

Sophia University
Handbook for

DEI&B

Creating a Community of Inclusion and Respect



上智大学
SOPHIA UNIVERSITY

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Note : The policies described in this handbook may vary in applicability depending on employment status and working conditions. We kindly ask that you confirm the applicability of each policy as it may differ depending on your employment status.



1. Introduction

Sophia University has been committed to “creating a society in which individuals can fully demonstrate their individuality and abilities” through various initiatives that respect diversity, such as support for minorities and life-work balance. Support for childcare and family care, as well as training programs to promote the activities of women and people from diverse backgrounds, are part of these actions. It is an important goal shared by all those involved with the University to build a community in which all members can flourish in their own ways, and to develop human resources who can contribute to a diverse society.

This handbook outlines Sophia University’s approach to fostering a respectful, safe learning and working environments for all members of our community.

Here, the Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability organizes information into six key categories that it focuses on when addressing challenges. However, we encourage you to read this with the understanding that diversity is not limited to these visible attributes. We aim to respect and embrace the deeper layers of diversity—such as individual experiences, values, and ways of thinking—that are not easily seen from the outside. Our goal is to create people, organizations, and societies where this profound diversity is recognized and valued.

Through this handbook, we hope to encourage an attitude of mutual understanding and respect for differences, and to help build a rich and creative learning environment.

2. DEI&B Statement and the Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability

When you hear the phrase “an environment where DEI&B is thriving,” what kind of situation comes to mind? While many recognize that DEI&B (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging) is an important concept, some may only have a vague understanding of what it truly means.

Recently, efforts to promote DEI&B have been gaining momentum across society to create environments where everyone can live comfortably. This is equally true in universities, where people of different generations, nationalities, and backgrounds come together, requiring awareness and actions that support DEI&B.

So, what does it look like for DEI&B to be genuinely embodied at Sophia University? The following “Sophia University DEI&B Statement” clearly defines this vision.



2-1. Sophia University DEI&B Statement



Sophia University DEI&B Statement

Sophia University is committed to human education grounded in Christian humanism, fostering students, faculty, and staff to respect fundamental human rights, recognize the dignity of each individual, and act with responsibility and humility to contribute to the betterment of the world. Guided by our unwavering educational spirit, "For Others, With Others," we will continue to take necessary and reasonable actions to realize a society in which everyone has the opportunity to thrive and where people live together in mutual respect.

June 2025

President of Sophia University, Miki Sugimura

1. Diversity

Sophia University does not tolerate any acts of discrimination or behavior that undermine the dignity of others based on differences such as race, ethnicity, nationality, language, age, gender, sexuality, religion, or physical characteristics. We are committed to maintaining an environment where the diversity of each individual's experiences, values, and perspectives is respected.

2. Equity *1

Sophia University is committed to providing all members with access to a wide range of information and opportunities, creating an environment where they can fully realize their potential. We also strive to address and rectify discriminatory social structures in education, research, employment, and other areas.

3. Inclusion

Sophia University is committed to creating an environment where the voices of each and every member are heard, psychological safety is ensured, and diverse values are co-created in a spirit of coexistence and mutual respect. We strive to nurture individuals who contribute to the building of an inclusive society, and, together with those who share this vision, we will work toward the realization of a truly inclusive and harmonious society.

4. Belonging *2

Sophia University aims to be a community where all members are respected, feel a sense of psychological safety and acceptance, and can express their thoughts and concerns without fear. By fostering such an environment, we will strive to continue being an organization that brings out each individual's full potential and leads to the creation of new values.

*1

"Equity" involves adjusting the resources provided based on individual differences and circumstances to ensure that everyone has access to the same opportunities and environments. On the other hand, "Equality" refers to providing the same resources to everyone, however this approach is only effective when everyone has the same needs or are from the same circumstance.

*2

"Belonging" refers to a state in which each individual feels a sense of connection to their community and experience reassurance that they have a place where they truly belong.



2-2. Mission and Structure of the Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability

(1) Role of the Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability

The Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability at Sophia University is committed to promoting diversity within the university in accordance with the Catholic spirit, Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'*, the Jesuit UAPs (Four Directions), and the United Nations SDGs. Since its inception in 2009, the Office has continued to explore ways to promote diversity in response to the needs of a changing society.

Building on these past efforts, we will continue striving to create a more inclusive and equitable environment where all members of the university can learn, work, and play active roles with peace of mind, while respecting their diverse values and backgrounds. In addition, based on the University's philosophy of valuing a global perspective, we will further advance the promotion of diversity while responding flexibly to changes both within and outside the University.

(2) About the Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability

Sophia School Corporation established the Women Researchers Support Program Liaison Office in 2009, followed by the Office for Promotion of Gender Equality in 2012, which was reorganized as the Office for the Promotion of Diversity in 2017. The Office of Sophia Sustainability Promotion was established in 2021.

In 2024, the Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Office of Sophia Sustainability Promotion were integrated into the Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability. Sophia School Corporation's diversity-related activities began in 2009 with the "Project to Support Women Researchers in a Global Society", and were initially led by the Office for Promotion of Gender Equality after the "Sophia University Gender Equality Declaration" was enacted in 2011. Later, as the concept of diversity broadened, it was reorganized as the Office for the Promotion of Diversity, which expanded its support to include a wider range of individuals and improved its support systems.

Meanwhile, the Office of Sophia Sustainability Promotion was launched in 2021 as a cross-departmental project to promote improvements in energy efficiency and the campus environment. As a unique initiative, the office employs student staff to work on event planning, facility maintenance, and public relations activities, thereby promoting collaboration between students, faculty, and staff.



(3) History of the Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability

- 2009 : Started “Project to Support Women Researchers in a Global Society”,
Established the Women Researchers Support Program Liaison Office
- 2011 : Establishment of the Sophia University Gender Equality Declaration and
establishment of the Office for Promotion of Gender Equality
- 2017 : Reorganized as the Office for the Promotion of Diversity
- 2021 : Established the Office of Sophia Sustainability Promotion
- 2024 : Reorganized as the Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability



3. Gender Equity

3-1. Sophia University Declaration for Gender Equity

The Basic Act for Gender Equal Society enacted in 1999 places a gender equal society as an imperative task in deciding the future of Japanese society in the 21st century. It also stipulates the importance of promoting policies relevant to creating a gender equal society in every field in order for both men and women to fully exercise their individuality and abilities regardless of gender.

Sophia University was founded in 1913 based on the spirit of Christianity. We search for truth, we search for values, and we work for “human” formation of our students.

The university was a men’s university in the past but became co-educational in 1958, and has continued to turn out bright young graduates capable and committed to make significant advances in the future generation ever since.

We develop abilities to address the global society. Intensive language education, overseas study programs, academic exchanges and a campus with a diverse community of international students from all over the world helping one another to deepen their understanding of other cultures and to develop qualities that will allow students to play an active role in an evolving global society. At the same time, the educational motto of Sophia University “For Others, With Others” teaches our students to become an active part of global challenges to solve the issues of poverty, starvation, environment and discrimination while pursuing their own goals and interests.

Making use of these characteristics, we declare that Sophia University fulfills our social responsibility and commits to provide positive contribution to the creation of gender-equal society and to promote the Gender Equality Plan on the basis of the following basic action plan.

< Basic Action Plan >

1. Promotion of gender equality in the spheres of education, research and employment
2. Support for men and women to ensure feasibility of accommodating studying, research or job and family life
3. Promotion of activities to raise awareness about gender equality and educational research on gender equality
4. Promotion of gender equality in decision making process regarding administration of the University

January 2011, The Chancellor of Sophia School Corporation



3-2. University's Initiatives to achieving Gender Equity

(1) For Students

1. Education and Research

■Supporting Women Researchers in Science and Technology

In 2012, Sophia University established the Global Advancement Award for Women Researchers to support female graduate students in the Graduate School of Science and Technology.

This program encourages students to grow into internationally recognized researchers. Eligible applicants are those who have demonstrated academic achievements through international conferences and publications and who receive a recommendation from their academic advisor.

Contact: Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability

■Feeling Anxious While Studying Abroad

While most partner universities and dormitories take steps to prevent gender-based issues, many students may still feel anxious about going abroad.

To support them, the Center for Global Education and Discovery provides resources and information on gender-related concerns during study abroad—such as how to stay safe from sexual violence or navigate gender norms in other cultures. These topics are covered in pre-departure briefings, and a collection of helpful links is also available.

If you have questions or concerns, feel free to visit the center during office hours. In addition, a 24-hour crisis management service is available while you're overseas for immediate support.

Contact: Center for Global Education and Discovery Bldg. 2, 1F



(2) For Students and Faculty/Staff

1. Campus Life – On-campus facilities –

■What is OiTr and Where Can You Find It on Campus?

Yotsuya Campus provides free sanitary pads through the OiTr system in some women's restrooms and Restroom for Everyone.

By holding a smartphone with the OiTr app over the dispenser, one pad is dispensed free of charge.

(<https://www.oitr.jp/>) (Japanese Website Only)

OiTr Locations on Yotsuya Campus (As of June 1, 2025):

Building2, 1F – Women's restroom (2 units)

Building2, 4F – Women's restroom (4 units)

Building2, 5F – Women's restroom (2 units)

Building6, 1F – Women's restroom (2 units), Restroom for Everyone (1 unit)

Building6, 4F – Women's restroom (4 units), Restroom for Everyone (1 unit)

Building9, B1F (Active Commons) – Women's restroom (2 units),

Restroom for Everyone (1 unit)

Building11, 1F – Women's restroom (2 units)

Contact: Office of Environment and Facility Management

■What is Mew Dispenser and Where Can You Find It on Campus?

Mejiro Campus provides free sanitary pads through the Mew Dispenser system in all women's restrooms.

Mew Dispenser Locations on Mejiro Campus (As of June 1, 2025):

Building1

B1F – Women's restroom (2 units)

1F – Women's restroom (2 units)

2F – Women's restroom (2 units)

3F – Women's restroom (2 units)

4F – Women's restroom (1 unit)

Building2

1F – Women's restroom (2 units)

2F – Women's restroom (2 units)

2F – Women's restroom (1 unit)



2. Others - Tips for thriving beyond gender -

■Role Model Collection

Since 2009, Sophia University has published a Role Model Collection featuring the life stories of female researchers, male faculty members who support gender equality, and students, faculty and staff who represent gender minorities within their fields of study.

The latest edition, Volume 12 (published in 2022), is titled “Sophia Diversity: Sophia’s Women Leadership”. It highlights a wide range of role models—female faculty, current students, and alumnae—who have been involved with Sophia in various ways. Each story provides a unique perspective on leadership and career development from a woman’s point of view.

This resource is highly relevant not only for current students, but also for faculty and staff seeking to expand their professional horizons. We encourage everyone to explore these inspiring examples.

Role Models XII: Sophia Diversity: Sophia’s Women Leadership

[English version](#)

[Japanese version](#)

If you would like to view previous editions of the Role Model Collection, please contact the office below.

Contact: Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability

4. LGBTQ+

4-1. Sophia University’s Policies and Initiatives on LGBTQ+

(1) For Students

1. Education and Research

■Classroom Accommodations

Gender is recorded on attendance lists used by instructors only when deemed necessary for course management. Examples include segregating changing rooms during physical education practice, assigning rooms during seminar training camps, and considerations for calling students by name.

Contact: Center for Academic Affairs, Bldg. 2, 1F

■Support During Study Abroad or International Training Program

If you have concerns or questions about participating in university-sponsored programs such as exchange studies or various training programs, please consult the university in advance.

Contact: Center for Global Education and Discovery, Bldg. 2, 1F



2. Campus Life

■Is Gender Information Collected?

Gender information relates deeply to personal dignity and values, so it is collected and used only when there is a reasonable necessity after thorough consideration.

When collected, it is voluntary as much as possible, allowing choices among “Male,” “Female,” “Non-binary,” and “Prefer not to say.” Depending on research or other circumstances, free-text or other expressions may also be permitted. (except where university policy cannot be changed due to laws or regulations.)

■Is Gender Recorded on University-issued Certificates?

The following certificates issued by the university do not include gender information:
(Issuing departments are indicated in brackets)

Certificate of Enrollment, Academic Transcript,
Certificate of Expected Graduation/Completion,
Graduation/Completion Certificate < Center of Academic Affairs>
Student ID Card < Center of Academic Affairs>
Student Discount Card < Center for Student Affairs>
Health check certificates < Health and Wellbeing Center>

■When Changing One’s Legal Gender

The gender registered in the student record must be the same as the gender listed on the family register. If there has been a change in the registered gender, please submit an application at the office together with official documentation verifying the change. Once the application is processed, the gender information in the student record will be updated.

Contact: Center of Academic Affairs Academic Records Section,
Bldg. 2, 1F

■If You Want to Change Your Registered Name

Students who experience discomfort with their registered gender may consult the university regarding a change of name in the student record. The updated name will appear on all official certificates issued by the university. If an explanation of the change is required outside the university, the university can issue a supporting document.

Contact: Center of Academic Affairs, Student Registration Section,
Bldg. 2, 1F

■If You Feel Uncomfortable with Group Health Checkups

Periodic health examinations can also be taken individually. If you wish to undergo an individual examination, please consult the Health and Wellbeing Center.

Contact: Health and Wellbeing Center (Health Support), Hoffmann Hall, 2F



(2) For Faculty/Staff

1. Use of “Name which you go by”

To foster a workplace environment where faculty and staff respect one another's diversity, the use of a “Name which you go by” is permitted. In cases such as marriage, nationality, or academic research circumstances where individuals wish to use a name other than their registered legal name, they may do so upon completing the prescribed application procedures. An approved “Name which you go by” may then be employed on business cards, internal university documents, and educational and research information databases.

(3) For Students and Faculty/Staff

1. Campus Life – On-campus facilities –

■Restroom for Everyone

There are shared restrooms accessible to anyone within the Yotsuya campus and Mejiro campus called Restroom for Everyone. Please refer to the Accessibility Map for their locations.

Yotsuya Campus

[Accessibility Map](#)

Mejiro Campus

Building 1, 1F

Building 2, 1F

«Do you know about Breeze Lounge?»

In September 2024, the 4th floor of Building 2 at Yotsuya Campus was newly renovated as the “Breeze Lounge.” As part of this, three new private toilets were added, increasing options for Restroom for Everyone.

Considerations were made regarding installation methods, lighting, materials, and vacancy indicators to create a space where everyone feels comfortable using the facilities. This initiative will serve as a starting point to consider the future design and usage of toilets and all other facilities at the university.



■Changing Rooms

Changing rooms used for classes are separated by gender. Changing rooms available for use outside classes, such as for extracurricular activities, are located at the following three places:

Gymnasium B1F Judo/Kendo Hall (male only)

Gymnasium 1F (female only)

Hoffmann Hall Training Center (separated by gender)

Currently, there are no gender-neutral or private changing rooms available. However, several “Restroom for Everyone” equipped with changing tables are installed and can be used.

Locations of Changing Tables (Yotsuya Campus):

Building 2, 1F and 4F

Building 3, B1F to 5F

Building 4, 6F

Building 6, 2F to 6F and 17F

5. Multicultural Coexistence

5-1. Sophia University’s Policies and Initiatives for Multicultural Coexistence

(1) For Students

1. Education and Research

At Sophia university, you can study 22 different languages. What kind of environment is available to support language learning? Here we introduce some of the features:

Departmental Courses and University-wide Courses (including language courses)
Language Learning Commons (LLC)

LLC offers a variety of support services such as book lending, DVD viewing, provision of e-learning materials accessible from home, and consultations with language learning advisors.

There are also small-group conversation lessons called “Foreign Language Communication Groups” led by international and senior students, as well as “Language Exchange” sessions held during lunchtime for casual interaction. These are open to all enrolled and international students, so please take advantage of them.

Location: Building.6, 1F (Weekdays 10:00–17:00 *Closed on class holidays*)

For details on usage and event schedules, please check My Sophia
(My Sophia > Academics > Language Learning Commons • LLC)

Contact: Center for Language Education and Research Bldg. 6, 6F



2. Campus Life

■Handling of Registered Names

The university uses three types of registered names: “Kanji Name,” “Kana Name,” and “Roman Alphabet Name”.

Japanese students are required to use their Kanji names, while international students use their Roman Alphabet Name (those with multiple nationalities are treated as Japanese nationals). By request, former names or other common names may also be used.

Additionally, some international students may use their Kanji names as common names if these are registered on their resident record or similar documents.

Contact: Center of Academic Affairs, Student Registration Section,
Bldg. 2, 1F

■Support for International Students and Interaction with Sophia Students

Global-Network (GL-Net)

GL-Net is a student-run international exchange organization that collaborates with the Center for Global Education and Discovery to hold events introducing Japanese culture and day trips. Members are recruited throughout the year. Those interested should check GL-Net’s Instagram page.

Exchange Student Supporter System

This is a volunteer program where supporters help exchange students at Sophia by assisting with necessary procedures for living in Japan, teaching Japanese, and providing information about campus life.

New registrations are accepted anytime, and supporters for each semester are recruited twice a year. Announcements will be made on My Sophia when recruitment starts.

(My Sophia > Academics > Center for Global Education and Discovery)

Contact: Center for Global Education and Discovery, Bldg. 2, 1F

Sophia Student Integration Commons (SSIC)

SSIC, located on the 1st floor of Building 11, is a space where faculty, staff, and students collaborate to promote communication between international and Japanese students.

In the 2024 academic year, around 24 events were held, including experiential events outside SSIC.

Details are posted on “FIND SOPHIA,” and registration is possible via My Sophia.

(My Sophia > Campus Life > Center for Student Affairs > SSIC)

Contact: Center for Student Affairs, Bldg. 2, 1F



■Employment Support Program for International Students

The Career Center supports international students who wish to work in Japan but feel uncertain about the timing or process of job hunting. The support ranges from basic knowledge needed to start job hunting to practical help with writing Job application form and interview preparation.

The staff provides personalized support, so please feel free to consult with the Career Center.

Additionally, the Career Center offers useful resources such as:

[Sophia University Job Hunting Guidebook for International Students](#)

[Job Hunting Information for International Students\(Graduate School\)](#)

Contact: Career Center, Bldg. 2, 1F

(2) For Students and Faculty/Staff

1. Campus Life - School Facilities and Services -

■Establishment of Prayer Room

Students, faculty, and staff who need time for prayer or meditation for religious reasons may use the prayer room. Students who wish to use the prayer room can fill out an application form at the desk at Center for Student Affairs below and receive permission to use the room.

[Prayer rooms](#)

Contact: Center for Student Affairs, Bldg. 2, 1F, Desk 9

■Consideration for Meals

Sophia university accommodates diverse food cultures and dietary habits by offering a halal food café, cafeterias with vegan menu options, and bento box sales. Additionally, multiple food trucks visit the campus daily, providing a variety of meal genres.

You can check the weekly menu on FIND SOPHIA (under TODAY'S MENU).

[TODAY'S MENU](#) (Japanese Only)



6. Health and Wellbeing

6-1. Sophia University's Progress and Initiatives to Health and Wellbeing

(1) For students

1. Education and Research

■ Supports for Students with Disabilities

Sophia University upholds the educational spirit of “For Others, With Others.” We believe that existence itself is good and that all human beings are equal in dignity. We aim to support every student in reaching their full potential and becoming individuals who live for others and with others.

In line with this philosophy and based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2006, the university strives to eliminate unjust discriminatory treatment against students with disabilities. We engage in dialogue with the students themselves to provide reasonable accommodations to the extent possible by Sophia University, enabling students to pursue their studies and research with peace of mind.

Furthermore, we aim for all students to deepen their understanding of disabilities, to act with appropriate empathy, and to foster a mutually inclusive society.

(Source: Basic Philosophy, “Basic Policy for Use of Sophia University’s Academic Support for Students with Disabilities”)

Provision of Reasonable Accommodations for Academic Pursuits

To remove barriers to learning caused by disabilities and to ensure that students can pursue their studies and research with peace of mind, the university provides reasonable accommodations to the extent possible, through constructive dialogue with each student.

Application deadlines are set for each semester, and the process requires a certain period of time. Students who wish to request support or accommodations are encouraged to consult with the university as early as possible.

For details on support for students with disabilities at our university, please refer to the following website:

[Support for Students with Disabilities](#)

Faculty and staff are requested to refer to the “Sophia University Academic Support for Students with Special Needs Guide for Faculty and Staff Members” available in the Manual Database.

Contact: Health and Wellbeing Center (Coordinator for Students with Special Needs)
e-mail: with_others-co@sophia.ac.jp



■Taking the “Universal Manners Test”

From the 2022 academic year, the university has introduced e-learning participation in the Universal Manners Test for all new students.

2. Campus Life

■Career Support for Students with Disabilities

The Career Center offers individual consultations with specialized advisors as part of career support for students with disabilities. Related information is also available on the Career Center's website, so please make use of these resources.

[Diverse Ways of Working \(for Persons with Disabilities\) – career-co page!](#) (Japanese Only)

Contact: Career Center, Bldg. 2, 1F

■Sophia University Telephone Health Counseling Service

To support students' physical and mental health, the university has established a dedicated 9am-5pm Weekday, toll-free Telephone Health Counseling Service. (Outsourced to T-PEC CORPORATION)

Qualified professionals such as doctors, public health nurses, and nurses are available to provide consultations on health, medical care, mental health, and information on medical institutions.

Eligibility: Sophia University students and their guarantors

For details on usage, please check My Sophia.

(My Sophia > Campus Life > Health and Wellbeing Center Student Support Services > Information on Telephone Health Counseling Service)

(2) For students and faculty/staff

1. Services

■On-Campus Health Consultation

At the Health and Wellbeing Center (Health Support), doctors and nurses provide health consultations, first aid, and referrals to medical institutions.

Please feel free to use these services if you have any health concerns or questions.

Location: Health and Wellbeing Center (Health Support), Hoffmann Hall 2F

Hours: Monday to Friday, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM, 12:30 PM – 5:00 PM

Note: Emergency first aid services are also available from 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM



■Gynecological Consultation

Starting in the 2025 academic year, gynecological consultations by female physicians are available. Students are welcome to seek advice about any concerns related to gynecological health—such as worries or discomfort in daily life, issues that may feel difficult to discuss with others, or uncertainty about whether to visit a hospital. Please feel free to consult us about any of these issues.

Location: Health and Wellbeing Center (Health Support), Hoffmann Hall 2F

Mondays (twice a month, Only in the months when classes are conducted), 12:30 PM – 4:30 PM

By appointment only (about 30 minutes per session)

2. Campus Improvements

■Universal Design on Campus

Aiming for barrier-free environments in terms of physical space, information, and awareness, universal design principles have been adopted on campus, leading to the renewal of some facilities.

Examples of renewed facilities:

- Campus signs (guidance boards): Considerations for height, color schemes, and font size
- Campus maps: Designed for better visibility and multilingual support
[Accessibility Map for Yotsuya Campus \(Barrier-Free Information\)](#)
- Rooftop Garden at Building 9 Active Commons (commonly called “9 Garden”): Introduced a universal design flowerbed allowing everyone to enjoy gardening without strain

In addition to these examples, the campus has introduced “priority elevators” for those who need elevator access, removed steps on main campus pathways, and created spaces in various locations to improve accessibility throughout campus buildings.



7. Childcare and Family Care

7-1. Sophia University's Support Systems and Initiatives for Childcare and Family Care

(1) For Students

1. Campus Life

■On Campus Childcare Room

Sophia University aims to be a university where students can study and conduct research with peace of mind while raising children. In partnership with Shogakukan-Shueisha Production Co., Ltd., an on-campus Childcare Room has been established.

Students who wish to use the Childcare Room should complete the necessary procedures at the Center for Student Affairs at least one month prior to the desired date of use. The Childcare Room is available during class hours and hours equivalent to class time. (There is a subsidy system for usage fees.)

[Sophia Nursery](#)

Contact: Center for Student Affairs, Bldg. 2, 1F

(2) For Faculty/Staff

Sophia University has systems in place to support the balance between work and life, such as childbirth, childcare, and Family care. The following websites summarize these systems:

[Sophia School Corporation Website: Welfare](#) (Japanese Only)

[Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability Website: Childcare, Family care/Work in Life](#)

Examples of Systems and Initiatives for Childbirth and Childcare

- Special leave for spouse childbirth
- Childcare time
- Childcare leave (for both women and men)
- Shortened working hours for childcare
- Subsidies for childcare services at academic conferences, etc.
- On-site childcare room
- Health management system for faculty and staff during pregnancy and after childbirth*
- Subsidy system for babysitter discount vouchers
- Nursing leave and related leave

*As of October 1, 2025, in accordance with the amendment of the law, these systems have been revised to improve accessibility. For further details, please refer [here](#).



Examples of the University's Systems and Initiatives for Caregiving

- Caregiver's Leave
- Shortened Working Hours for Caregiving
- Caregiving Leave
- Subsidy for the Use of Caregiving Services Subsidies

Other Examples of Systems and Initiatives

- The Research Assistant System

Since 2012, Sophia School Corporation has operated a system that supports researchers at Sophia University in balancing work, childbirth, childcare, and family caregiving without having to give up their research careers, allowing them to continue their career formation and participate fairly in competition. Recently, this system has become well known among male researchers and is used university-wide regardless of gender or research field. Faculty members using this system also serve as role models and mentors for research assistants, creating a ripple effect such as fostering research assistants. For more details on how to utilize this system, please check the Sophia bulletin board.

Contact: Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability

8. Generations

8-1. University's Initiatives and Systems Related to Generations

(1) For Students and Faculty/Staff

1. Activities and Events

■Student Staff Program at the Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability

Since 2021, Sophia University has employed enrolled students as staff in the Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability.

These student staff members contribute to university operations by leveraging their unique perspectives as students and their flexible ways of thinking. Their work includes improving the campus environment, promoting university activities, and planning and managing events.

Their activities are featured on the official university website, FIND SOPHIA, and on the office's webpage. Please take a look.

Details regarding recruitment are posted on My Sophia. If you are considering applying, please check the announcements there.



■Sophia Topics – Sophia Student Press Club

“Sophia Topics,” part of the FIND SOPHIA media platform for current students, is a student-run online publication. Student reporters plan, research, and write articles, working collaboratively with university staff to manage the website.

While current students may already be familiar with it, the content also reaches high school students and parents, serving as an important medium for sharing university news with a wider audience.

If you are interested in becoming a student reporter, please contact the Center for Student Affairs.

Contact: Center for Student Affairs, Bldg. 2, 1F

■All Sophians' Festival (ASF)

The Sophia University Alumni Association (SUAA[Sophia University Alumni Association]) hosts the All Sophians' Festival (ASF) each May as a homecoming event to strengthen the bond between alumni and their alma mater.

In addition to alumni, current students—including members of the Sophia Festival Executive Committee and the Sophia Broadcasting Society—also participate in planning and managing this major Sophia-kai event.

ASF is open to alumni, current students, faculty and staff, family members, and the general public. It features a wide variety of programs such as commemorative Mass, lectures, stage performances, and food stalls. Over 100 gatherings—including class reunions and club/circle alumni meetings—are also held in classrooms across campus.

In recent years, the festival has also featured online events, offering opportunities to connect with Sophians in other regions and overseas.

Faculty and staff members who wish to participate as executive committee members can check [Sophia University Alumni Association Website](#) around January each year for announcements and details.



9. Crosscutting Initiatives for DEI&B

(1) For Students and Faculty/Staff

1. Activities and Events

■Diversity Training and Awareness-Raising Events

Sophia University hosts various training sessions and awareness-raising events on campus to promote diversity. These include guest speaker lectures and film screenings. The events offer students and faculty/staff the opportunity to hear directly from individuals with lived experiences and field experts, fostering a multifaceted understanding of the importance of diversity.

■Sophia Diversity Week

Since 2017, the university has designated the period from November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) to December 10 (Human Rights Day) as Sophia Diversity Week.

During this period, various events such as exhibitions, workshops, and lectures are held for students, faculty, and staff to deepen understanding of diversity and human rights. This initiative is hosted by the Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability, with co-organization by the Student Executive Committee, and is collaboratively planned and operated by students, faculty, and enterprises.

Recruitment information for student executive committee is announced on social media, so those interested are encouraged to check the details and get involved.

[Instagram](#)

Contact: Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability
e-mail: diversity-sustainability-co@sophia.ac.jp

2. Other Initiatives

Sophia University and the Sophia School Corporation strictly prohibit all forms of harassment and are committed to respecting the dignity of all members of the community. The university takes harassment seriously, recognizing it as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination, and strives to ensure a safe, fair environment for education, research, student life, and employment.

All students, faculty, and staff are required to follow university guidelines to prevent harassment and respond appropriately and promptly should an incident occur. You can find more information on the university's harassment policy and educational resources at the links below:

[Aiming for a campus without harassment](#)

[brochure "Aiming for a Campus Without Harassment" \(English and Japanese\)](#)



10. Appendix

10-1. Glossary of Terms and Symbols

(1) Understanding the Diversity of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

■What does LGBTQ+ Mean?

LGBTQ+ is a collective term that represents diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. It consists of the following letters:

- L – *Lesbian*: A woman who is attracted to other women
- G – *Gay*: A man who is attracted to other men
- B – *Bisexual*: A person attracted to more than one gender
- T – *Transgender*: A person whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth
- Q – *Queer or Questioning*: A broad term for people who don't conform to traditional gender or sexuality norms, or who are unsure or exploring their identity.

The “+” symbol represents the inclusion of other identities beyond these five, recognizing the full spectrum of gender and sexual diversity.

■What is an Ally?

An Ally is someone who supports and stands up for LGBTQ+ people, even if they do not identify as LGBTQ+ themselves. The term comes from the English word meaning “friend” or “supporter.” Allies play an important role in promoting understanding and equality.

■What is SOGI / SOGIE / SOGIESC?

These acronyms refer to components of everyone’s identity, not just those in minority groups:

- **Sexual Orientation** – Who you are romantically or sexually attracted to
- **Gender Identity** – How you personally experience and identify your gender
- **Gender Expression** – How you present your gender through appearance, behavior, etc.
- **Sex Characteristics** – Biological attributes such as chromosomes, hormones, or reproductive anatomy

These concepts help promote the understanding that everyone has their own unique identity relating to gender and sexuality.

«A Key Concept: “Gender and Sexuality Exist on a Spectrum” »

It is important to remember that gender and sexuality cannot be neatly categorized into fixed boxes like “male” or “female.” People have diverse ways of identifying, expressing, and experiencing their gender and sexuality.

Also, never share someone’s sexual orientation or gender identity without their permission. This is known as outing, and it can cause serious harm—even if done unintentionally. When in doubt, pause and reflect on whether your actions could violate someone's privacy or trust.

(Source: [Tokyo Pride](#)) (Japanese Only)



(2) Respecting Individuality Regardless of Ability

■What is Reasonable Accommodation?

This refers to necessary and appropriate modifications or adjustments to ensure that people with disabilities can enjoy or exercise their human rights and freedoms on an equal basis with others—without imposing undue burden.

(Defined in Article 2 of the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*)

■What does Barrier-Free Mean?

“Barrier-free” originally described removing physical obstacles in buildings and infrastructure. Today, it has expanded to include removing social, informational, cultural, and psychological barriers that prevent people—especially those with disabilities or older adults—from participating fully in society.

The goal is to create inclusive environments that are accessible and welcoming to everyone.

(Source: : [Japanese Government Public Relations Online](#)) (Japanese Only)

◀◀“障害” Shougai vs. “障がい”Shougai: Which Term Should You Use?>>


In Japanese, there are different ways to write the word “disability.” Some people use 「障害」 (standard form), while others prefer 「障がい」 (a softened version), each based on personal or institutional considerations. At Sophia University’s Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability, we recommend using 「障害」 (standard form) for accessibility reasons—especially on the web. Text-to-speech software may misread 「障がい」, which can reduce accessibility for visually impaired users. Furthermore, based on the social model perspective—which sees barriers as existing not within the individual but within society—the character “害” (harm) in the term “障害” (disability) is sometimes intentionally used to highlight this concept.







■Common Disability-Related Symbols You May See on Campus

You might notice various accessibility icons around campus—for example, at building entrances or restrooms. These symbols represent supports or accommodations for people with disabilities. Understanding their meaning is one small but meaningful step toward creating an inclusive and comfortable campus for all.

- Accessibility icons -








	<p>International Symbol of Access</p> <p>This universal symbol clearly expresses buildings and facilities that allows not only wheel chair users but also people with any kind of disabilities can use.</p> <p>※This meaning is also conveyed by similar pictograms used in public signage.</p>		<p>International Symbol for Visual Impairment</p> <p>This is an universal symbol for people who have vision related disabilities.</p>
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	<p>Symbol for Hearing Impairment</p> <p>This symbol indicates that a person has a hearing disability, including being deaf or hard of hearing. It also signifies that the facility or person displaying the symbol is equipped to provide support or accommodations for individuals with hearing impairments.</p>		<p>Help Mark</p> <p>This symbol is used to indicate that a person may have an invisible disability or condition and may require assistance, support, or understanding from people around them.</p> <p>It helps communicate needs that are not immediately visible, such as chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, or internal injuries.</p>
	<p>Ostomate Symbol / Facilities for Ostomate</p> <p>This symbol indicates that a facility is equipped for use by ostomate—people who have a colostomy, ileostomy, or urostomy (i.e. a surgically created stoma such as an artificial anus or bladder).</p> <p>It helps identify restrooms or spaces designed to support the specific needs of ostomate users.</p> <p>※This meaning is also represented through similar pictograms.</p>		<p>Heart Plus Symbol</p> <p>This symbol indicates that a person has a hidden (non-visible) internal disability, such as a condition affecting the heart, lungs, kidneys, bladder or rectum, intestines, liver, or immune system.</p> <p>It serves to inform others that the individual may require consideration or support, even if they appear healthy on the outside.</p>



- Pictograms -

 	<p>Baby Feeding Room</p> <p>Facilities designated for breastfeeding or bottle-feeding infants and caring for babies.</p> <p>Top Symbol: For use by women only</p> <p>Bottom Symbol: Gender-inclusive — accessible to all caregivers, regardless of gender</p>		<p>Priority Facilities for Elderly People</p> <p>Facilities designated for the use of elderly persons, ensuring safety and comfort. Symbol: Indicates priority seating, spaces, or services provided for elderly individuals.</p>
	<p>Care Bed</p> <p>A bed for caregiving assistance, often used in accessible restrooms or support spaces.</p>		<p>Priority Facilities for people with Internal Disabilities</p> <p>This symbol indicates that the facility gives priority to individuals with internal (non-visible) disabilities, such as conditions affecting the heart, lungs, kidneys, digestive.</p>
	<p>Calm / Cool-Down Space</p> <p>This symbol indicates a quiet, low-stimulation space where individuals can go to calm down, take a break, or reset —especially useful for people who may feel overwhelmed due to sensory sensitivities, anxiety, neurodiversity (such as autism), or emotional stress.</p>		<p>Changing Board</p> <p>This symbol indicates a board or surface provided for changing clothes or diapers, often found in restrooms or caregiving facilities.</p> <p>It is designed to assist parents, caregivers, or individuals who need support with changing.</p>

(source : [Japan Cabinet Office, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism](#))



« “Barrier-Free Mindsets” and Tips for Inclusive Communication »

Previously, we explained the idea of "barrier-free" environments. But recently, the phrase "barrier-free mindset" has been gaining attention. So what does it actually mean?

Simply put, it means thinking and acting from another person's perspective—especially those who face challenges or barriers in daily life. It's not something complicated or difficult. It's about being aware, empathetic, and ready to support.

For example:

If someone using a wheelchair is struggling with a step or incline on campus...

If someone using a cane is waiting in line for the elevator...

If a non-Japanese speaker is confused during a disaster because they cannot understand the signs or announcements...

Ask yourself: What would I do at that moment?

“Is there anything I can do to help?”

This simple question opens up respectful communication and shows that you care.

If you can help, do what you can. If it seems difficult to assist on your own, don't hesitate to ask others for support. Also, remember that not everyone needs or wants assistance. If that's the case, simply being present and respectful is enough.

Although the term "barrier-free mindset" is often associated with disability inclusion, it applies to all areas of DEI&B (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging) —as covered in this handbook. Let's each take steps toward cultivating a barrier-free mindset and making Sophia University a place where everyone feels respected and included.

10-2. Contact Information for DEI&B-Related Support

(1) Gender, LGBTQ+ Support

- Center for Student Affairs (Bldg. 2, 1F) — 03-3238-3525
- Center for Global Education and Discovery (Bldg. 2, 1F) — 03-3238-3521
 - Counseling for Study Abroad (Language Learning Commons(LLC), Bldg. 6, 1F)
- More details available on the [website](#).
- Career Center (Bldg. 2, 1F) — 03-3238-3581
- Health and Wellbeing Center (Health Support) (Hoffmann Hall, 2F) — 03-3238-3394
- Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability
 - e-mail: diversity-sustainability-co@sophia.ac.jp



(2) Multicultural Coexistence Support

- Center for Global Education and Discovery (Bldg. 2, 1F) — 03-3238-3521
 - Study Abroad Programs from Sophia University (exchange, short-term, etc.) and International Exchange Activities on Campus
- Center for Student Affairs (Bldg. 2, 1F) — 03-3238-3525
- Center of Academic Affairs – Enrollment Section (Bldg. 2, 1F) — 03-3238-3519
- Career Center — 03-3238-3581
- Center for Language Education and Research — 03-3238-3699
 - LLC (Bldg. 6, 1F) — 03-3238-4094

(3) Health and Wellbeing Support

- Health and Wellbeing Center (Health Support) (Hoffmann Hall, 2F) — 03-3238-3394
 - e-mail: health_cs-co@sophia.ac.jp
- Health and Wellbeing Center – Disability Student Support
 - e-mail: with_others-co@sophia.ac.jp
- Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability
 - e-mail: diversity-sustainability-co@sophia.ac.jp
- Office of Personnel Affairs – Refresh Room Services
 - e-mail: refreshroom-co@sophia.ac.jp

(4) Childcare and Family Care Support

- Office of Personnel Affairs — 03-3238-3192
- Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability
 - e-mail: research-assist-co@sophia.ac.jp

(5) Generational Support

- Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability
 - e-mail: diversity-sustainability-co@sophia.ac.jp
- Sophia University Alumni Association
 - e-mail: info@sophiakai.gr.jp

(6) Harassment Support

- On-Campus Harassment Consultation
Available via in-person visits, phone, or the web. Please refer to the university website:
[Requesting appointments for consultations and making inquiries regarding harassment](#)
- Off-Campus Harassment Hotline
Available by phone, the web, letter, or email. Visit the dedicated site:
[Sophia School Corporation External Harassment Consultation Desk](#)



(7) Mental Health and Emotional Support

- Health and Wellbeing Center (Health Support) (Hoffmann Hall, 2F) — 03-3238-3394
- Counseling Services (Bldg. 10, 3F) — 03-3238-3559

(8) Other Support

- “Student Information Service” (Students only)
 - Submit inquiries through the online form: “[Student Information Service Application Form](#)”

10-3. Useful On-Campus Resources and Websites

- (1) [Sophians' Guide for PC](#) [Sophians' Guide for Mobile phone](#)

(2) **Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability – Official Website**

Specialized pages for each theme are available:

- [Sophia×Diversity](#)
- [Sophia×Sustainability \(SDGs\)](#)

