

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

BACKGROUND

The federal administration is swiftly issuing executive orders and agency guidance, including concerning diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). Many within the UC system are diligently working to assess how these orders and guidelines affect the university and our community members.

The University does not consider race, ethnicity, sex, color, national origin or other protected class status when making admissions, employment, and contracting decisions and has not done so for more than a quarter century. We take seriously our responsibility to ensure that our diversity, equity and inclusion policies and practices are fully compliant with both federal and state non-discrimination laws and consistent with applicable University policies. Equally important is our responsibility to ensure that the University is a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all.

This UC-specific compilation of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) contains preliminary guidance and references to relevant federal and state law and University policy. Each UC location, in partnership with their counsel, should regularly review programs and services to ensure that they remain fully compliant with applicable laws and policies. We will update these FAQs as needed and as we receive additional information.

Questions may be directed to VPGUEA@ucop.edu.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

THE FUTURE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Q: Does UC plan to eliminate or scale back its diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts?

A: UC remains fully committed to equal opportunity and broad participation in its education, employment, and contracting opportunities in compliance with [Article 1, Section 31 of the California Constitution](#) (also known as Proposition 209), which prohibits the University from discrimination or preference based on race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin. UC's equal opportunity and non-discrimination efforts are race- and gender-neutral initiatives that contribute to safe, respectful, and inclusive UC communities and ensure broad access to educational and career opportunities for all students and employees.

Q: Will positions with DEI titles be eliminated?

A: UC's mission to ensure broad access to education and career opportunities for all individuals remains unchanged and UC will continue to have positions that support that mission. Job functions must align with UC's mission to ensure broad access to educational and career opportunities for all individuals.

For staff employees: UC's Career Tracks job titles and functions may be updated to reflect our people strategies and organizational mission.

Academic job titles will remain the same.

Q: How does the February 14, 2025 “Dear Colleague” letter from the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights affect UC’s efforts?

A: UC is reviewing the letter and assessing its implications, as well as monitoring ongoing litigation challenging the letter. Additional guidance may be forthcoming as a result. The February 14, 2025 [Dear Colleague](#) letter is not specific to any institution. The letter describes how the Office of Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education (OCR) interprets existing legal requirements under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution, as well as other “relevant authorities” (e.g., the 2023 SCOTUS decision in [SFFA vs. Harvard](#)). The letter informs institutions receiving federal funds that OCR will undertake “appropriate measures to assess compliance based on the understanding embodied in this letter.”

Q: What efforts should my department/program take to ensure that we are fully compliant with all policies?

A: Campuses should regularly review, with their counsel, their programs and services to ensure that they are compliant with applicable law and policies.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Q: Can race or sex be used as admissions, scholarships, or hiring criteria?

A: It is unlawful for UC to use racial or sex-based preferences in admissions, hiring, promotion, compensation, financial aid and scholarships; in selection of participants in student, employee and faculty programs; or in other aspects of our operations. [Regents Policy 4404](#) furthermore prohibits the use of quotas or caps in contracting, employment and admissions.

UC promotes equal opportunity and non-discrimination by considering how applicants contribute to the UC mission to “serve society as a center of higher learning, providing long-term societal benefits through transmitting advanced knowledge, discovering new knowledge, and functioning as an active working repository of organized knowledge” and/or enhance teaching, research, service, study, administration, and patient care.

PROGRAMMING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Q: Can UC engage in outreach or pipeline programs by race or sex if the programs provide benefits that are available to all?

A: If clearly open to individuals of any race or sex, UC may use informational outreach strategies and pipeline programs to reach particular groups, as long as the program’s benefits and information are also

available to other groups.

Q: Will UC continue to collect race/sex/ethnicity data of applicants and employees?

A: UC will continue widescale recruitment efforts to attract large pools of applicants from a variety of backgrounds and other best practices to ensure that all UC locations are inclusive for students, faculty and staff. Data collection supports our ability to monitor the success of programs and activities that help UC attract and retain qualified talent from all backgrounds and experiences. Collecting data helps us to understand what programs and activities are most effective.

Q: Can UC departments offer courses and programs on race or sex, or other topics related to diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging?

A: UC may offer programs relating to race or sex as long as those programs are open and available to all.

This includes:

- Academic disciplines like ethnic studies, women’s studies, history or sociology departments
- Workshops about women in science
- Speaker series highlighting the contributions of scholars of color
- Research institutes focused on race or gender issues
- Faculty development programs that support research, teaching and service that advances inclusion and equal opportunity at the University

Departments and programs may consider communicating with intention in their advertisements, collateral materials, websites and other channels as to how activities are part of our employee or academic value proposition, our statement of values, and well-settled policy compliance:

This [program, workshop, event, center] complies with federal and state non-discrimination laws, is applicable to living our values, and is open to all members of the campus community.

CAMPUS CLIMATE

Q: Will UC continue efforts to improve climate, culture, and dialogue across differences and for all students, faculty, and staff, given the current DEI environment?

A: UC must – and will be expected to – continue to advance equal opportunity and combat discrimination in all forms in alignment with [federal](#) and [state](#) law and [University](#) non-discrimination policies. UC will continue to take steps to ensure safe, inclusive, and respectful UC communities for all groups.

This includes developing programs and services that support a healthy campus climate, reinforce our values, and bridge and improve intergroup relations in order to enhance overall employee and student experience, safety, and well-being.

Q: Will UC continue to offer implicit bias training for individuals serving as search committee members and to improve campus climate?

A: Training on topics such as implicit bias and preventing discrimination are intended to create a shared understanding of fairness. UC will review existing training on this topic and others to ensure that they continue to enhance inclusive recruitment and campus climate practices.

Q: Can UC continue to support employees through affinity groups and Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)?

A: The California Attorney General has [confirmed](#) that professional development and retention activities such as Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are best practices that “create an inclusive and supportive space where employees of particular backgrounds or common experiences feel valued and heard.” Such programming should be designed to support everyone and be part of broad efforts to ensure “equal access to all aspects of professional development, training, and mentorship programs that provide clear pathways for career growth.” ERGs and affinity groups may not limit membership and attendance by race or sex and should develop programs to build understanding among all participants.

Q: Can UC support affinity-based registered student organizations or pre-professional societies?

A: UC can support affinity-based student organizations and pre-professional societies as long as registered student organizations comply with the rules and regulations for forming a student organization and remain open to all registered students.

Q: Can UC provide resources for programs designed to support specific demographic groups?

A: UC may provide resources for such programs as long as the programs are clearly open to all. For example:

- UC may offer workshops and events that highlight the accomplishments of specific communities (e.g., African American Studies and African Diaspora Studies ceremonies, American Indian Studies ceremonies, recognizing women in science. Event organizers must ensure that all are welcome and included and that participation in these events is voluntary.
- UC may provide routine assistance — such as information, incidental logistical support and access to campus facilities — to private organizations that target efforts on the basis of race, sex or gender if (1) assistance is provided on a nondiscriminatory basis (that is, similar private organizations are eligible for similar assistance, regardless of the race or sex of the groups the private organization serves); (2) the University does not control or administer the private organization; and (3) the University is not involved in choosing recipients of the organization’s benefits.

POLICY RESOURCES

Select Federal Non-Discrimination Laws

[Age Discrimination in Employment Act](#)

[Americans with Disabilities Act](#)
[Equal Pay Act](#)
[Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment](#)
[Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)
[Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#)
[Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#)
[Title IX](#)

Select State Laws, Policies and Guidance

[California Fair Employment and Housing Act](#)
Article I, Section 31 of the California Constitution ([Proposition 209](#))
[Multistate Guidance Concerning Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Initiatives](#)

University Systemwide Policies

[Abusive Conduct in the Workplace Policy](#)
[Anti-Discrimination Policy](#)
[Policies Applying to Campus Activities, Organizations and Students \(PACAOS\)](#)
[Principles Against Intolerance](#)
[Principles of Community](#)
[Policy on University of California Diversity Statement \(Regents Policy 4400\)](#)
[Regents Policy 4404: Policy Prohibiting Use of Quotas and Caps in University Contracting, Employment, and Admissions](#)
[Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy](#)
[Whistleblower Protection Policy](#)