

Gender Equality in Academia and Research

Integration of the sex/gender dimension into research and teaching content

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The inclusion of the sex/gender dimension means that differences, whether biological or social, are taken into account in research and teaching. Our knowledge is the basis on which future generations will build their societies. It is therefore crucial that the **knowledge** that is **created through research** and **transferred through education** is free of gender bias.

Looking at potential sex and/or gender differences and at issues related to gender equality generates added value in terms of research excellence, rigour, reproducibility and creativity; brings in-depth understanding of all people's needs, behaviours and attitudes; and enhances the societal relevance of research and innovation (R & I). Integrating the gender dimension into educational activities, including teaching curricula and public engagement, is also essential for the proper training of the next generations of researchers and innovators.

The integration of the gender dimension addresses the **incorporation of sex and/or gender analysis through the entire R & I cycle**. This includes setting research priorities through defining concepts, formulating research questions, developing methodologies, gathering and analysing sex-disaggregated data, evaluating and reporting results, and transferring them to markets as innovations and products. The integration of the gender dimension is relevant in various R & I fields.

Consider these measures for addressing the issue in your gender equality plan

The gender equality plan (GEP) should consider how the gender dimension will be incorporated into the content of research or educational activities and into the outputs of the organisation:

the GEP can **set out the organisation's commitment** to incorporating gender equality in its R & I priorities;

the GEP can **establish processes** for ensuring that sex and gender analysis is considered in the design and outputs of research and teaching;

the GEP can **set out the provision of support and capacities for researchers** to develop methodologies that incorporate the sex/gender dimension;

the GEP can **set out the support and capacity provided for teachers** to develop curricula that incorporate the sex/gender dimension.

Moreover, the following measures might be considered:

integration of the sex/gender dimension into the monitoring of research output and programme outcomes, for example the number of project-related peer-reviewed publications and research projects that include a sex/gender dimension, the number of innovations that can be classified as gender sensitive, and the number of applications, high-quality applications and funded projects that have a sex/gender dimension and that fully take sex/gender into account in their methodological approach;

awareness-raising activities among researchers and prospective applicants about the sex/gender dimension of R & I, for instance through academic conferences, briefings and training opportunities;

integration of the sex/gender dimension as a criterion in the quality assurance and approval processes for research and teaching programmes, including a review of whether the sex/gender dimension has been appropriately considered in their design;

establishment of a dedicated department or interdisciplinary research institute within the organisation for coordinated and institutionalised gender research activities in order to evidence and inform the state of the art in gender research knowledge and practice;

establishment of respective research programmes, licences, master's and doctoral programmes, and accreditation procedures.

R & I organisations that distribute funding might consider the following questions in their GEP.

Do funding programmes encourage or require prospective applicants to consider the sex/gender dimension in their work, including the scope of their research inquiry and the

potential impact of their research results on different groups?

Do strategic research funding objectives include a sex/gender dimension? Are there specific calls or opportunities that are designed to stimulate research around the gender dimension across different disciplines?

Do funding decisions have processes for identifying or flagging where sex and/or gender analysis should be considered and mechanisms for evaluating how research projects account for the sex/gender dimension, as part of evaluation criteria for research excellence and impact?

Is sufficient expertise incorporated into decision-making processes, including peer-review processes and panels, to assess the sex/gender dimension of project applications or in other types of research assessment exercises?

Examples of documents and guidelines are provided in the **tab 'Tools and resources'**.

Get some tips on what to consider when implementing measures

Consider the following points on integrating a sex/gender dimension into research and teaching.

A subject is considered sex- / **gender-relevant** when it can be expected that its findings affect (groups of) women and men, or girls and boys, differently.

Integrating the gender dimension in the research content requires the **consideration of sex and gender aspects throughout all stages of the research cycle**: in the definition of research questions and hypotheses, in the selection of research methods, during the running of research activities, and in the analysis and reporting of results.

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) research topics often appear to be gender-neutral. In such cases, the following questions can be asked about aspects that are not gender-neutral: Who decides on the research agenda? Whose interests and needs are served with the research? Who will be the users of the knowledge that is to be produced? Who can benefit and in what way from the research? It is always relevant to produce research that has a high societal value and can provide answers to societal needs.

When including the gender dimension in research projects, it is often necessary to broaden the perspective and also consider other dimensions of diversity. To that end, an **intersectional approach** can be helpful. Read more about intersectionality [here](#).

Teachers' and lecturers' interactions with students are unconsciously influenced by **gender stereotypes**. Young people also hold stereotypical beliefs about women's and men's 'natural' abilities. Countering such stereotypes allows everyone to engage with

science in all its aspects without constraints set by ungrounded preconceptions.

In order to get more detailed information and guidance on how to integrate the gender dimension into research and teaching, check out the resources provided in the **tab 'Tools and resources'**.

Get inspired by what other organisations have implemented

Here are some **examples of measures** implemented in other organisations (note that they will open in a new window). Some of the examples focus on research funding but may also be relevant to internal resource allocation in universities and other research organisations:

[description of the research programme of the University of Latvia for 2015–2020](#) ,

University of Latvia, Latvia,

[equal funding of innovations](#), Vinnova, Sweden,

[funding advisement](#), Technische Universität Wien, Austria,

[gender in research fellowship](#), Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (ZonMw), the Netherlands,

[Gender4STEM](#), Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology, Luxembourg,

[GenderResearch4COVID-19 support](#), Foundation for Science and Technology, and Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, Portugal,

[Julie Hamáčková award](#), University of Chemistry and Technology, Czechia,

[model for equal distribution of research funds](#), Kristianstad University, Sweden,

[gender dimension in research content as a criterion for the evaluation of research proposals](#), Technology Agency of the Czech Republic, Czechia,

[various activities to promote and build capacity for gender mainstreaming in university curricula and research](#), University of Malta, Malta,

[Women and Science Committee](#), Spanish National Research Council, Spain.

You can find further inspirational examples in the following sources.

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) provides a section on [good practices](#) for various relevant topics.

The EU-funded project 'Promoting gender balance and inclusion in research, innovation and training' (PLOTINA) provides a [library of actions](#) [↗](#), focusing on issues such as career progression and work–life balance, but also the integration of sex and gender in

teaching curricula. How to integrate the gender dimension into research is also shown, using [case studies](#) from different disciplines.

Although limited to the members of the 'Effective gender equality in research and academia' (EGERA) consortium (seventh framework programme, 2014–2017), [Collected Good Practices in Introducing Gender in Curricula](#) provides useful and well-documented examples of good practices in mainstreaming gender in academic curricula.

The short report by the project 'Gender equality in engineering through communication and commitment' (GEECCO) entitled [Integrating the gender dimension in the content of research and innovation](#) uses examples from the fields of energy transition, robotics, medicine and product development to show why it is important to take the gender dimension into account.

These sustainable measures were already mentioned in the first version of the gender equality in academia and research (GEAR) tool and are still in place.

If you want to learn more about how you can adjust these measures for your own purposes and how to implement them through a GEP, read the step-by-step guide for [research organisations, universities and public bodies](#), or the step-by-step guide for [research funding organisations](#).