, the Netherlands, Spain, Norway, the United Kingdom and Taiwan. Scholars were approached to participate based on their specific expertise in EDI, while also ensuring a balanced representation across geography, gender, language, cultural background, and career stage. Among these contributors, AIESEP members played a central role, bringing together a rich diversity of nationalities, languages, cultural backgrounds, professional experiences, and perspectives. Over approximately 20 hours, the team engaged in seven structured workshops focused on brainstorming and idea development. This was followed by several rounds of online interaction and asynchronous collaboration to draft and refine the policy, ensuring it reflected diverse perspectives and a shared commitment to EDI. This initiative was deeply rooted in the principles of Participatory Action Research, an approach that emphasises shared ownership, co-construction of knowledge, and the mitigation of power imbalances within collaborative processes. To facilitate inclusive and equitable collaboration, a range of digital tools were used throughout the process (e.g. Zoom and Miro boards).

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We consider that the co-construction of the policy is a continuous process in which all diverse voices should be included. We therefore welcome diverse voices to shape its direction, including those who are not yet part of this community but whom we imagine will join us. Feedback can include:

- Strategies for identifying and addressing exclusion, blind spots, dominance, and erasure.
- Examples of strengths-based, socially just research practices that inspire and guide us.

Please contribute your ideas and experiences here: **[link to living suggestions board]**

2. Scope of the Policy: a living document

This EDI policy is a living document, designed to grow and evolve alongside the AIESEP community and the diverse realities we navigate as scholars and educators in Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy. By 'living document', we mean that this policy is not static or fixed; it will be updated as the context in which it is enacted changes. It reflects our collective commitment to nurturing a global scholarly community that not only respects but actively promotes EDI in all aspects of our work. Recognising that inclusion is an ongoing, collective and conscious endeavour, we have built mechanisms into the policy to ensure it remains responsive and relevant. This policy will be formally reviewed every three years to ensure its principles, strategies, and actions remain aligned with the evolving needs, insights, and aspirations of our global community.

This EDI policy applies across all levels and activities of AIESEP, including but not limited to:

- Conferences
- Awards & selection processes
- Virtual meetings
- Public advertising
- Research activities and partnerships
- Vision and mission of AIESEP
- Membership

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- ○ New members (being inclusive, trying to reach diverse populations and actively supporting new memberships, etc.)
- ○ Current members (individual/institutional) have benefits by being AIESEP members, but also responsibilities concerning EDI
- Board composition and commitments (diversity, inclusion, representation)
- Members' expectations regarding relational dynamics and collaborative working

To navigate this policy, some definitions are central to understanding the core principles of EDI as they apply to AIESEP. We begin by defining the key terms used throughout this policy. In addition to these, we include a broader set of terms that may support AIESEP members in understanding EDI-related concepts, thereby contributing to continuous professional learning on EDI issues. We also acknowledge that these concepts and definitions are evolving. As a living document, this policy will be consistently reviewed and updated to reflect emerging knowledge, practices, and language in the field of EDI.

Bystander	A bystander is an observer of violence or other aggressive behaviour. In contrast to the passive term, an active or prosocial bystander is someone who actively intervenes in the incident. Generally, we think bystanders are individuals, but bystanders can also be collective agents that shape society's norms and culture. Engaging bystanders can increase community awareness of the scourge of violence in our society and galvanise everyone to be involved more actively throughout the different stages of violence (UNDP South Africa, 2023).
Decolonising	Decolonising refers to the process of critically confronting and dismantling the legacy and ongoing impacts of colonialism, particularly in research, knowledge production, and education. Western research has historically been complicit in the colonisation of Indigenous peoples, often silencing or marginalising Indigenous knowledge (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012).

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Disability	Disability refers to a long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder a person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. This definition recognises that disability is not only a medical condition but also shaped by social, environmental, and attitudinal barriers that limit inclusion and equity (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).
Discrimination	Discrimination is any unfair treatment or arbitrary distinction based on a person's race, sex, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, language, social origin or other status (United Nations, 2009).
Diversity	Diversity is about what makes each of us unique and includes our backgrounds, personality, life experiences and beliefs, all of the things that make us who we are. It is a combination of our differences that shape our view of the world, our perspective and our approach. Diversity is also about recognising, respecting and valuing differences based on ethnicity, gender, age, race, religion, disability and sexual orientation. It also includes an infinite range of individual unique characteristics and experiences, such as communication style, career path, life experience, educational background, geographic location, income level, marital status, parental status and other variables that influence personal perspectives (Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2019).
Equal opportunity	Equal opportunity means that every person can participate freely and equally in areas of public life, such as in the workplace, in education, or in accessing goods and services without disadvantage or less favourable treatment due to their unique attributes. Everyone in the workplace has rights and responsibilities under equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation to prevent discrimination, harassment, vilification or victimisation. Equal opportunity is an integral part of the employment life cycle applicable to recruitment, retention, performance management,

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	promotion, talent identification, succession planning, remuneration, professional development and end of employment (Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2019).
Equity & Equality	Equality and equity are two different concepts increasingly used without recognition of the significant differences between them. Equality is a human rights principle meaning 'the same', while equity is a concept of justice, which means 'fair' (UN-Habitat, 2015).
Inclusion	Inclusion is the process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education (UNESCO, 2005). It involves creating a supportive environment where every individual feels respected, accepted, and able to contribute, regardless of their background or identity.
Intersectionality	A critical lens that examines the overlapping nature of marginalised identities, which can compound and transform experiences of discrimination. The concept was developed by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, a lawyer, civil rights advocate, and critical race theory scholar, to examine how race and gender transform and amplify the discrimination experienced by women of colour (Monash University, 2022).
Isms	The '-ism(s)' refer to contemporary issues highlighted by Lynch and colleagues (2022), such as healthism, fatism, ableism, elitism, genderism, sexism, heterosexism, racism, classism, linguicism, religionism, ageism and colonialism. Developing critical awareness of these 'isms' is central to working toward inclusion.
Positive action	Positive Action refers to specific measures taken to support individuals or groups who experience disadvantage, underrepresentation, or discrimination, with the aim of achieving greater equality of opportunity. Unlike positive discrimination, which gives preferential treatment based solely on a protected characteristic, positive action is lawful (in many

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	jurisdictions) when it helps level the playing field without bypassing merit-based criteria (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2011).
Relational love	Relational love is a transformative and ethical commitment to others rooted in dialogue, empathy, care, and respect (hooks, 2000). It involves recognising the legitimacy and subjectivity of others, especially those who are marginalised, and actively participating in their liberation. Far from romantic sentimentality, relational love is a radical, political, and pedagogical force that seeks to build solidarity, challenge oppressive systems, and foster collective growth through mutual recognition and responsibility (Castro-García et al., 2024).
Settler colonisation	Settler colonisation is a type of colonialism in which the indigenous peoples of a colonised region are displaced by settlers who permanently form a society there (Cox, 2016)
Sexual harassment	Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behavior of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation to another, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. While typically involving a pattern of behaviour, it can take the form of a single incident. Sexual harassment may occur between persons of the opposite or same sex. Both males and females can be either the victims or the offenders (United Nations, 2013)
Sexual harm	Sexual harm is any unwanted, non-consensual behaviour of a sexual nature. Sexual harm includes sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment and any other unwanted sexual behaviour, whether online or in person. Sexual harm is a crime that can happen to anyone, of any age, sexual orientation, gender, cultural background or religious belief. Sexual harm is never the responsibility of the person who has been assaulted, and is often perpetrated by someone known to the person (Deakin University, 2023).

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Symbolic violence	Symbolic violence operates through the manipulation of symbols, ideas, and beliefs, rather than through physical force. It is a form of power that functions at the level of culture, shaping individuals' perceptions, preferences, and behaviours. Bourdieu argued that symbolic violence is particularly effective because it is internalised by individuals, leading them to accept and reproduce the social hierarchies and inequalities that exist (Easy Sociology, 2024).
Upstander	An upstander is someone who chooses to support a person who is being abused or harmed. There are ways you can be an upstander online while keeping yourself safe (eSafety Commissioner, 2024).
Victimisation	When we talk about a person being victimised, it means they're being treated badly or unfairly because they have made a complaint about discrimination, sexual harassment or racial and religious vilification, it is believed they intend to make a complaint, or they've helped someone else to make a complaint. The legal definition of victimisation is when someone "subjects or threatens to subject the other person to any detriment" (Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, n.d.).

3. Organisational commitment

The AIESEP organisation strives to ensuring all members are aligned with the policy, actively enacting it, and working to enhance their understanding of EDI. This is shared by:

The AIESEP board of directors commits to:
- Work to ensure that the board composition reflects its global and diverse community by embedding EDI principles in the nomination and election process, encouraging participation from underrepresented groups.
- Remain engaged with current issues in equity, diversity, and inclusion relevant to AIESEP's work, including upstander practices and anti-discrimination. While recognising that many members engage in such learning through their institutions,

AIESEP encourages ongoing reflection and development tailored to each member's context and role within the association.

- Demonstrate a commitment to EDI both in terms of location and in the proposed organisation of the event. While recognising that practical considerations and bid availability may vary, EDI will be considered as an important factor in the selection process. Additionally, the board will encourage and support members from diverse locations to submit bids, helping to ensure broader representation.

- Offer reduced membership fees for participants currently living and working in low-GDP countries.

- Clarify and define the responsibilities of various portfolio holders regarding EDI matters.

- Uphold and model inclusive, respectful, and non-discriminatory behaviours in all AIESEP activities. This includes actively challenging bias, promoting equity, and creating space for voices that have historically been marginalised.

- Ensure commitment to AIESEP's EDI policy in published materials, advertising and communications.

Conference organisers commit to:
- Diverse conference topics in terms of country, background, ethnicity, etc.

- Consider accessibility and inclusion in their planning, with attention to participants' diverse needs, such as disability accommodations, linguistic accessibility, and caregiving responsibilities, where feasible. While recognising that not all needs can be met in every context, thoughtful efforts to reduce barriers to participation contribute to a more inclusive conference environment.

- Support non-native English speakers during sessions through the implementation of technology and social -emotional support.

- The implementation of measures to ensure participants feel safe and supported during the event. For example: establishing and clearly communicating a code of conduct that prohibits harassment and discrimination, providing accessible channels for reporting concerns or incidents confidentially and promptly.

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- Offering reduced conference fees for participants currently living and working in low-GDP countries.
- Engage with Indigenous knowledge holders to ensure respectful entry to country and place. As well as educate delegates and the Board about Indigenous sovereignty, protocols of place and actively seek one keynote with expertise associated with/by Indigenous knowledge holders.

Members (whether institutional or individual) commit to:
- Uphold and reflect AIESEP's values of EDI in their participation, contributing to a respectful and supportive community for all.
- Embrace and apply the principles of the EDI policy across all activities, including meetings, events, and communications. This commitment is essential to fostering a culture of inclusion within the organisation.

4. A restorative procedure:

Board members are encouraged to actively engage with the application of EDI principles in their roles, recognising that inclusive leadership is essential to AIESEP's mission. This includes a commitment to ongoing learning and reflection around EDI practices relevant to the association's work. While formal professional development or a demonstrated history of EDI engagement is welcomed—particularly for new board members—AIESEP recognises that individuals will contribute in different ways depending on their experience and context. This reflects the evolving nature of "becoming," a continuous process of growth in understanding and practice. These principles also extend to others in leadership roles within AIESEP, including conference and webinar organisers, who are similarly encouraged to integrate EDI in their planning and delivery.

An education-first approach

All individuals (i.e., all members/participants of AIESEP) are expected to uphold the principles outlined in this policy. Breaches, including but not limited to discriminatory behaviour, harassment, or exclusionary practices, will be taken seriously. Oversight of any breach of policy will be supported by the EDI Facilitator (a Board member within the EDI portfolio),

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who will work collaboratively with the AIESEP Board to guide an appropriate and consistent response. Where appropriate, the EDI Facilitator may consult with individuals or groups with relevant expertise, such as members of the Social Justice SIG, to support a fair and informed response. Rather than taking a punitive approach, AIESEP is committed to restorative practices guided by the following procedures.

- **Education-First Approach**: We adopt a proactive stance to prevent breaches of EDI principles, and an education-first approach when addressing any that occur. Instead of punitive actions, our focus will be on fostering a mindset shift. This requires a proactive commitment to professional development, learning, and engagement with social justice and EDI work. We will offer opportunities for engagement, such as participation in professional development programmes, collaborative research projects and intellectual activism, including collaborative writing and dialogue. These opportunities, in line with the work of the Social Justice SIG, help members deepen their understanding of cultural differences, societal changes, and the ongoing process of social justice.

- **Mentoring Over Punishment:** Instead of relying on traditional disciplinary and grievance procedures, we will reconceptualise these processes to focus on restorative mentoring and support. For individuals who may be struggling with understanding or engaging with EDI/social justice issues, mentoring sessions will be offered. These sessions will be designed to help Board members and staff move through their learning journey, recognising that this is a process that takes time and understanding. We acknowledge that everyone is at a different stage in their growth, and mistakes or difficulties are a natural part of the learning process. The mentoring will be organised and designed collaboratively between the EDI Facilitator and the Social Justice SIG.

- **Encouraging Vulnerability and Growth**: In contemporary times, in many of our educational institutions, where accountability, competition and performance are often prioritised, recognising vulnerability can be challenging. However, vulnerability is essential for genuine learning and growth in social justice. We will create a 'brave' space (Cary, 2023) for individuals to acknowledge their potential, learn with others,

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and engage in dialogue that fosters mutual understanding. The five pillars of a brave space are (1) authenticity and vulnerability, (2) empathy, (3) getting comfortable with being uncomfortable, (4) growth mindset and (5) radical candour. This aligns with our broader commitment to social justice, where the goal is to create spaces to empower individuals to engage meaningfully with EDI principles and to foster a culture of continuous personal and collective development. By creating a space that encourages vulnerability and growth, the hope is to encourage collaborative learning, dialogue, and openness to development.

In this approach, we emphasise vulnerability and understanding, recognising that individuals are complex and operate in varying contexts. In moving away from traditional grievance procedures, we allow for a more human-centred, restorative approach to learning. Drawing on principles from Hellison's (2011) Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR), we aim to create a collaborative learning environment that encourages shared spaces of reflection, relational commitment, personal growth, and ongoing learning.

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