

APPROVED

by Vilnius University Senate

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as of 14 December 2021



**Vilnius
University**

VILNIUS UNIVERSITY GENDER EQUALITY PLAN 2021-2025



Vilnius University (VU) aims at creating and maintaining an open, safe, welcoming, community-centred environment that nurtures its members' diversity and ensures equal opportunities for everyone.

Equal opportunities – the realisation of human rights regardless of gender, race, nationality, citizenship, language, origin, social status, faith, beliefs or convictions, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic origin and religion. This document refers to gender equality, which is understood as equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men¹.

VU, guided by the values of openness, integrity, excellence and sustainability, aims to be an attractive place for study and research and to provide excellent working conditions for academic and non-academic staff.

1 The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) defines gender equality as “implying that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, thereby recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not only a women’s issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development as well as democracy.” EIGE Glossary & Thesaurus (2021), <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1168>.

FOUNDATIONS FOR THE GENDER EQUALITY PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Equality of women and men is one of the fundamental values of the European Union (EU)². Therefore, as part of the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025³, the activities set out in the Strategy to improve gender equality in the EU will be implemented as of 2021: “In the field of research and innovation, the Commission will introduce new measures to strengthen gender equality under Horizon Europe, such as the possibility to require a gender equality plan from applicants and an initiative to increase the number of women-led technology start-ups. Funding for gender and intersectional research will also be made available”⁴.

Gender equality is also one of the objectives of the United Nations (UN) as “women and men must enjoy equal opportunities, choices, capabilities, power and knowledge as equal citizens”⁵. Gender equality is one of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which

were endorsed by UN member states in 2015 as a global call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people live in peace and prosperity by 2030.

Article 5 of the Law amending the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the Republic of Lithuania states that “Educational and research institutions must implement equal rights for women and men”; Article 6 states that “the employer or the employer’s representative is obliged to implement equal rights for women and men at the workplace”⁶. In addition, Article 26 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania declares that “an employer is obliged to implement the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination on other grounds” (§1) and that “an employer who has an average number of employees of more than 50 must adopt and publish, in the ways that are accustomed at the workplace, the measures for imple-

2 The European Union and Gender Equality < <https://charter-equality.eu/the-charter/the-eu-and-gender-equality.html>>

3 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions. A Union of Equality. *Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025*. Brussels, 5.3.2020 COM(2020) 152 final < <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0152&from=EN%3E>>

4 Ibid. p. 16.

5 UNESCO. Priority Gender Equality < <https://en.unesco.org/genderequality>>

6 Law (5.11.2016 No. XII-2767) amending the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the Republic of Lithuania No. VIII-947 < <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/3486ee123cfa11eabd71c05e81f09716> >

mentation of the principles for the supervision of the implementation and enforcement of the equal opportunities policies” (§6)⁷.

As a member of the ARQUS European University Alliance⁸, VU is implementing the action line “Widening Access, Inclusion and Diversity”. The main objectives of this action line are to increase inclusion (widening access and diversity) at the University, to improve understanding of different forms of inequality and underrepresented groups and to promote inclusive policies at regional and national level.

Approved by Senate Decision No SPN-6 as of 18 February 2020, VU Diversity and Equal Opportunities Strategy 2020-2025 considers gender equality as one of priority areas when implementing the Strategic Objective to “Strive for gender equality in individual areas of science and studies at the University through drafting and implementing gender equality plans with respect to students and staff and through pursuing gender balance in the University’s governing bodies”⁹.

Implementing “Supporting and Implementing Plans for Gender Equality in Academia and Research 2019-2022” (SPEAR)¹⁰, a project funded by Horizon 2020, gender equality plans are being developed in ten departments of the University. In addition, the measures in the University’s Gender Equality Plan are based on a review of the overall situation at the University and the situation in individual units, analysis of existing statistics and other information¹¹ and best practices from other countries¹².

In addition, in order to foster institutional cooperation in the field of gender equality internationally, VU is participating in the H2020 project “Gender-based violence and institutional responses: Building a knowledge base and operational tools to make universities and research organisations safe – UniSAFE”¹³, is a member of the H2020 project “Promoting Communities of Practice to advance knowledge, collaborative learning and institutional change on gender equality in the European Research Area – ACT”¹⁴, of the Communities of Practice

7 Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania (RLA, 19.9.2016, No. 2016-23709) < <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/da9eea30a61211e8aa33fe8f0fea665f?jfwid=-k3id7tf7e>>

8 ARQUS European University Alliance <<https://www.arqus-alliance.eu/>>

9 VU Diversity and Equal Opportunities Strategy 2020-2025 <https://www.vu.lt/site_files/Apie_VU/VU_%C4%AFvairov%C4%97s_ir_lugis%C5%B3_galimybi%C5%B3_2020-2025_met%C5%B3_strategija_EN_v3.pdf>

10 H2020 project SPEAR < <https://gender-spear.eu/>>

11 Monitoring of Diversity and Equal Opportunities Situation in VU in 2020 <https://www.vu.lt/site_files/BVS/MONITORING_OF_DIVERSITY_AND_EQUAL_OPPORTUNITIES_SITUATION_IN_VILNIUS_UNIVERSITY_IN_2020.pdf>

12 EIGE, FESTA, GENOVATE (Implementing Measures for Gender Equality in Recruitment, Promotion and Progression in Academic and Research Careers. Contextualised Guidelines for Universities and Research Organisations <<http://www.genovate.eu/media/genovate/docs/intconferencebrusselsdocs/Contextualised-Guidelines.pdf>> p. 14-15), etc.

13 H2020 project UniSAFE <<https://unisafe-gbv.eu/>>

14 H2020 project ACT <<https://act-on-gender.eu/project>>

Gender Equality in Central and Eastern Europe (GEinCEE)¹⁵ and Gender Budgeting in Research Organisations (GenBUDGET)¹⁶.

Gender Equality Plan – an institutional policy instrument designed to promote cultural, systemic and structural change within the organisation in order to achieve favourable learning and working conditions for women and men.

VU Gender Equality Plan has been developed in accordance with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) guidelines for the development of gender equality plans ([Gender Equality in Academia and Research – GEAR tool](#)) and the [European Commission’s Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#), in collaboration with international communities of practitioners and experts¹⁷. It was based on the [UN SDGs](#), the

laws and regulations of the Republic of Lithuania¹⁸, the guidelines of the Lithuanian University Rectors’ Conference¹⁹, [VU Strategic Plan For 2021-2025](#), [VU Diversity and Equal Opportunities Strategy for 2020-2025](#), gender equality plans of VU academic departments²⁰, [VU Code of Academic Ethics](#) and the results of the [Monitoring of Diversity and Equal Opportunities Situation in VU in 2020](#).

In respect of equal opportunities principles, VU Gender Equality Plan has close links with the Study Regulations of VU, Research Regulations of VU, VU Description of the Procedure on Incentive Granting for High-Level Scientific Achievements, Guidelines on the Management and Provision of Open Access to Research and Experimental (Social, Cultural) Development Infrastructure Resources and Services of VU, etc.

- 15 H2020 project ACT – Community of Practice GEinCEE – Gender Equality in Central and Eastern Europe <<https://act-on-gender.eu/geincee-gender-equality-central-and-eastern-europe>>
- 16 H2020 project ACT – Community of Practice GenBUDGET – Gender Budgeting in Research Organisations <<https://act-on-gender.eu/genbudget-gender-budgeting-research-organisations>>
- 17 H2020-SwafS-2018-1 project “Supporting and Implementing Plans for Gender Equality in Academia and Research – SPEAR” (No. 824544, <https://gender-spear.eu/>), H2020-SwafS-2017-1 project “Communities of PrACTice for Accelerating Gender Equality and Institutional Change in Research and Innovation across Europe – ACT” (No. 788204), Communities of Practice GEinCEE – Gender Equality in Central and Eastern Europe (<https://act-on-gender.eu/geincee-gender-equality-central-and-eastern-europe>) – and GenBUDGET – Gender Budgeting in Research Organisations (<https://act-on-gender.eu/genbudget-gender-budgeting-research-organisations>).

- 18 The Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Equal Treatment of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the Republic of Lithuania and the recommendations of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania to ensure equal opportunities for women and men in Lithuanian research and study institutions.
- 19 Guidelines for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Investigation of Its Incidence of the Lithuanian University Rectors’ Conference.
- 20 Gender Equality Plan of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Gender Equality Plan of the Faculty of Philosophy, Gender Equality Plan of the Faculty of Communication, Gender Equality Plan of the Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Equal Opportunities Plan of the Business School.

VU Gender Equality Plan is based on the following **gender equality principles**:

- non-discrimination on the basis of gender and other grounds,
- equal representation,
- work-life balance,
- clear career opportunities.

Gender Equality Plan Implementation Areas

VU Gender Equality Plan commits to a consistent and systemic approach to gender equality principles implementation in the following areas:

- organisational governance and decision-making,
- staff management,
- research, experimental development and studies,
- organisational communication.

Gender Equality Plan Implementation

VU Gender Equality Plan aims to demonstrate and consolidate VU's long-term commitment to gender equality and to ensure that the principles articulated in the Plan are maintained and further developed regardless of the changing terms of office in the highest governing bodies of VU.

This Gender Equality Plan is intended for the period 2021-2025. VU Gender Equality Plan will be updated as necessary based on the results of monitoring and assessment of its implementation.

VILNIUS UNIVERSITY GENDER EQUALITY PLAN 2021-2025

Aim I: Ensure the effective and continuous implementation of gender equality at VU.

Objectives	Measures	Timeframe/ deadline	Department and Person Responsible	Desired outcome
1. Establish an organisational structure ensuring effective Gender Equality Plan implementation	1.1. Gender equality plans in VU departments	2021-2022, ongoing	Pro-Rector for Organisational Development and Community Affairs, heads of academic and non-academic units of VU	Gender equality is pursued systematically and consistently in all VU units.
	1.2 Network of gender equality coordinators ²¹ in VU	2022, ongoing	Pro-Rector for Organisational Development and Community Affairs, Community Development Department, heads of VU departments, gender equality coordinators, if required.	An active network of gender equality coordinators, which regularly exchanges knowledge, experience and other information and ensures effective gender equality solutions in all VU units.
2. Establish institutional practices, procedures and instruments enabling effective gender equality implementation	2.1 Guidelines for gender mainstreaming in organisational activities and communication processes	2025	Pro-Rector for Organisational Development and Community Affairs, Community Development Department, Human Resources Department, Communication and Marketing Department, heads of VU departments, gender equality coordinators, if required	Recommendations for gender mainstreaming in organisational activities and internal and external communication processes are published and discussed in VU community. The recommendations are followed in all day-to-day activities of the organisation and in VU's internal and external communication processes.

²¹ Each unit decides independently on the status and functions to be performed by the Gender Equality Coordinator.

Objectives	Measures	Timeframe/ deadline	Department and Person Responsible	Desired outcome
3. Consolidate institutional understanding of the significance of gender equality	3.1 Training on gender mainstreaming in organisational governance and management procedures and other research and study activities for VU management, different groups of academic and non-academic staff	Ongoing	Pro-Rector for Organisational Development and Community Affairs, Community Development Department, Human Resources Department, Research and Innovation Department, Communication and Marketing Department, Academic Quality and Development Department, Studies Administration Department, Student Affairs and Career Office, gender equality coordinators, is required	VU community is aware of the importance of gender equality in its work and can adequately mainstream the principles of gender equality in its activities at VU. At the beginning of each year, training needs are assessed, and a training plan is developed and implemented.
4. Systematise information on gender equality implementation principles at VU	4.1 Monitoring and assessment of the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan ²²	2022, annually on a recurring basis	Pro-Rector for Organisational Development and Community Affairs, Community Development Department, gender equality coordinators, if required, Human Resources Department, Finance Department, Research and Innovation Department, Academic Quality and Development Department, Student Affairs and Career Office, Communication and Marketing Department	Compiling and analysing information on gender mainstreaming in VU's governance, management, research and study processes. This information is used to identify gender equality issues and to make decisions.

22 VU academic and non-academic units that do not have gender equality plans in place provide data to the Equal Opportunities Coordinator of the Community Development Department.

Aim II: Ensure equal gender representation at the management and decision-making levels of the organisation, considering the capabilities and harnessing the potential of all individuals.

Objectives	Measures	Timeframe/ deadline	Department and Person Responsible	Desired outcome
<p>1. Establish conditions to ensure equal, gender-neutral opportunities to take up positions in governing and/or decision-making bodies</p>	<p>The objective will be achieved through the following integrated measures: I-2.1. Recommendations for gender mainstreaming in the organisational activities and communication processes. I-3.1 Training on gender equality. I-4.1 Monitoring the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan.</p>	<p>2022, ongoing</p>	<p>Pro-Rector for Organisational Development and Community Affairs, Community Development Department, Human Resources Department, gender equality coordinators in departments, if needed</p>	<p>Equal gender representation at all the highest management levels of VU.</p>

Aim III: Ensure equal, gender-neutral working and career conditions at the staff level at VU.

Objectives	Measures	Timeframe/ deadline	Department and Person Responsible	Desired outcome
<p>1. Establish gender-neutral procedures for staff selection, recruitment and promotion</p>	<p>The objective will be implemented through the following integrated measures: I-2.1. Recommendations for gender mainstreaming in organisational activities and communication processes. I-3.1 Training on gender equality. I-4.1 Monitoring the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan.</p>	<p>2022, ongoing</p>	<p>Pro-Rector for Organisational Development and Community Affairs, Community Development Department, Human Resources Department, gender equality coordinators, if required.</p>	<p>Gender equality principles are applied in all staff selection, recruitment and certification procedures.</p>
<p>2. Establish equal opportunities for all staff to achieve an appropriate work-life balance regardless of gender ²³</p>	<p>2.1 Description of the opportunities provided by VU to staff members in the event of a long-term leave of absence due to childcare, old age, sickness, disability, etc., or upon returning from a long-term (e.g., parental leave, internship, etc.) leave of absence from their duties</p>	<p>2024</p>	<p>Pro-Rector for Organisational Development and Community Affairs, Community Development Department, Human Resources Department, gender equality coordinators, if required.</p>	<p>VU staff members can flexibly balance their work and personal life commitments at different stages and under different circumstances in their lives. This is regulated by VU's descriptions of the procedure on opportunities for staff members in the event of a long-term absence, adaptation of new staff members and teleworking.</p>

23 The objective is related to Objective 5 of [VU Diversity and Equal Opportunities Strategy 2020-2025](#).

Objectives	Measures	Timeframe/ deadline	Department and Person Responsible	Desired outcome
3. Establish equal pay opportunities, regardless of gender	3.1 Methodology for the analysis of the salaries of academic and non-academic staff at VU from the perspective of gender	2023	Pro-Rector for Organisational Development and Community Affairs, Community Development Department, Human Resources Department, Finance Department	Analysis of salary data is carried out, and this information is used to identify gender equality issues and to inform decision-making. All VU staff in the same position with the same competences and workload are paid equally regardless of gender.
	3.2 Methodology for the analysis of incentives for additional activities of academic and non-academic staff from the perspective of gender	2023	Pro-Rector for Organisational Development and Community Affairs, Community Development Department, Human Resources Department, Finance Department, gender equality coordinators if required.	Analysis of data on incentives for additional academic and non-academic staff activities. This information is used to identify gender equality issues and to inform decision-making. All VU employees are paid equally for additional academic and non-academic activities, regardless of gender.
4. Implement discrimination, mobbing and sexual harassment prevention.	4.1 Description of procedure for handling and preventing discrimination, mobbing and sexual harassment	2022	Pro-Rector for Organisational Development and Community Affairs, Community Development Department, Legal Department	Cases of discrimination, mobbing and sexual harassment are dealt with according to clearly defined procedures.

Aim IV: Strengthen gender equality awareness at the level of research, experimental development and innovation (R&D&I) and at the level of studies, ensuring equal opportunities for participation in a wide range of R&D&I and study activities, regardless of gender

Objectives	Measures	Timeframe/ deadline	Department and Person Responsible	Desired outcome
1. Gender mainstreaming in R&D&I and studies	1.1 Recommendations for gender mainstreaming in R&D&I and study content, following the EC Horizon guidelines ²⁴ and considering rational purposefulness	2023	Pro-Rector for Organisational Development and Community Affairs, Community Development Department, Science and Innovation Department, Academic Quality and Development Department, Student Affairs and Career Office, gender equality coordinators, if required	Gender is mainstreamed in all R&D&I and study content, considering rational purposefulness.
	1.2 Analysis of students' satisfaction with their studies from a gender perspective	2023	Pro-Rector for Studies, Academic Quality and Development Department, Student Affairs and Career Office, gender equality coordinators, if required	Collect and analyse information on students' satisfaction with their studies and, if necessary, introduce measures based on the analysis of the information to ensure equal opportunities in terms of gender.
	1.3 Analysis of study indicators (achievements, drop-outs, resumption, etc.) from a gender perspective	2025	Pro-Rector for Studies, Academic Quality and Development Department, Student Affairs and Career Office, gender equality coordinators, if required	Collect and analyse information study indicators in terms of gender and, where appropriate, implement measures based on information analysis to ensure equal opportunities for female and male students.
	1.4 Analysis of project-based research and study activities from a gender perspective	2023	Pro-Rector of Research, Chancellor, Science and Innovation Department, Development Department, gender coordinators, if required	Collect and analyse information on project-based study and research activities from a gender perspective and, where appropriate, implement measures based on information analysis to ensure equal opportunities for the whole community.

²⁴ Horizon Europe (HORIZON) Programme Guide. Version 1.204 October 2021. https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/programme-guide_horizon_en.pdf

Aim V: At the level of organisational communication, develop an organisational culture that ensures gender equality and treats all genders equally

Objectives	Measures	Timeframe/ deadline	Department and Person Responsible	Desired outcome
1. Gender mainstreaming in internal and external communication activities and related processes	The objective will be implemented through the following integrated measures: I-2.1. Recommendations for gender mainstreaming in organisational activities and communication processes. I-3.1 Training on gender equality. I-4.1 Monitoring the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan.	2022, ongoing	Pro-Rector for Organisational Development and Community Affairs, Pro-Rector for Partnerships, Community Development Department, Communication and Marketing Unit	Gender is mainstreamed in VU communication and marketing activities. VU community is kept fully informed about the activities and measures cultivated in the field of gender equality.
	1.1. Publicising gender equality activities in external communication.	2022, ongoing	Pro-Rector for Organisational Development and Community Affairs, Pro-Rector for Partnerships, Community Development Department, Communication and Marketing Department	The public is informed about the activities and measures developed by VU in the field of gender equality.