

Provisional implementation measures of the gender equality policy

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Decision-making body: Rectorate of the University of Luxembourg

"Nothing in life is to be feared; it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less."

Marie Curie Skłodowska

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Introduction

In this document we put forward an ambitious plan to implement the Gender Equality Policy. The policy was validated by the Board of Governors of the university on May 21, 2021.

This document provides the university with an action plan for accelerating progress towards a more gender equal workplace environment in which everyone has space to thrive. It makes the promotion of gender equality one of priorities of all policies and actions of the university in the coming years; offers a roadmap for working together at multilateral levels of implementation; steps up actions in the six strategic policy areas; and ensures the transparency of the results.

The University will prioritise *research-based* actions, which follow other higher education institutions' best practices and answer employees' needs expressed in the 2020 gender audit.

The roadmap of the document is as follows. In section I, we articulate several actions that fall into the policy areas defined in the gender equality policy. Then, in Section II, we detail the plan of action and the prioritisation.

Section I: Implementation measures

Awareness

The 2020 GE Audit documented that University staff members display very different perceptions of gender equality at the University. Moreover, many staff members are unaware of the existing gender inequality in the gender composition of the University (see FigureA1 and A2 in Annexe I).

To raise awareness, we will take various actions. First, we will improve access to implicit biases training at the University. Second, the Gender Equality Officer, in collaboration with the Office of Statistics and Institutional Research (OSIR), shall produce annual gender-disaggregated data, as detailed below. Third, in a bottom-up internal process, Faculties and ICs are invited to set gender objectives annually using the gender-disaggregated statistics.

Gender disaggregated statistics shall be established, at least, for:

(i) Access and opportunities

- students starting university studies (per Faculty/IC)
- students getting a bachelor's degree (per Faculty/IC)
- students earning a master's degree (per Faculty/IC)
- candidates starting a PhD (per Faculty/IC)
- researchers starting a postdoctoral project (per Faculty/IC)
- assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors (per Faculty/IC)
- administrative, financial, and technical personnel.

(ii) Participation

- scientific staff in research activities versus teaching and administration activities
- applicants for new appointments (at each academic career level)
- the gender composition of management bodies (e.g., university committees, working groups, ...)

- staff leadership positions (leadership position as defined by human resources in the University headcount)

(iii) Participation in resources

- the percentage of internal funding flowing towards the different faculties and consequently research units (linked to the gender rates of scientists in these faculties and departments)
- the amount of external funding and grants awarded (percentage per faculty/IC tied to the gender ratio of scientists)
- the percentage of applicants for funding and grants (by gender and per faculty/IC)

Staff composition

To react to the current misbalanced staff composition (see FigA1 in Annexe I), the University will take several measures.

First, we will gender proof both the Academic Recruitment Procedure and the Competitive Promotion Policy. For instance:

- We systematically shall reach out to the less represented gender candidates and actively search (via headhunting or consultation of databases) for these candidates.
- In line with European Research Council guidelines, eighteen months per child shall be deducted from the years constituting female candidates' academic career.¹ For paternity, six months shall be deducted if the candidate proves to have taken parental leave. Similar rules apply to other long leaves.² This measure's rationale is fairness, not penalising candidates for "career breaks" that coincide with childbearing and childrearing years. It applies to all staff members.
- To proactively sustain gender equality in professorial positions, we will establish an excellency chair programme to hire candidates of the under-represented gender proactively. These chairs will reinforce the diversity in talents. They will symbolise the University's values of a modern institution aiming to advance talented international researchers. The details of the Programme will be included in a future document. Internal and external funds will support these chairs. They shall mirror similar internationally successful schemes, exemplified by the Rosalind Franklin Fellowships of the University of Groningen, the international reference for combining diversity with excellence and internationality.³

Second, we will also propose innovative measures to improve the gender balance in administrative, financial, and technical staff.

Third, we will organise a **Mentorship/Networking Programme**. The 2020 GE Audit documented (see FigA2 in Annexe I) that more than twice as many women than men believe access to informal or formal circles of influence favours men. Besides, women are five times more likely than men to feel that senior staff are not mentoring them. The Programme will contrast these results.

Scope. In the coming three years, the Programme will be organised for young researchers (e.g. research scientists, assistant professors and recently tenured associate professors). In the future, the program can be extended to any new employee of the University.

¹ For instance, the number of published articles during five years of a female candidate's academic career *with two children* must be articles published within two years (5 years - 18 months *2).

²https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/guides_for_applicants/h2020-guide19-erc-stg-cog_en.pdf

³ See <https://www.rug.nl/about-us/work-with-us/rff/?lang=en>

Pairing choices. The match between mentors and mentees is voluntary. However, the Gender Equality Officer, the gender equality representatives, the head of the department, the Dean or IC Director may facilitate it.

Mentors. Success usually leads to success so that mentors may be full professors at our University or other universities. In addition, mentors can also be CEOs of firms who have demonstrated an ability to balance their workload and shown the propensity and capacity to train and lead effectively. Importantly, mentors shall have encountered the same hurdles in their career as young researchers and have successfully overcome these difficulties. In summary, the University aims to build a *network of mentors* belonging to Luxembourg institutions and not only (CEOs of public institutions and private firms; leaders, members of Amis de l'Université) and professors at various universities.

Mentor guidelines. Mentoring can last for three academic years and can be extended beyond this time. The mentor's role is to help the mentee network, build and manage a (diverse) group, supervise staff, acquire funds, and set research priorities in areas where the mentor can support the mentee. Mentees and mentors will plan a series of meetings to discuss the above topics.

Mentees. In a starting first phase, the Programme will be dedicated to women because of the gender inequality at our University, as shown by the 2020 GE Audit results. Then, in a second phase, we will extend the Programme to all young academics of the University.

Funding. The Gender Equality Officer dedicates an envelope to the Programme. External financing may be requested.

Finally, a similar mentoring program will be built for doctoral candidates. More specifically, we will organise the ULMent PhD workshops. These are field-specific ULMent seminars designed to expose PhD participants to role models.⁴ The workshops will be an initiative of the Gender Equality Officer, with the Office of Doctoral Studies' support. Depending on the size of the workshops, funding will be requested from the FNR funding schemes. The Gender Equality Officer can also offer to fund.

Work-life Balance

The 2020 GE Audit showed that 56% of respondents had taken a child-related leave during their work at the University. Because of this result and the commitment of the University in the current *Contrat d'Etablissement*⁵, as well as the suggestions of the external evaluation reports in 2016 and 2017, we will take several measures to improve work-life balance at the University. For instance:

- To make a research-based decision about the childcare service at the University's premises, we will perform a cost-benefit analysis.
- The University will also continue to offer childcare services for participants at scientific events on our institution's premises.
- The University will guarantee that all information related to maternity/paternity and pregnancy should be readily available (e.g., via a family-friendly initiatives office).
- To ensure that pregnant staff employees are not disadvantaged in their career development, the University is committed to improving accessibility to research spaces while preserving the compatibility with the Service de Santé au Travail's safety requirements.

⁴ Leading scientists will be invited to present their work at UL on the first day(s) of the workshop to discuss and offer feedback on the participants' research and career development. The workshop will also include several more extensive how-to sessions on publishing, effective teaching, developing a tenure case, writing a grant, networking, and work-life balance.

⁵ Page 9 of the Contrat d'Etablissement writes: « Ensemble avec le Fonds national de la recherche (FNR) et les centres de recherche publics du Luxembourg, l'Université développera une plateforme nationale pour les questions du genre, qui comprendra des formations aux fonctions de direction, un meilleur accompagnement des couples de chercheurs et le développement de politiques plus favorables aux familles. »

Workplace climate

The 2020 GE Audit revealed that 8% of academic respondents had experienced bullying. More than 20% of female administrative staff and 12% of male administrative staff also reported incidents of harassment. Besides, using the Luxembourg Workplace Mobbing Scale,⁶ the Gender Equality Audit documents that mobbing occurs more frequently towards female academic staff.⁷

To counteract these findings and implement the Workplace Climate principle of zero tolerance, we will take the following actions.

- The University will develop a confidential and anonymous reporting system to disclose alleged cases of harassment. This system will inform authorities of perceived harassment and enable informal intervention while protecting the identity of the reporter. Relatedly, following the disclosure of incidents and at the request of the reporter, the University will consider using "interim measures"⁸ and "modifications" in cases of perceived moral harassment or sexual harassment.
- The University will build an Appropriate Dispute Resolution committee to resolve conflicts formally or informally, where possible. Some of the facilitators are already present as the Rectorate, the Office of the Ombudsman,⁹ HR partners, Staff and Student Delegation, and the Inclusion Officer. Others (e.g. university mentor-facilitators, ombuds-committee for PhD candidates) may be newly constituted, if necessary.
- Finally, with the Ombudsman's advice, the University will establish a transparent and straightforward procedure for a prompt and effective review and investigation of harassment or bullying complaints.

Inclusive Communication

Staff members have reported inappropriate and strongly gendered language in the GE Audit open questions. Besides, a non-negligible share of the respondents (4%) in the 2020 GE Audit refused to reveal their gender. To improve communication:

- We will build guidelines for a gender-inclusive language. Many languages (e.g. Luxembourgish, French, German and English) use masculine nouns and pronouns in situations where the gender is unclear or variable. The same applies if a group to which we are referring contains members of different genders. Such language practices are becoming increasingly unacceptable, and the University is committed to reflecting gender identities more accurately in day-to-day communication. At our University, we want to convey ideas clearly and accurately to all colleagues and students. We will use several different strategies such as proper use of pronouns, the feminisation of job titles, non-discriminatory language, avoiding gendered expressions. These guidelines are helpful not only for the University's documents but also for a vector of awareness about gender inclusiveness at our institution.
- We will implement the Rectorate decision on December 18th, 2019. We will modify the gender recording in official University documents, questionnaires, and surveys, adding a third option of choice to the question related to gender in university forms. This measure highlights the will of the University to be an inclusive workplace. Its implementation approach is systemic, including several University offices (recruitment platforms, HR procedures, student enrolment, ...).

⁶ This mobbing scale was developed in Steffgen *et al.* 2019, see <https://doi.org/10.1027/1015-5759/a000381>

⁷ It is important to recall that these episodes may be correlated with gender imbalance in both the research and administrative roles at the University, as shown by the Gender Equality Audit 2020.

⁸ Interim measures are non-disciplinary conditions that may be imposed on a person alleged to have committed harassment.

⁹ See [Code of Conduct](#) for the definition of the Ombudsman.

Teaching and research

Because of the biased perceptions of academic staff members, as demonstrated by the 2020 Gender Equality Audit:

- The University will organise a new **Interdisciplinary Seminar Series on Gender**. These seminars, open to the entire community of researchers in Luxembourg (LISER, LIST, LIH, BCL, ...), serve to raise awareness and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration on gender-related issues.
- We will continue to offer teaching on Good Research Practice and Gender for all PhD candidates. This course informs young researchers about biases and their consequences on research content.
- We will build teaching programmes related to gender studies to offer attractive curricula to domestic and international students.
- Research at the University of Luxembourg aims to contribute to finding solutions to global challenges. For this reason, we envisage contributing to gender research with possible professorial positions in gender-related research fields.

Section II: Planning of Measures and Prioritizing

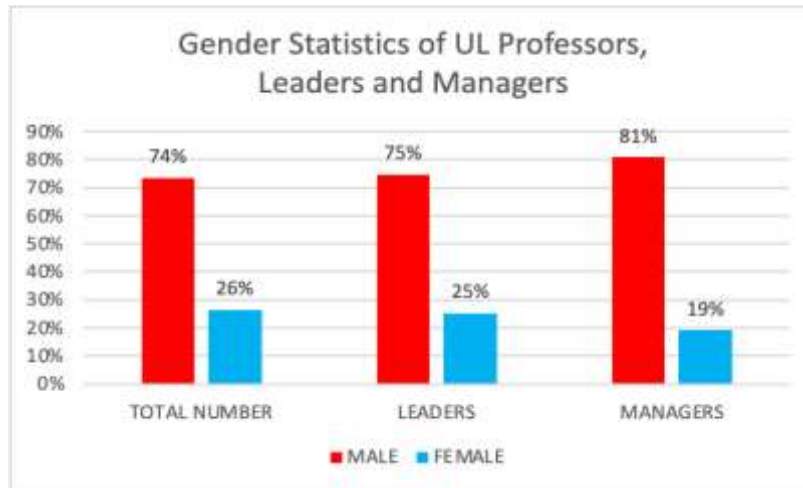
Measures to implement the Gender Equality Policy will be put in place starting from 2021.

As illustrated in Annexe I, the main results of the Gender Equality Audit indicate that some areas are more critically suffering from gender inequalities than others are. For this reason, we will give immediate priority during the first half period of implementation to measures concerning the Policy Areas: Communication, Staff Composition and Workplace Climate. Implementation measures concerning the Policy Areas: Awareness, Work-Life Balance, Teaching, and Research will follow.

The effectiveness and success of the policy and its measures will be evaluated in the second gender audit planned three years after the policy validation.

Annexe I: Main Statistical Results of the 2020 Gender Audit

FigA1: Gender composition of UL professor and leading positions* in December 2019



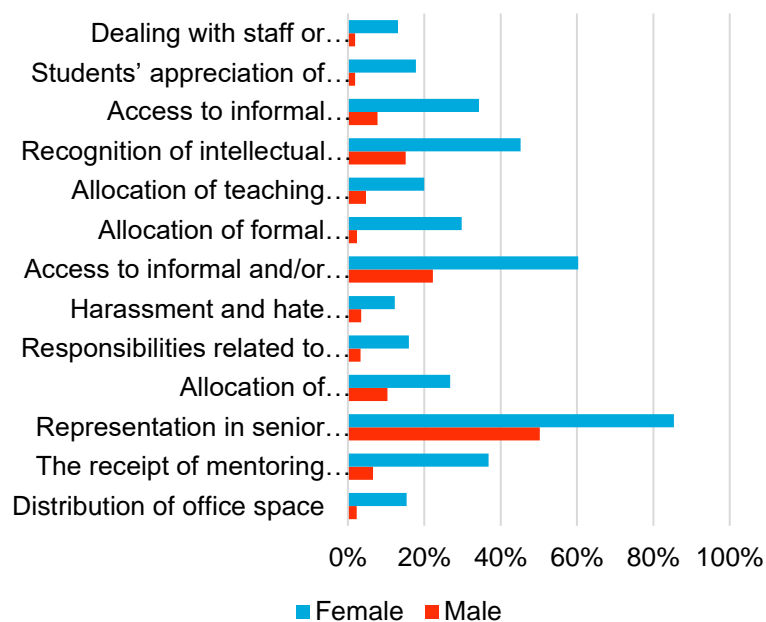
Source: Gender Equality Office, June 2020

*Leader is an employee that manages an organisational unit in SAP, e.g. IT Team leader, Legal Affairs team leader, RU, Compliance and Quality unit.

*Manager is an employee that manages "directly" another employee (staff to staff only), e.g. program director, PI

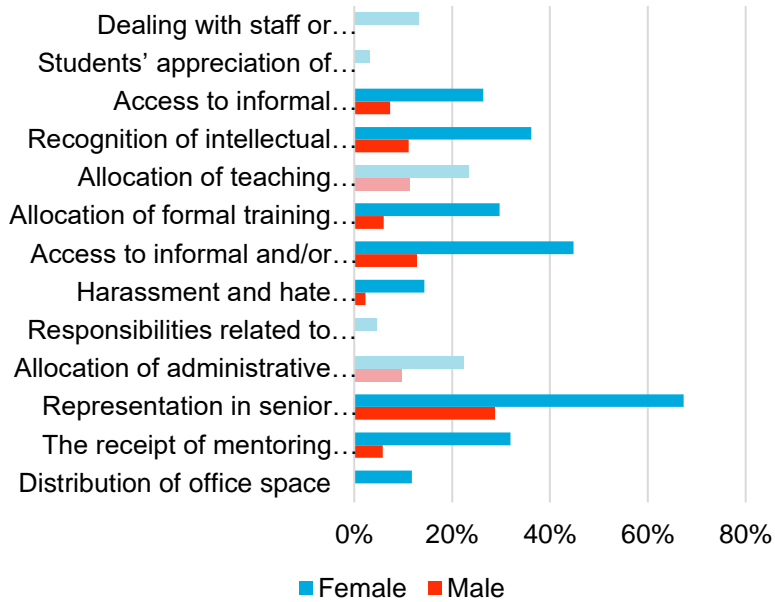
FigA2: The perceived advantage of men (Academic Staff)

...is to the advantage of men



The perceived advantage of men (Administrative Staff)

...is to the advantage of men



Source: The result of the 2020 Gender Equality Audit