



Inclusion of **LGBTQ+** Employees at the University of Twente

“INVISIBLE INCLUSION OR UNNOTICED EXCLUSION?”

Report (final)

24-03-2022

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

hrm.
TECHNOLOGY
& INNOVATION

By: Dr. [M. Renkema](#)

Key Findings and Implications

The LGBTQ+ community has been relatively invisible at the University of Twente – meaning that the subject has not received a lot of (management) attention and LGBTQ+ individuals are not noticed in groups and policies. Although invisibility is not necessarily a problem, it might be the case that issues do not surface and employees and the organization are harmed. In fact, research shows that in general LGBTQ+ employees are frequently subject to mistreatment, which harms both their well-being and performance. Moreover, invisibility is a particularly important issue, because it could also be linked to individuals not disclosing their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and/or involvement in the LGBTQ+ community. Hence, invisibility may be directly a result of experienced difficulties. Therefore, this research attempts to explore the experiences of LGBTQ+ employees and intends to find ways how to influence their feeling of inclusion. In doing so, also the question whether the relative absence of attention can be explained as “invisible inclusion” or “unnoticed exclusion” of LGBTQ+ employees can be answered.

The findings are based on 25 semi-structured interviews, with individuals from different faculties, functions, levels, LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ identities.

Hence, the **aims of the research** are:

- 1) To get an understanding of experiences of LGBTQ+ UT employees and the level of inclusion they perceive;
- 2) To develop ideas and provide a basis for improving inclusion of LGBTQ+ UT employees and the inclusiveness of the UT;
- 3) To help the UT develop policies and practices that support this inclusiveness.

The **findings** show that:

- The feeling of inclusion of LGBTQ+ employees in the direct workplace is on average relatively high; and a majority of interviewees did not experience serious issues.
- Nevertheless, there were several incidents of (micro)discrimination, homophobia and/or general mistreatment; some of which were not addressed correctly or were downplayed.
- At the organizational level the University of Twente needs do more to support and stimulate (feelings of) inclusion of LGBTQ+ employees.
- Support by co-workers and supervisors is crucial. For some the support by networks such as Th!nk with Pride is helpful.
- Several concrete ideas and suggestions were made to further improve inclusion of LGBTQ+ employees; mostly related to communication & signaling, practical support & action, and changes in people management, resulting in 18 recommendations.