



FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGNING THE GENDER EQUALITY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AT University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts (UL FF)

I. GENDER EQUALITY IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESOLUTIONS AND STRATEGIES

Gender equality is one of the most important goals in a significant majority of strategic documents concerning higher education and research, both nationally and internationally. The first document of this kind at the national level that should be mentioned is the *Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2015–2020)*. One of the eight priority areas of the resolution focuses on a “knowledge-based society without gender stereotypes” (ReNPEMŽM15–2),¹ which, among other things, also implies a commitment to removing gender inequalities in science and higher education.

The above-mentioned resolution also states the following: “There is a lack of scientific analyses and research studies on gender equality in Slovenia. They have not been conducted systematically and have largely depended on the individual efforts of people interested in such research to obtain funding for these topics. In recent years, some research projects were co-funded within the framework of the targeted research programmes of the Slovenian Research Agency” (p. 42).

At the same time the document emphasizes the need for more practices informed by data, analyses and studies on gender equality. Accordingly, one of the objectives the resolution has set concerns increasing the number of scientific studies and analyses on gender equality. The measures specified in the resolution include “the promotion and support of research and studies on gender equality” and “gender mainstreaming in relevant analyses and research” (p. 42).

The resolution also emphasizes the significant gaps in salaries, awards and honorary titles. Among other things, the resolution refers to the following: “In the period 2000–2012, no woman won the Zois Prize, the highest award given to scientists for lifetime achievement. The list of honorary doctorates awarded by the University of Ljubljana from 1929, when one was first awarded, to 2010 shows that only four out of 72 recipients were women. The University of Ljubljana started to award the title of ‘honorary senator’ in 1997 and to date no woman has received it” (p. 41). These facts are part of the reason why the Resolution orients itself towards reducing gender inequality between women and men in science, while focusing mainly on increasing the participation of women in science and higher education and improving their position.

Similarly, the *Resolution on the Research and Innovation Strategy of Slovenia 2011–2020* (ReRIS11–20)² also sets the objective of improving career opportunities for researchers and the inclusion of gender equality principles: “It is necessary to reduce vertical segregation; therefore, support from a decision-making level for changes, and modernization of research organizations, are very important. The first is necessary to adopt measures for gender equality, to change legislation, and to focus attention to the role of gender in research, teaching and in management of institutions.

¹ <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=RESO108#>

² <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=RESO68>



The basic requirement for such support is a good acknowledgment of the importance of gender equality” (p. 21).

The *University of Ljubljana Resources Strategy for Researchers and Teachers 2017–2020 with Action Plan*³ is based on a similar framework. It specifically acknowledges the need for increasing women’s participation in science and improving their position. To achieve the goal of equal gender representation in leadership positions, the strategy proposes the following three measures: (1) “annual monitoring of gender representation in different positions and governing bodies”, (2) preparing “recommendations to UL Members to take due account of equal gender representation in promotions and elections to leadership positions and decision-making bodies at faculties” and (3) preparing “amendments to the University of Ljubljana rules on decision-making bodies and elections by taking into account quotas for women” (p. 9).

Gender equality in the field of higher education also represents a strategic orientation of the European commission, which, among other measures, encourages the creation of institutional gender equality plans (GEP). The GEP is part of the EU’s objectives in the area of gender equality.⁴ Among these, three are directly related to activities for promoting gender equality in the field of research and innovation policy in the EU:⁵ (1) fostering equality in research careers, (2) ensuring gender balance in decision-making processes and bodies, (3) integrating the gender dimension in research and innovation content.

In achieving these broad and other, more specific, objectives,⁶ special attention is given to institutional strategies, including the GEP, which could contribute to eliminating gender inequality. These also include strategies that are characteristic for higher education institutions in their specific national contexts. Different studies, including *She Figures*,⁷ point to the significance of these latter measures and strategies.

II. STRATEGIC STEPS IN IMPLEMENTING GENDER EQUALITY AT UL FF

In the period between March and October 2019, we have, within the framework of the *Gearing Roles* (H2020)⁸ project, conducted a preliminary analysis of the state of gender equality at UL FF. This analysis has shown that ensuring gender equality at UL FF necessitates the implementation of certain initial steps, especially in the following areas:

³ https://www.uni-lj.si/research_and_development/international_mobility_of_researches/strategy_for_researcher_career_development/

⁴ See also: *Gender Equality Strategy*, EC: https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/promoting-gender-equality-research-and-innovation>

⁶ https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/era-communication_en_2012_0.pdf

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/she-figures-2018_en This is an annual research that is financed by the EC. It reviews the state of art in the area of gender equality in the field of research and higher education in Europe. The research follows a wide range of indicators, and through them monitors and evaluates the effects of various policies in the area of gender equality.

⁸ *Gearing Roles*, <https://gearingroles.eu/>.



1) Systematic collection and monitoring of data for all employees and students by gender

The above-mentioned preliminary analysis on gender equality at UL FF has shown that databases and various registries about employees and students at the faculty, which are compiled by specific services, are mutually incompatible and uncoordinated and, as such, currently do not enable the monitoring and comparing of the gathered sex-segregated data. However, it is precisely the systematic collection of sex-disaggregated data that represents a necessary step towards gender equality, as this enables us to conduct analyses of actual data that can serve as a basis for reflecting on existing and planning future practices that could promote gender equality at UL FF. Comparative studies and practices at other institutions, which already carry out these types of analyses, show that the following elements should be monitored:

- Gender balance (teaching and professional staff, student population) at specific departments, support and administrative services, study programmes and levels of study;
- gender balance of teaching staff by habilitation titles and the mean time of progressing or transitioning between titles, working positions and pay grades at the level of the institution and the department;
- gender balance in support and administrative services by titles and mean times of progressing or transitioning between titles, working positions and pay grades;
- gender balance by types of contract.

UL FF will examine the possibilities for the efficient and systematic collection and monitoring of data by gender in relation to the above-mentioned areas within the APIS framework, its new business and information system.

2) Gender equality in employment, promotions, career opportunities and balancing the work-life relationship

At present, FF does not systematically collect data on employment, promotions and career opportunities of its employees or on the occupation of leadership and decision-making positions, awards and acknowledgements, etc., which would make it possible to monitor the progression of individuals on their career path. The establishment of a systematic collection of such data by gender would allow the creation of more effective measures and would thus contribute significantly to ensuring equal opportunities in employment and for promotion.

International comparisons and data⁹ in the area of employment, promotions and career opportunities show that women still occupy under-privileged positions. To avoid reproducing these inequalities UL FF should review and complement its existing mechanisms and practices in the area of employment, promotions and work-life balance through the prism of gender equality.

Within the European higher education area, various examples of good practice in the field of equal career opportunities can be observed: different types of mentoring female PhD students (assistants, language instructors, researchers) at the beginning of their career and at points of transition

⁹ Eurostat: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/sdg_05_20



between titles, especially in periods related to greater challenges in the area of balancing the work-life relationship.

International data and studies¹⁰ show that women, for various reasons, occupy fewer leadership positions or positions in decision-making bodies compared to men. In academia this is partly related to the nature of work in these positions, excessive administrative workloads, overlaps of this work with other teaching and research responsibilities, which reduce the potential for developing one's professional career. However, this is also partly due to the prejudices, gender stereotypes and women's self-imposed limitations, etc.

With the above-mentioned obstacles in mind UL FF should reconsider how and with what measures or policies it intends to ensure equal access of women and men to leadership positions (e.g. dean, associate dean), especially with regard to balancing the workload characteristic of these positions, concerns for academic achievement and everyday life.

3) Gender in research, curricula and the pedagogical process

The EU emphasizes its concern for gender equality in different ways, which also include guidelines for evaluating research projects.¹¹ The gender dimension encourages research to consider gender at different levels: at the level of research content, at the level of gender-balanced research groups, and at the level of gender-sensitive practices in the evaluation of research proposals.

Similarly, we should also take particular care to include the gender dimension in curricula at the level of study programmes, individual subjects, and particular topics within given subjects. At this point we should also emphasize the unacceptability of gender-specific (biased) practices in the pedagogical process itself (e.g. gendered division of tasks and roles when working with students, gender-biased opportunities for cooperation and recognition, and the characterization of female students as "diligent and hardworking" and male students as "smart and capable").

The analysis at UL FF has shown that addressing the above-mentioned issues is left to the initiative of individual professors who incorporate the gender dimension into their subjects. However, a broader sensibility for preventing the reproduction of gender stereotypes and inequalities in teaching and research is still lacking.

At FF we will examine good practices in this area and develop recommendations and guidelines for incorporating the gender dimension into both research and the pedagogical process.

4) Gender-sensitive language use

¹⁰ *She Figures*: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/she-figures-2018_en

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/gender/h2020-hi-guide-gender_en.pdf



In 2018 the UL FF Senate passed an agreement on gender-inclusive language. With this in mind, a special Senate working group will continue this work, which we are also including in the GEP.

5) Gender stereotypes, gender discrimination and sexual harassment

Despite the fact that data from focus group interviews conducted at UL FF within the *Gearing Roles* project has revealed that women at UL FF face gender stereotypes, discriminatory practices and sexual harassment, FF does not have any special mechanisms to manage such cases or to offer help to women who have suffered from these practices.

Sexual harassment in academia can be detected at all levels, in relationships between students themselves as well as in relationships between students and professors and between professors themselves. It is also present at different levels in the hierarchy of employees. International research shows¹² that at-risk groups are predominantly comprised of students, younger women, women in uncertain employment positions and certain minorities. Sexual harassment has physical, psychological and professional consequences for its victims, which can lead to depression, anxiety, an increased risk of addiction, a decline in motivation for work, reduced opportunities for promotion, etc.

Within this framework, FF will examine the possibilities for those establishing mechanisms at the faculty that are otherwise demanded by the *Rules on Measures for Protecting the Dignity of UL Employees and UL Students*.

6) Gender equality as part of the mission of UL FF

The 2019 *Annual Report* of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ljubljana states that one of the fundamental orientations of FF is the commitment of our teaching and research to the fundamental values of humanity, freedom, solidarity, equality, including gender equality, and justice.

Against this background, gender equality at UL FF will be given its due place in representing UL FF on official websites as well as in other documents that declare its mission.

The document was discussed and approved by the Commission for Quality Assurance at UL FF (April 28, 2020) and the UL FF Senate (May 27, 2020).

¹² https://www.superaproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Sexual-harassment-in-academia_VR_2018.pdf