



UNIVERSITY
OF ŽILINA

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ŽILINA (2021 – 2025)

Submitted by: Department for International Relations and Marketing

Job position of the contact person: Vice-rector for International Relations and Marketing

In cooperation with participants of project CHANGE – CHAlleNging Gender (In)Equality in science and research / **Ing. Veronika Mešková**






1. GENDER EQUALITY AT UNIZA

"The promotion of equality between women and men is a task for the Union, in all its activities, required by the Treaties. Gender equality is a core value of the EU, a fundamental right and key principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights. It is a reflection of who we are. It is also an essential condition for an innovative, competitive, and thriving European economy. In business, politics, and society as a whole, we can only reach our full potential if we use all of our talent and diversity."


(A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025)^[1]



Through its **Code of Ethics**, the **University of Žilina** (UNIZA) advocates "adherence to the principle of equal treatment, which entails the prohibition of discrimination based on sex, religion or belief, race, nationality or ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital or family status, skin colour, language, political or other views, national or social background, property, ancestry, or other status or because of a report on crime or other antisocial behaviour. In upholding the principle of equal treatment, UNIZA takes into consideration moral behaviour and protection against discrimination, while fully supporting equal opportunity and equal participation of both men and women in all areas of its activities. UNIZA also fully supports the equalization of gender differences between women and men in the extent of participation, means of accessibility, rights, as well as the results in any area of their activity."

In practical matters, the commitment to the principle of equal treatment in the area of gender equality is implemented by means of Gender Equality Plan of the University of Žilina for years 2021-2025 (hereinafter referred to as the "Plan"), which was approved by the university management. The Plan consists of three parts: The first one is general: **A. Gender-equal UNIZA** and two are specific: **B. Reconciliation** of work and private life, **C. Physical and psychological violence**. The Plan naturally follows its predecessor, which was prepared in the framework of the implementation of the CHANGE project – Challenging Gender (In)Equality in Science and Research, which received funding from the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020), implemented from May 2018 to October 2022. Because of this Plan, the university embarked on a journey to promote gender equality in 2018.

The primary Gender Equality Plan of the University of Žilina was developed within the framework of the CHANGE project. The Plan was implemented after an initial quantitative and qualitative analysis. Its focus became various **activities, with main aim to raise awareness of gender equality issues** primarily at the university itself. Among these activities were, for example, articles in the journal Reporter ("Spravodajca") of the University of Žilina, trainings, photo exhibition, presentations of research activities of successful female researchers, panel discussion, and others. Information obtained from primary analyses was combined with the data from Employee Satisfaction Survey carried out in summer 2019. It was the first survey of its kind conducted at the university, with a 39.7% participation rate. Based on this survey, a number of specific measures were adopted and incorporated into the collective



agreement, in particular those promoting **balancing of work and private life**. UNIZA has applied for a grant to establish a pre-school facility for the children of university community members to facilitate a better work-life balance. The university seeks to take a comprehensive approach to the issue at hand. This includes recommendations to consider parental responsibilities in the fulfilment of work obligations, maintaining contact with parents on maternity or parental leave, or inviting children to the university to participate in various activities during school holidays. UNIZA will continue to **monitor its gender equality status** and its development over time, adjusting monitoring indicators if necessary. The results of the monitoring will be reported to the management of the university and published in the Annual Activity Report of the University of Žilina.


Next step was the discussion on the **gender-sensitive language** and its adoption in the selected university documents, as well as the gradual introduction of the gender dimension in the teaching practice, highlighting the positive sides of this approach.

Our goal is to **institutionalize** the principles of equal opportunities, specifically the principles of gender equality, which will be represented by **Equal Opportunities Ambassador**, who will oversee the implementation of the submitted plan, update it if necessary, and regularly, but at least once a year, inform the university management about its implementation. The position of ambassador will be established to improve the coordination and evaluation of activities promoting equality and to monitor any issues which may need to be addressed. UNIZA is obliged to continue its established activities, such as trainings on unconscious bias, gender equality and gender-sensitive language for different target groups. Also, there are popularization activities directed at the academic community and beyond (including the promotion of informatics studies among high school female students as part of the "Aj Ty v IT" (Female Potential in ICT) initiative, **consideration of the gender dimension in teaching practice and its intensified expansion into the area of research**. Department for International Relations and Marketing shall develop a mass media training for researchers with the aim to influence the gender balance of public debates. Team CHANGE shall design a concept of mentoring programme primarily supporting women's career growth, which will be practically implemented.

UNIZA strictly rejects **any form of violence, either physical or psychological** (including sexual harassment pursuant to its definition in the Anti-discrimination Act). Members of the Ethics Committee, including staff members of Counselling and Career Centre, shall be re-trained. Complaints related to violence can be submitted not only in accordance with Article 11 of the Code of Ethics ("Submission of Complaints/Suggestions to the Ethics Committee and Ethics Committee Meetings") but also directly to the superior staff member, or the staff member of the Counselling and Career Centre, who will hand it over to the chairman/chairwoman of the Ethics Committee.

The university will continue to use the capacities acquired thanks to CHANGE throughout the whole project lifetime. Afterwards, the university shall draw from the knowledge base that was acquired during the project. Responsibility for the actions conducted by the CHANGE team shall be transferred to other organisational units (in accordance with the Overview of the Intended Actions chart). The finances necessary for the implementation of the ac-

tivities scheduled within the framework of the submitted Gender Equality Plan 2021-2025 shall be provided by the budgets of the UNIZA organizational units responsible for specific activities.



The management of the university believes that the implementation of the submitted plan will encourage the members of the UNIZA academic community to adopt more thorough principles of gender equality and to convert them to practice. We believe that the institutions that embrace diversity and strive to create suitable working and learning conditions for all, without the constraints of gender stereotypes, shall prove successful in the world of education, science, and research. Gender equality is therefore not only a value in itself, but: “the application of the principle of equal opportunities and gender equality contributes significantly to the quality of research and to the development and strengthening of scientific and technological innovations. Equal opportunities are associated with excellence – as well as with wider applicability of the results.”^[2] **The University of Žilina hereby reaffirms its commitment to create an environment of respect for all**, to actively promote cooperation and a vibrant UNIZA community that goes beyond the boundaries of a formal community formed only by an existing employment or study enrolment relationship.

In Žilina on 22 November 2021

prof. Ing. Jozef Jandačka, PhD
Rector





2. GENDER EQUALITY PLAN 2021 – 2025

A. Gender-Equal UNIZA

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE IMPLEMENTED	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	PERIODICITY/DATE DUE
Institutionalisation of gender equality	Establishment of the Equal Opportunities Ambassador position	Rector	March 2022
Enhancing gender sensitivity in the academic community	Trainings – unconscious bias and gender equality in academic practice	compulsory training for managers voluntary training for people interested in gender equality issues	Team CHANGE (subsequently: Department of Personnel and Social Work)
	Training: Gender equality and gender-sensitive language (target group: UNIZA Department for International Relations and Marketing, Counselling and Career Centre, Department of Personnel and Social Work)	CHANGE tím	every two years February 2022
Increasing the visibility of women in public space	Mass media communication training for researchers	Department for International Relations and Marketing	June 2022
Statistical evaluation of gender equality	Monitoring of the representation of women in the student and staff section of the academic community	staff section	Department of Personnel and Social Work
		student section	Department for Education
Support of women's career development	Mentoring programme with a minimum of 50% female representation	programme setting	Team CHANGE
		programme coordination	Team CHANGE (subsequently: Department of Personnel and Social Work)
Increased emphasis on a gender perspective in research and teaching activities	Gender dimension in pedagogical practice (training for new teaching staff)	Institute of Life-long Learning	continuously as part of the adaptive training of university teachers
	Gender dimension in research	Institute of Life-long Learning	
More women in STEM (IT) study programmes	Aj Ty v IT (Female Potential in ICT)	Faculty of Management Science and Informatics	once a year
More men in pedagogical study programmes	Educational workshop for high school boys	Faculty of Humanities	October 2023



2. GENDER EQUALITY PLAN 2021 – 2025

B. Reconciliation of work and private life

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE IMPLEMENTED	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	PERIODICITY/DATE DUE
Identifying the needs	Benefits	Reassessing and expanding the offer of benefits Benefits communication	Department of Personnel and Social Work several times a year
	Employee Satisfaction Survey	Quality Council in collaboration with Department of Personnel and Social Work	every two years
Creating a physical place for the children of employees	Establishment of a nursery for the children of employees	UNIZA management	September 2022
Inclusion of future generations at the university	Family Day at UNIZA	UNIZA management and Department for International Relations and Marketing	once a year
	Kids at the University (On the occasion of International Family Day on 15 May, employees can bring their kids to work to spend the day with them – both in the office and during lectures)	Equal Opportunities Ambassador in collaboration with Department for International Relations and Marketing	
Considering parental responsibilities in the fulfilment of work obligations	Recommendation to plan the beginning of meeting no later than at 2:00 PM	Duty to provide information: Equal Opportunities Ambassador	April 2022
	Upon agreement with the immediate superior, the possibility of part-time work for a parent providing permanent care for a child up to 15 years of age pursuant to the Labour Code ^[3] or for a person providing care for another person	Immediate superior in collaboration with the dean/rector	continuously throughout the year
Reinstatement of employees into the working environment	Maintaining contact with staff on maternity and parental leave (via department e-mails)	Secretariats of departments and individual workplaces	continuously throughout the year



2. GENDER EQUALITY PLAN 2021 – 2025

C. Physical and psychological violence

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE IMPLEMENTED	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	PERIODICITY/DATE DUE
Establishing a process for the prevention and elimination of physical and psychological violence	Training: Gender equality and sexual harassment at a higher education institution	Team CHANGE	April 2022
	Inclusion of the issue of physical and psychological violence in the training of new teaching staff	Institute of Lifelong Learning	October 2022
	Inclusion of the issue of physical and psychological violence in the training of new UNIZA staff	Department of Personnel and Social Work	September 2022
	Setting up the complaints process	Equal Opportunities Ambassador in collaboration with: Team CHANGE and UNIZA management	April 2022
	Monitoring of physical and psychological violence issue	Equal Opportunities Ambassador	once a year
	Monitoring the lighting conditions on the university campus	Operations Department	once a year



GLOSSARY OF USED TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS



Gender reflects socially and culturally determined role assigned to men and women. It is a set of characteristics, actions, and traits of how we shape and present ourselves as men and women. Gender is shaped by upbringing, education, environment and background, expectations, language, etc. and can be altered by time and culture. ^[6] Basically, it answers the question what it means to be a woman or a man in a specific historical and cultural background. So, considering the demands of this role, “being a man” meant something else in the 18th century as it means today. Likewise, there is a difference between “being a woman” in nowadays Slovak Republic and woman of specific country of a third world.



Gender equality or equality between women and men stands for equal social status of men and women in all spheres of public and private life; its objective is to ensure full integration of all women and men into society based on individual merit and abilities. On a broader scale, this translates into fair treatment of women and men and taking their specific needs and life situations into account. ^[2]



Gender-sensitive language makes women and men more visible due to the proper use of language means – for example, when addressing the teachers of elementary schools (85% of which are female), instead of using only the masculine form of denomination (“učitelia”), both of the forms (the feminine and the masculine-“učiteľky, učitelia”) are used (respectively in this case only the feminine form “učiteľky”); the language does not use the masculine gender to refer to a profession when it is practised by a woman; ^[7] When thinking about the gender-sensitive language, the conclusions are drawn from the fact that language does not only define the reality, but also participates in its formation. For gender-sensitive language, the denominations gender-correct, symmetrical, fair, neutral, and competent language are also used. ^[4]



Gender-sensitive research considers the differences between men and women in all aspects of the research, from an initial idea, through formulating research questions, objectives and methodologies to the outcomes and presentation of results. ^[5] In practice, it may mean, for example, investigation of the efficacy of a particular drug on male and female bodies, or greater consideration of female physiology when conducting car crash tests.



Gender-sensitive teaching pays attention to gender differences both in creating syllabus and in class conduct. ^[5] Due to the frequent misinterpretation of the principles of gender equality and equality of women and men presented incorrectly as policies that deny differences of sexes, we provide an additional explanation of the term not included in the text:

Equality of women and men means equal perception, support, and participation of both genders in all areas of public and private life. It denotes equality not only *de jure*, but also *de facto*. Equality of women and men does not imply uniformity of sexes nor an understanding of men’s living conditions as a general ,norm‘. ^[7]

DIRaM (in Slovak OMVaM): Department for International Relations and Marketing

ILL (in Slovak ÚCV): Institute of Lifelong Learning of the University of Žilina

FH (in Slovak FHV): Faculty of Humanities of the University of Žilina



RECOMMENDED LITERATURE

- [1] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, p. 2.
- [2] National Gender Equality Strategy in the Slovak Republic for the Years 2014-2019, p. 16, 5, 7.
- [3] Labour Code, Section 164, par. 2.
- [4] Cviková J., Juráňová J., Kobová L., Maďarová Z., Ostertágová A., Satinská L., Vrábľová J., Terkanič M. (2014): Ako používať rodovo vyvážený jazyk (Usage of Gender-balanced Language) Možnosti, otázky, príklady, s. 5, 4. (Possibilities, Questions, Examples, p. 5, 4).
- [5] Trbovc J. M., Hofman A. (2015): Toolkit for Integrating Gender-Sensitive Approach into Research and Teaching (GARCIA Working Papers 6), p. 4.
- [6] Gender Equality: <https://www.gender.gov.sk/aktivita/temy/zakladne-pojmy/rod-gender/>
- [7] Glossary of gender terminology, Equality of women and men: <http://glosar.aspekt.sk/default.aspx?smi=1&ami=1<r=r&vid=103>

