

## INTEGRATING GENDER EQUALITY INTO RPOS AND UNIVERSITIES

**Gender & Diversity Controlling**

**Goethe University Frankfurt**

**Germany - 2010**

### COORDINATING AND MONITORING FOR EFFECTIVE DECENTRAL ACTION

#### Summary

Goethe University Frankfurt is committed to promote gender equality within its organisation. After realising that the level of commitment to design and implement gender equality measures differed significantly between the decentral units, and recognising the need for centralising information on gender equality initiatives in the faculties, Goethe University Frankfurt established the *Gender & Diversity Controlling* in 2010. The establishment of this structure was foreseen in the university's gender action plan covering the period between 2009 and 2013 (*Frauenförderplan 2009-2013*).

The *Gender & Diversity Controlling* aims at monitoring developments with respect to gender (in)equalities across the university, as well as at providing guidance and support, and monitoring gender equality-related efforts within the 16 faculties (*Fachbereiche*) of Goethe University Frankfurt. More specifically, the Gender & Diversity Controlling coordinator is in charge of steering the controlling/monitoring procedures and of managing the compilation of gender & diversity statistics within the university.

#### Promoting gender equality and diversity at Goethe University Frankfurt

Since 2010, in each of the 16 faculties it is mandatory to set up a Gender Equality & Diversity Action Plan (GEDAP) every two years and to comply with reporting requirements. The action plans are linked with target agreements (*Zielvereinbarungen*) that are issued between the university management and the faculty management. The process of setting up Gender Equality & Diversity Action Plans is steered by the Gender & Diversity Controlling coordinator.

#### The Gender & Diversity Controlling unit: combining monitoring and support tasks

Within the Equal Opportunities Office there are several strategic and/or service-oriented fields of activity, including the Gender & Diversity Controlling. The coordinator Gender & Diversity Controlling is a member of the Equal Opportunities Office, who cooperates closely with the university's central reporting and controlling unit. This position was established in 2010. The coordinator is supported by a team to undertake the controlling/monitoring tasks. This team is composed of coordinators of other fields of activity of the Equality Opportunities Office, namely 'Gender Consulting', 'Diversity Consulting' and 'Family Service'. The coordinator and her team guide the faculties' representatives through the following four-step cycle: (1) analysis of the status quo and needs assessment; (2) planning of gender equality measures addressing the identified needs; (3) implementation of these measures; and (4) assessment of successes and shortcomings of the measures, as well as issuing recommendations.

In addition to guiding and monitoring the assessment and further development of the Gender Equality & Diversity Plans, the Gender & Diversity Controlling unit provides services that are sought by management staff, administrators and researchers. This unit carries out Gender Equality Monitoring of the share of female and male staff in different positions and in different decision-making bodies, amongst others.

### **Clear procedures for a smooth process**

The Gender and Diversity Action Plans at faculty level cover a period of two years. After these two years, reporting takes place. In order to ensure that the Gender & Diversity Controlling unit can thoroughly provide advice to all 16 faculties, the reporting period is not scheduled for all of them at the same time.

As a first step in the process, the Gender & Diversity Controlling coordinator provides the faculties with sex-disaggregated statistics, tools to assist them in the reporting and planning process, and further relevant material if deemed necessary. The faculties are expected to analyse the status quo, to assess existing measures and to design their next Gender and Diversity Action Plan within three months. At least one Gender & Diversity Consulting meeting takes place with each faculty, complemented by less formalised forms of exchange. During this meeting, the Gender & Diversity Controlling coordinators, as well as experts from 'Gender Consulting' and the 'Family Service', provide a first feedback and advice with regard to identified needs and promising initiatives. This meeting is also aimed at finding a shared understanding about the priority areas of intervention (as usually resources are limited). These experts are brought together in order to make use of the available in-house expertise in different fields of action. They support the faculties in setting up tailor-made measures addressing the identified individual needs. It is up to the faculties to decide who takes part in these meetings from their side. The type of representatives chosen by each faculty differs significantly. This is partly due to the varied sizes, and the administrative and managerial structures of the different faculties. Typically, the following representatives take part of these meetings: the Dean or his/her deputies, the Head of the faculty's administration or Head or member of the faculty's quality management unit, the coordinator of study/teaching issues within the faculty (who is most likely a member of the research/ teaching staff, and the faculty's women's representative (who may be a researcher and/or a member of the administrative staff).

The faculties are responsible for designing their next Gender and Diversity Action Plans following guidelines and templates. Once they submit the action plans to the Gender & Diversity Controlling coordinator, the unit assesses the plans and issues a comprehensive report. Subsequently, the University Senate's Commission on Gender Equality and Diversity (*Senatskommission Frauenförderung, Gleichstellung und Diversität*) receives the action plans together with the assessment made by the Gender & Diversity Controlling unit and provides a written feedback to the respective faculties.

For the assessment of the Gender and Diversity Action Plans, the quality criteria defined in the Research-Oriented Standards on Gender Equality of the German Research Foundation (DFG) are applied, namely consistency, transparency, competitiveness and forward-looking approach, and competency. These criteria are complemented by the following two criteria: the extent to which the measures fit the context and the objectives (i.e. if they respond adequately to the problems

identified); and how the measures address the needs of their target groups orientation. The faculties have the power to decide on the modification of their action plans based on the feedback received. Having overcome some initial resistances, this process is well-established and accepted by now. However, subtle resistance remains among a few stakeholders that is shown in a low level of cooperation with the coordinator and the disregard of advice. The resistance is likely to be rooted in the concern of some researchers that such controlling instruments restrict their freedom in decision-making and research, and impose labour-intensive administrative duties. Yet, most stakeholders tend to accept and appreciate the controlling/monitoring process once they are more familiar with it and its aims. To give an example, a broad acceptance of the initiative is more likely if the objectives of the controlling/monitoring that are to be communicated are aligned with the university's and faculties' objectives, e.g. those related to excellence.

### **Useful tools to support steering and reporting**

Several tools have been developed in order to guide and assist actors at faculty level throughout the process. These tools are continuously being updated and adjusted and have become well-accepted among their target group.

At the beginning of each phase of reporting activities, the Gender & Diversity Controlling coordinator provides the faculties with the following tools:

- Guidelines on how to carry out a baseline and a needs assessment, how to define priority objectives and how to identify target groups, together with a reporting template;
- A template for documenting the assessment of measures implemented regarding a reporting period;
- A template for developing new measures to be implemented in the upcoming reporting period, including the definition of objectives, target groups, costs and responsibilities;
- A toolkit featuring exemplary measures at faculty level.

In addition, the coordinator prepares and shares sex-disaggregated statistics including, amongst others, comparisons over time and an assessment of the achievement of the action plans' objectives.

### **A convincing approach showing first successes**

After the first two controlling/monitoring rounds, the Gender & Diversity Controlling prepared a report to analyse the results and effects achieved so far, including an assessment of strong and weak points of the procedures. This 'Self-Evaluation' was then reviewed by the university Senate's Commission on Gender Equality and Diversity. Based on this review, some amendments were made to the procedure, which have been implemented in third round.

The Gender & Diversity Controlling approach and procedures have proven very promising at Goethe University Frankfurt. They have met the needs for central steering and monitoring, while granting the faculties freedom to design and implement tailor-made action plans. Gender & Diversity Controlling makes gender equality-related efforts within the faculties more binding and supports informed action with regard to gender equality. The different elements and services provided by the Gender & Diversity Controlling unit are considered to contribute to the acceptance and success of the controlling/monitoring procedures.

This structure is embedded in a wider strategy and in the organisation, which ensures its continuity and sustainability. It adopts a participatory and inclusive approach by ensuring the involvement of the University's Senate, faculties' representatives, along with other structures of the university (such as experts from Gender Consulting and the 'Family Service'). The controlling/monitoring procedures and tools are good for learning how to act upon existing inequalities. The Gender & Diversity Controlling model designed and implemented at Goethe University Frankfurt is likely to be transferable to other Universities (certain adaptations may have to be considered depending on each specific context).

At the time of the third reporting period that was being undertaken in the autumn of 2015, it could be observed that the Gender Equality and Diversity Action Plans at faculty level have been significantly developed and advanced in comparison to previous reporting periods. Gender Equality & Diversity measures tend to have a larger scope than before and are more likely to be successfully implemented. The active involvement of a variety of stakeholders in gender equality-related efforts within the faculties has increased over the years. Furthermore, the coordination of the process by the Gender & Diversity Controlling coordinator ensures an overview and understanding of the developments and initiatives in different, autonomous faculties. This controlling/monitoring approach enables the exchange of ideas, and has the potential to transform organisational structures and procedures.

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## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Website on Gender & Diversity Controlling at Goethe University Frankfurt:

<http://www.uni-frankfurt.de/39809233/aufgaben> (in German)

Informative flyer about Equality at Goethe University Frankfurt:

<http://www.goethe-university-frankfurt.de/50824258/Flyer-Equality-Goethe-University.pdf>

More information about the Women's Representative and the Equal Opportunities Office:

<http://www.goethe-university-frankfurt.de/50611397/Equality>