

Gender Equality Plan
Design Academy Eindhoven
2026-2028

Introduction

Design Academy Eindhoven (DAE) is committed to providing an environment that is inclusive and equitable for all people, regardless of their gender identity or sex characteristics. It is an environment where every individual member of our community is valued and respected, irrespective of their social, cultural, economic, or demographic background.

This Gender Equality Plan outlines the ongoing and future efforts to promote sex and gender equality as part of the broader commitment to foster, embed, and advance diversity and inclusion, as described in the vision, mission, and strategic themes of the DAE Institutional Plan 2025–2028.

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Background: Gender equality developments at DAE 2020-2025

Since 2020 diversity and inclusion, including gender equality, has received much attention within DAE. These developments were driven by a desire from the board and management team, staff, tutors and students to foster a welcoming environment where students and staff collaborate together to make transformative contributions to a pluralistic inclusive society (as expressed in the vision and mission statement from institutional plan 2020-2025),

Policy

Social safety

In 2021 the 'call out art institutions' initiative indicated issues with discrimination and sexual harassment in art institutions throughout the Netherlands. Some of the shared experiences referred to DAE. These complaints were taken seriously by the Executive Board, which commissioned a survey on social safety and organisational culture within DAE by Bezemer & Schubad in the same year. This research resulted in a report with recommendations that was shared publicly on the website and discussed extensively with both students and staff in several meetings with participation body representatives and student initiatives. Following these recommendations several steps were taken

A new Code of Conduct and reporting procedure was developed with the support of Governance & Integrity International, and input from the Institutional Participation Council, published early 2023. The Code of Conduct includes a section on personal integrity violations, including sexual violations such as sexual harassment. Additionally, it explicitly prohibits discrimination based on sex characteristics and gender and includes a provision that all are expected to respect and use a person's preferred pronouns. Trainings on code of conduct and integrity procedures were provided to the Executive Board and management team in 2023 and 2024 by Governance and Integrity International. The Code of Conduct was reviewed internally and expanded with a separate reporting procedure between late 2023 and late 2025, currently awaiting approval.

Students are introduced to the code of conduct during the introduction weeks. Group agreements are collaboratively created within BA & MA classes to determine interaction and communication amongst the group as a practical application of the code of conduct..

Two external confidential counsellors provide advice and support to staff and students who experience potentially inappropriate behaviour at DAE. To raise awareness and ease access the confidential counsellors have introduced themselves at a staff meeting and during the introduction weeks for all students each year. Additionally, and a poster campaign promoting the confidential counsellors was created for the bathrooms to raise awareness and serve as a reminder in a private setting.

Anti-discrimination policy

Anti-discrimination policy for recruitment and selection was developed to clarify what is and is not permitted in recruiting and selecting new employees, including discriminating based on gender.

Training management and staff

Two training sessions (in Dutch and English) were held on collaboration without unconscious biases in diverse environments for managers and coordinators. Furthermore, a training session was organised by HR on managing employees dealing with long term health issues and disabilities.

Chosen name policy

The Chosen Name Policy allows all DAE students, employees, freelancers and alumni to register a chosen name or modify a previously registered name. A chosen name is an unofficial name that is different from the legal name. Many people choose a different name because it better suits their personal preferences, such as usability in a specific region, the use of one name among multiple official names, or to better reflect gender identity reflected. The ability to register a chosen name underscores DAE's commitment for inclusiveness and respect for personal identities. For unofficial communication where legal names are not legally required, DAE uses chosen names.

Gender inclusive language

Internal communication such as standardised emails to students and policy documents such as the student charter and examination and teaching and examination regulations have been updated to use gender-inclusive terminology.

Genderinclusive bathrooms

Genderinclusive bathrooms were created on all floors to ensure all in the DAE community have equal access to bathroom facilities regardless of gender identity.

Gender Wage Equality Analysis

An internal wage analysis was conducted in 2025, analysing average and individual wage differences. All pay differences were explained by gender-neutral criteria, namely responsibilities and experience.

Recruitment, selection and retention

In the past years efforts have been made to increase the diversity of staff composition in terms of age, sex, gender, neurodiversity, educational backgrounds, cultural backgrounds and migration backgrounds in all departments, including in the composition of the management team. The recruitment and selection processes were reviewed and adjusted to attract applicants from various backgrounds.

Menopause

Employees reported experiencing obstacles in their work due to menopause symptoms and a desire to talk about this issue. The Fan Club (for fans of fans) was established in 2024. An online group was created and two gatherings were organised in which employees came

together to learn, exchange experiences, support each other and share tips and tricks with the support of a menopause consultant.

Specialists

In December 2020 Dr Praveen Sewgobind, started in the Diversity and Inclusion professorship to focus on research and teaching regarding D&I. Requests from students resulted in the hiring of other specialists. DAE alum Pete Fung began as Community Officer in early 2023 to focus on community collaboration and communication within DAE. Leigh Tukker joined August 2023 as Diversity and Inclusion Officer, to focus on strategic improvements for D&I. Dr Naomi Bueno de Mesquita replaced the professorship of Sewgobind and transformed the professorship into the professorship Design and Social Innovation focuses research and research teaching on transition challenges with a strong emphasis on social innovation in collaboration with institutional partners such as municipalities, provinces, and governmental bodies.

Representation and participation

Students and staff are included in DAE policy decisions through three elected representative bodies consisting of staff and student members: The Institutional Participation Council (IPC), the Bachelor Course Committee (BCC) and the Master Course Committee (MCC). The IPC has advisory and consent rights on proposals from the Executive Board. The BCC and MCC provide solicited and unsolicited advice on all aspects of the educational programmes and check if changes are in line with the Teaching and Examinations Regulations. These committees can also propose improvements and put issues on the agenda of the IPC.

Additionally, students are unofficially represented by the voluntary student council which regularly meets with the Executive Board throughout the year.

Each MA class is represented by two class representatives from each master programme for each year. These representatives meet with the head of the MA each month during the academic year to discuss potential issues, challenges and improvements.

Curriculum

Diversity and inclusion are an important part of education at DAE. Many students develop D&I and D&I-related projects during their studies.

In the Bachelor's programme, D&I is addressed in the Contextual Design courses of the Fundamentals programme, in which all Bachelor's students learn about gender, decolonisation and queer theories, among other things. Students can also delve deeper into the subject at social design-oriented studios, such as Studio Digital Native and Morning Studio, and in the focus modules facilitated by the Design and Social Innovation Professorship in collaboration with external partners. D&I is also part of other studios. For example, Silva Systems is focused on sustainability and ecological accountability but also discusses and trains on inclusive collaboration.

The Master's programmes Social Design, Contextual Design and Critical Inquiry Lab focus specifically on social issues, including gender, decolonisation and queer theories, but D&I is also addressed in teaching and projects in Geo-Design and Information Design.

Extra-curricular activities

Community grant

DAE promotes and supports student initiatives by providing easily accessible, low-threshold funding for extracurricular community events, such as reading clubs, discussion groups, sporting events, the Spring Event, and additional workshops. Diversity and Inclusion, including Gender Equality, is one of the assessment criteria.

Lecture series

The Lecture Series Committee, composed of students and supported by DAE staff, organizes monthly lectures for which they invite both internal and external speakers, ranging from local to international experts. The topics regularly relate to gender equality. For instance, sessions included intersex human rights advocacy, voicing and speaking out, and gender and climate justice.

Satisfaction Surveys

Internal employee satisfaction surveys were performed in 2023 and 2024 by HR. The 2023 employee satisfaction survey gave an average score of 7.4 out of 10 for Diversity and Inclusion, which includes gender equality. DAE scored especially well on feelings of acceptance (8.3) and comfort surrounding talking about background(8.5). Comfort surrounding contrary opinions (6.8) and feeling of safety communicating concerns scored lower (6.6). Diversity and inclusion related answers in other sections also scored well. The statement “feel home at DAE” scored a 7.7. The 2024 survey included a section on social safety where employees rated DAE a 7.1 on average on social safety.

Equal treatment was included in the National Student Surveys from 2021-2025. The average scores show improvement in this area. In the Bachelor Programme Equal treatment scored 3.60 in 2021, dropped to 3.42 in 2022 and climbed steadily to a 3.72 in 2025. In the Master programme Equal treatment scored 3.35 in 2021 and steadily climbed to 3.87 in 2025.

Goal & plans

Goal: Foster and embed gender equality within the study and work environment at DAE

DAE aims to further foster and embed gender equality within the organisation through the continuation of the existing efforts described above and the plans described in the overview below.

Plans 2026-2028:

- Update the Code of Conduct and reporting procedure.
- Review and update all related policy documents to align with the Code of Conduct and reporting procedure.
- Provide training to employees and students on the Code of Conduct and reporting procedures, including how to address and support individuals experiencing sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination.
- Expand the systematic monitoring and review system for the Code of Conduct and reporting procedure, incorporating feedback from students, tutors, and staff.
- Improve the accessibility of the Code of Conduct by creating visualisations, summaries, and Dutch translations.
- Deliver repeated training on unconscious bias in recruitment and selection for new employees involved in hiring.
- Conduct an annual gender wage analysis using gender-disaggregated data to ensure wage differences remain based on gender-neutral indicators.
- Grant parental leave, adoption leave, and additional birth leave to all parents.
- Grant gender transition leave – providing up to 33 weeks of fully paid social or medical leave, without loss of salary or allowances.
- Promote work-life balance through tailor-made arrangements, for example informal care leave or support for health differences related to physical and biological features such as menstruation, menopause, or fertility treatments.

Resources

Resources are made available to further promote, foster and embed gender equality at DAE through specialised staff and annual budget for diversity and inclusion efforts, including gender equality, for the described plans.

Transparency, privacy and legal limitations

DAE strives to be a transparent organisation, however, there are legal limits to this transparency. Therefore, results of reviews and analyses will only be shared if there are no legal limitations (such as privacy and collecting specific personal data) to sharing the information.