

UNITE
STUDENTS

We are
US

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion,
Belonging and Wellbeing
Strategy 2022-25



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FOREWORD

Our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging and Wellbeing journey

Our people make us great. Understanding what we do, and why we do it, is imperative to a successful business as is delivering for employees, students, higher education partners and the communities we serve.

We are Unite Students, is centered in building a Home for Success. We aim to make every day an opportunity to learn and grow our understanding of the people that live, work, and belong in our communities. Equity and belonging are at the foundation of our values – the golden thread weaving our values together, creating the foundations on which our purpose is built. As we look towards the future, our organisation is constantly innovating and developing. Our responsibility in leading this sector is to role model conscientious leadership and shape the future leaders that live and work with us.

Our journey to inclusion has led to our increased efforts to understand who we are. We have hired an EDI and Wellbeing Manager to help us define our journey, we have committed to greater gender representation in leadership and are increasing ethnic representation in our management population. Our ambition is to display the actions that move us forward to learning the skills of instinctive inclusion.

Our journey to redefining our approach to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) led us to the realisation that without the lens of inclusion, true wellbeing could not be achieved. The progression of our understanding of DEIB and Wellbeing as a business has led to a deep dive into intersectionality and ensuring that our policies and procedures, development pathways and ambitions leave no one behind regardless of characteristic. Understanding wellbeing holistically has allowed us to develop a comprehensive approach to truly **creating room for everyone**.

Leadership is about being brave and ambitious. There is no overnight fix, but a journey built on strong foundations and moulded by our values. Instinctive inclusion is about taking the next step, learning the skills that make inclusion not just what we do but who we are. Our USP, what makes us thrive, what makes us different.

We are US

Richard Smith

CEO



FOREWORD

Our vision for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging and Wellbeing

I'm delighted to share with you Unite Students' first Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging and Wellbeing Strategy. This redefines our commitment to being good neighbours, both to each other and to our wider community; it lays out our blueprint for the next three years, what we want to achieve and how we plan to achieve it. It embeds our values, purpose and strategic ambition, providing the foundations for us to build our home for the future. We recognise our responsibility to create healthier and happier workplaces, in which we can all strive for more equitable and sustainable futures. Thriving together for a better Unite Students. It starts at home.

Sam Kingsley

Senior EDI and Wellbeing Manager
(she/they)



OUR HOME

We aspire to build a mindful culture where wellbeing is a priority and being different is valued. Changing mindsets through the lens of inclusion helps us to transform communities and **creates room for everyone.**

STRATEGIC AMBITION

Building our Home for Success

Our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging and wellbeing is an essential component of our dedication to providing a **Home for Success**. Our strategic ambition provides the foundation on which we can build our success mindset.

OUR STRATEGIC VISION IS...

To be a role-model organisation through developing **instinctive inclusion**; where our people and student communities **thrive** and are at the heart of **who we are** and what we do every day.



WHO WE ARE

Unite Students in numbers

To progress our journey towards **instinctive inclusion**, we must celebrate our successes so far, understand who we are and who we represent.



1,800

TOTAL EMPLOYEES

including full-time, part-time and fixed-contract



OVER **24**

ETHNIC GROUPS

across our **EMPLOYEES**



HOME TO

74,000

STUDENTS living with Unite Students in 2021-2022



23%

ARE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

19% of our total students are from China, **3%** from India, **1%** from other countries around the world

66%

are 1st year students



34%

2nd, 3rd year and post-grad students

59%

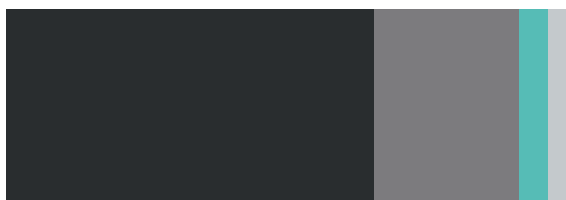
of our 2021/22 students were anxious they won't fit in*

92%

wanted to feel a sense of belonging and community*

*Data collected before students moved in.

WHERE OUR STUDENTS COME FROM

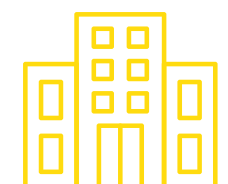


64.2% UK

25.7% Asia

5.4% Western Europe

4.7% Other countries



172
PROPERTIES IN...



25 **CITIES**
with offices in Bristol, London and Beijing

60
UNIVERSITY PARTNERS

WHY IT'S SO IMPORTANT TO US

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging and Wellbeing

Our sustainability strategy defines Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging (DEIB) and Wellbeing as being key priorities in achieving social sustainability for the business. Healthy, happy and inclusive environments create conditions for success for our employees, students, Higher Education partners, property localities and wider communities. It's how we ensure we deliver a **Home for our Success**.

Understanding what makes us US begins with establishing our standards with strong governance, which are consistently monitored and reviewed to ensure that our ways of working are world-class. 'We are US' will make us DEIB and Wellbeing leaders in our sector, and beyond.

Instinctive inclusion in three steps:

- 1. 'Inclusion starts with I' –** Hiring and retaining the best talent, providing the tools they need to excel in their role and deliver innovation. Creating a dynamic and inclusive environment where every individual can thrive. This is equity.
- 2. Building on the individual to develop our teams and create our community –** Understanding our responsibility to evolve constantly and consistently to create a place of belonging; and learn about our employees, students, property localities and Higher Education partners. Reflecting on data and driving constant change.
- 3. Cultural change –** Monitoring, evaluating, and driving a culture of perpetual evolution. Allowing us to embed DEIB and Wellbeing into who we are. Clearly demonstrating that in everything we do inclusion is not just considered but is the starting point.





Definitions



DIVERSITY

The demographic of US, people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, and abilities.

EQUITY

Equity ensures that everyone has the access to the same opportunities, providing everyone the resources they need to be the best they can be.

INCLUSION

Inclusion means creating an environment where everyone is treated fairly, and employee voice is valued.

BELONGING

Belonging is centred on whether colleagues feel accepted, welcome and safe.

WELLBEING

The state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy as the result of alignment in physical, mental, financial and social health.

Mental Wellbeing: A state of wellbeing in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to their community. Normal stresses can be defined as daily

life – for example jobs, hobbies, passions, chores, etc.

Physical Wellbeing: The ability to maintain a healthy quality of life that allows us to get the most out of our daily activities without undue fatigue or physical stress.

Financial Wellbeing: Having a sense of security and feeling as though you have enough money to meet your needs. It's about being in control of your

day-to-day finances and having the financial freedom to make choices that allow you to enjoy life.

Social Wellbeing: Maintaining healthy relationships with others and interacting positively with people. Being able to manage social situations and recognising our own impact on other people is a key part of this.



HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS

Our focus for years 1-3

These are the actions we plan to take in building our **Home for Success**.

YEAR 1 FOCUS

- Building the foundations for success
- Developing the framework for **instinctive inclusion**
- Setting our DEIB and Wellbeing Compass

YEAR 2 FOCUS

- Achieving consistency in Inclusive Leadership and inclusive business behaviours
- Increasing our diversity
- Extending our Value Chain to the Student Journey

YEAR 3 FOCUS

- We lead the way – sustaining Our Principles, and inclusive culture
- Being a **Good Neighbour**, enabling us to maximise Impact on Our Communities and society
- Becoming an Employer of Choice

OUR PRINCIPLES

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS

OUR PRINCIPLES

We want to lead the way in our practice and ways of working, ensuring that they provide us with a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment and where talent is developed and encouraged to thrive. We want to create the Unite Students Way, a framework for achieving consistency in all that we do, aligning our objectives and how we measure success.

**"When diversity is
managed correctly
it's an opportunity."**

FROM EDI SKILLS SESSION
- BEING BRAVE, BEING
VULNERABLE



OBJECTIVE 1

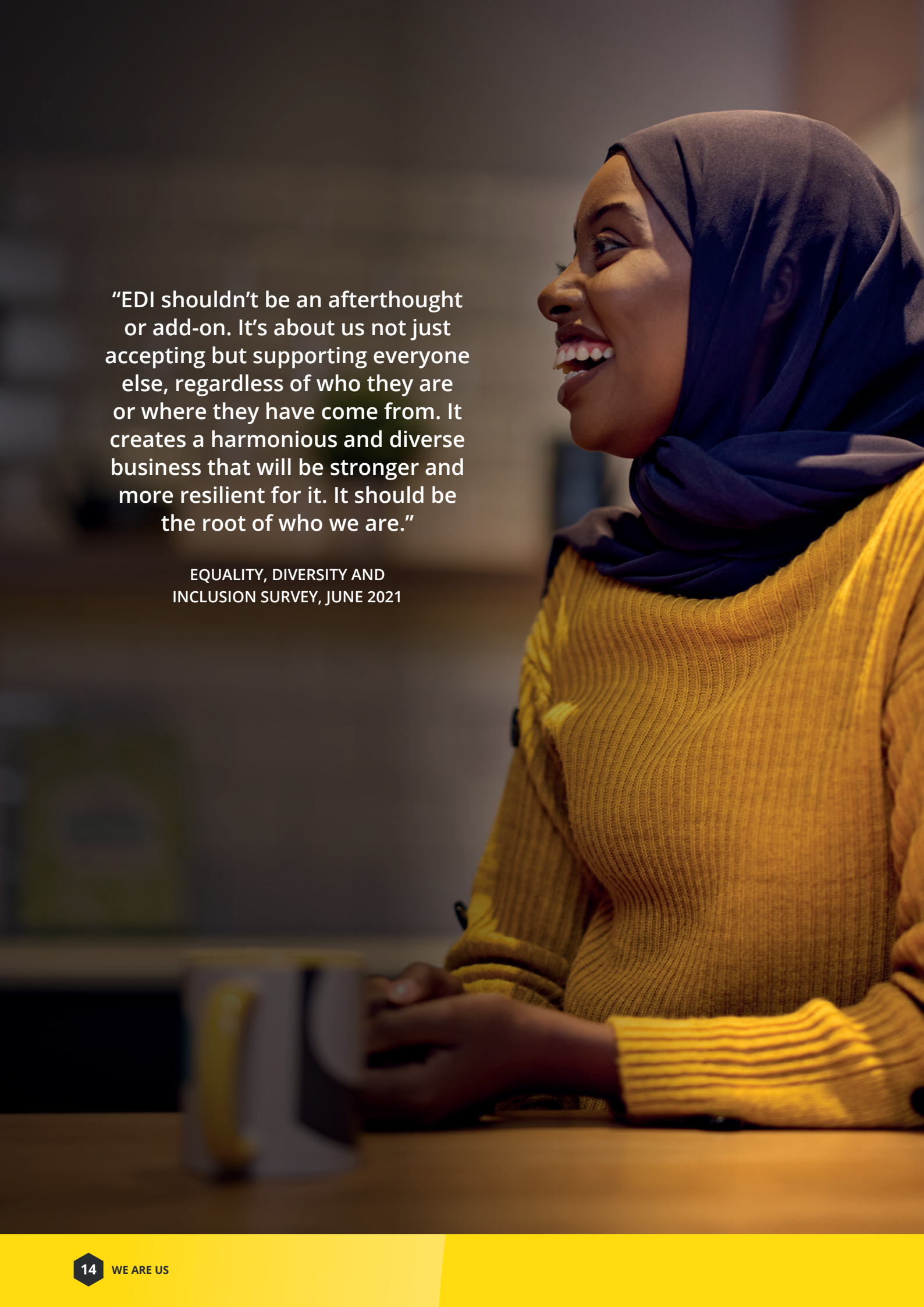
Have DEIB and Wellbeing thread through all our people practices – from recruitment, through onboarding to retention, career development and pathways.

OBJECTIVE 2

Put data and measurement at the heart of how we report, manage and minimise risk.

OBJECTIVE 3

Make our DEIB and Wellbeing governance robust and effective, by ensuring our policies, procedures and pathways create a framework for a safe and inclusive environment.



“EDI shouldn’t be an afterthought or add-on. It’s about us not just accepting but supporting everyone else, regardless of who they are or where they have come from. It creates a harmonious and diverse business that will be stronger and more resilient for it. It should be the root of who we are.”

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND
INCLUSION SURVEY, JUNE 2021

OUR EDUCATION

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS OUR EDUCATION

We will build an environment where people are inspired to learn, create and innovate, building a Unite Students for the future. Where everyone is developed and where we deliver the right support at the right time, meeting people where they are on their journey.

**"Everyone
has individual
experiences and
needs and one size
doesn't fit all."**

FROM EDI SKILLS SESSION
- BEING BRAVE, BEING
VULNERABLE



OBJECTIVE 1

Give our employees, students, partners and property localities the education and tools to expand their awareness, understand diversity, equity and inclusion and how these impact our environments, relationships, individuals, sense of belonging and authenticity.

OBJECTIVE 2

To support our leaders and employees in role modelling inclusive, fair and respectful behaviours and creating psychologically safe environments that encourage people to bring their whole selves to work.

OBJECTIVE 3

To embed the understanding of a holistic approach to inclusive wellbeing, defining its importance and making it everyone's responsibility to build happier and healthier communities.

“Education around being comfortable talking about EDI and how it is incorporated into every day ways of working, so it becomes part of Unite’s culture.”

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND
INCLUSION SURVEY, JUNE 2021



OUR CULTURE

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS OUR CULTURE

We want to make instinctive inclusion the heart of our home – it's who we are, the golden thread that links our community and drives our success. Where everybody feels that they have responsibility and strives to build and sustain a culture of inclusion.

"EDI and Wellbeing helps build powerful networks to draw upon ideas and communities."

FROM EDI SKILLS SESSION
- BEING BRAVE, BEING
VULNERABLE



OBJECTIVE 1


Have all leaders consistently model inclusive behaviours and set clear expectations for all, fostering an environment of engagement, motivation and accountability.

OBJECTIVE 2

Ensure that our business is aligned in our mindsets, attitudes and actions in bringing about a wholly inclusive culture.

OBJECTIVE 3

Create a safer, healthier and happier workplace that delivers improved employee engagement, stronger teamwork and greater pride in our organisation and culture.



“Everyone should support the embedding of true EDI – everyone needs to buy in and realise why it needs to happen. It’s about education and ignorance; someone who is ignorant doesn’t realise they are so until they are enlightened to the fact.”

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND
INCLUSION SURVEY, JUNE 2021

OUR COMMUNITY

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS OUR COMMUNITY

Our ambition is to be a good neighbour – maximising our impact on our communities and in doing so, safeguarding the future of Unite Students. Doing what's right, managing risk, taking care of our assets and optimising our partnerships are all essential in our responsibility and commitment to adding value to society making this business, a force for good.

**"EDI creates a
harmonious and
diverse business that
will be stronger and
more resilient for it."**

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY
AND INCLUSION SURVEY,
JUNE 2021



OBJECTIVE 1

Support the entire student journey – from accessing education, to entering the world of work – providing our students with the best possible start.

OBJECTIVE 2

Develop healthier, happier and more resilient communities by transforming the type and level of support we give our Resident Ambassadors, and being a good, responsible neighbour to our community partners.

OBJECTIVE 3

Develop a framework that allows us to measure and celebrate the impact we have on our communities, wider society and charitable partners.



**"Excellence is
not an act,
but a habit."**

**WILL DURANT,
AUTHOR AND PHILOSOPHER**



We are
US

 **PEOPLE OF
COLOUR UNITE**

 **KEEPING
US WELL**

 **CULTURE
MATTERS**

 **UNITE
LGBTQ+**

 **UNITE
WOMEN**



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