

1. Introduction:

a) phrase d'accroche, même si elle est parfois un peu « générale »...mais attention à ne pas dire le contraire de ce qui est dans le texte !

~~- Today, there are more and more DEI programs, quotas and special measures in higher education, especially in the USA.~~

- The fairness of quotas or affirmative action in higher education remains one of the most debated ethical and social issues in modern democracies.

- The question of whether it is fair to introduce quotas or special measures for minority groups in higher education raises a complex debate.

b) attention à reformuler la question et à annoncer une problématique

Exemples :

- **Should access to university rely purely on merit, or should it also take into account the persistent impact of historical and structural inequalities?**
- **Should universities treat everyone equally, or should they treat people differently to correct past and present inequalities?**
- **Is it truly fair to favour equity over strict equality in higher education?**

2. Plan:

I. Affirmative action aims to promote equity, not mere equality, to compensate for historical and social inequalities.

EXEMPLES

- 1961: the word “affirmative action” is used for the 1st time (executive order signed by president Kennedy). Main goal = to counter the effects of slavery, segregation and discrimination (to help African Americans) _ Quotas for Black Americans and Latinos in various universities’ admission process (before 2023): Harvard, University of California,...

- Women in science and engineering: programmes like the **MIT Women in STEM Initiative** (USA), scholarship programmes for women in engineering (in various countries, for example, university of Durham in the UK, also “British Council scholarship for women in STEM”,...)

- quotas/measures for quotas for Dalits and other marginalized castes (to compensate for centuries of exclusion) or for Maoris in New Zealand,...

II. However, critics argue that quotas contradict meritocratic principles and risk creating a new form of injustice (such measures may create reverse discrimination)

- several lawsuits in the U.S. have questioned whether affirmative action creates new forms of inequality: *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978) and *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* (2023) illustrate the tension between meritocratic ideals and social justice

- 2023 Supreme Court ruling (*Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*) declared race-based admissions unconstitutional

3. Conclusion: répondre à la question / à la problématique clairement (mais de façon nuancée) !!

Suggestions (en fonction de ce que vous avez démontré dans votre devoir et de votre opinion) :

- In short, when historical injustice produces lasting effects, affirmative action can be both fair and necessary — at least as a temporary step toward a more just society.
- In my opinion, these policies remain necessary and fair for now. They help balance opportunities. Ideally, one day they will no longer be needed—when true equality of opportunity is finally achieved.
- I think that these measures remain necessary as transitional tools to build a more equitable society. Ultimately, true fairness will be achieved only when social background no longer determines educational opportunity.
- In conclusion, affirmative action seeks **equity rather than privilege**. When applied carefully, it can make education fairer without undermining individual merit.
- [To conclude, I think that although affirmative action programs used to be fair in the past and have contributed to more equity and diversity in higher education, equality has now been achieved in our western societies: they shouldn't be used anymore so that every student might feel legitimate, even in prestigious institutions.]