

# Inclusion of students

To protect democracy, human rights and the equal worth of all people is a core value at BAS. We refer to our main document, *Statement on non-discriminatory and non-biased practice and teaching at Bergen School of Architecture*.

BAS works consistently to create awareness and develop competence around these questions.

BAS wants to be an open and welcoming school, with a good and safe environment for both students and staff.

Feeling part of the community is important for both nationals and internationals. This document will be aimed at what BAS does for our student group in general, to improve their feeling of inclusion.

We take into consideration that our students learn in many different ways. The background of each student is varied when it comes to culture, language and perspectives on education in general and the profession of architecture.

The following aspects are on the BAS agenda when it comes to creating inclusive education at BAS:

## **Sense of belonging:**

BAS is a small-scale school, only about a total of 160 students distributed on 5 different years. We have small groups of students. Maximum 30 students per group during 1-3. year of study, between 15-20 on master level. This ensures a low threshold in getting to know fellow class mates and the teaching staff. For all international incoming students, we have a buddy system in place, to make the start of their study at BAS as good as possible. We have events in place at the beginning of each school year for the 1<sup>st</sup> year student where the 2<sup>nd</sup> year will host a welcome dinner and party for them. We also have a formal welcome ceremony at the beginning of each semester for all new students.

## **Open and welcoming environment**

Being a small school, we are able to have close personal meetings between students and staff, both administrative and academic staff. We conduct welcome sessions for all new students, and put down a lot of time and effort to create a good class environment through different activities and events. Our goal is to make every single student feel important and that his/her voice matters.

## **Physiologically safe**

the threshold to contact someone at school is low whenever a students is

facing difficulties. We have appointed contact persons in the study administration that functions as councillors and advisors. These contact persons also stay in close contact with the academic staff, to ensure that relevant information is passed on to them upon request from the student. If a student is in a mental state where other support services are needed, we have a system in place to assist the students in the right direction. The academic staff also has a high degree of attention towards each student on their well-being, and will follow up if any concern is detected. Everything is done in accordance to GDPR and the right of privacy of the student.

### **Safe physical environment**

The students should they feel safe at school. We work constantly to improve and secure our Health and Safety system, and students are represented in committees working on these matters. We want all students to CARE for the building, that implies a responsibility both from the school's side, but also from the students. The students have a large degree of freedom in how they can use the facilities, but that freedom also comes with a conscious attitude.

### **Active participation and listening**

Our pedagogy supports an active dialogue between teachers and students, this encourages active participation and listening. Our programme emphasizes the process rather than the end result, and this fosters explorations and courageous thinking. There is no right and wrong answer that is set from the beginning, but instead the students have large degree of freedom to experiment throughout the process.

We encourage initiatives from the students, and try to support them financially and practically.

Every semester we conduct council meetings, where students and staff meet to discuss the state of our school, where we are and where we want to go. Many proposals from students start here, and this is a forum where everyone can be heard.

### **Cross courses**

Is something we conduct over 3-4 days every semester. Here the students sign up for different courses where they work together with students from other years/courses. The topic of these cross courses are flexible, which makes them a tool towards topics/challenges/wishes that the students want to address. The students are invited to propose a cross course, and to even teach them.

Such activities create a sense of belonging, and getting to know students across the different years/courses are important.

### **Extra-curricular activities**

are important to boost and maintain student motivation. We have students who work in the library that will host and set up different events after

school hours. Our students are very welcome to use the facilities at school, and there are on regular basis parties and celebrations, debates, events and other activities initiated by the students and the school.

### **Available information**

We know that it is crucial for a student to know where information can be found. This creates a sense of safety and predictability. We have different information channels that are easily available for the students. We put focus on using a language that is accessible for all. Our webpage is the central information point. In addition, a front desk is available to all students as a physical place to ask all questions and get help. Information on selection procedures, evaluation, and all matters that relate directly to the individual student should be available and transparent. All students have equal opportunities at BAS.

### **Teaching activities**

Peer interaction and group work is commonly used as strategies in the teaching. The teachers shall make clear routines and a structure that is predictable. Course plan with content, learning outcome, activities etc shall be available in advance of course start. Teachers have a special responsibility in creating a good inclusive environment in the class room, and should be a role model when it comes to promoting equality, diversity and good class values. Empathy, social justice, fairness, transparency and clear communication should be high on the agenda for all teachers and other staff at school. BAS will provide appropriate support for students with special needs. For international students we do information sessions to explain what they can expect from BAS, and what we expect from them as students. The teaching system and pedagogy at other architecture schools will in many cases differ substantially from what the foreign students will meet at BAS.

### **Surveys and evaluations**

Is a valuable tool to discover any difficulties and challenges faced by our student group. We conduct these regularly, as well as have half-way evaluation meetings with all classes. These meetings are done without the teachers present, and the students can address any matters that influence their learning situation and the school can act upon them.

After each course, the students evaluate, and the outcome here will be discussed in the Study Quality Assurance Committee to see what can be improved. Students can influence their study situation at BAS through many channels.

If needed, there is an anonymous notification channel online where students can report things.

