

Gender Equality in Academia and Research

Irène Curie Fellowship programme (ICF) – Eindhoven University of Technology (NL)

TYPE OF ORGANISATION: University

HORIZON EUROPE GEP ACTION FIELD: Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

COUNTRY: Netherlands

In the summer of 2019, the Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e) began its Irène Curie Fellowship (ICF) Programme. The Programme opened up academic jobs exclusively to women applicants for six months in a bid to achieve a greater balance between women and men in academic positions. Although widely supported, the measure also met with some criticism. In May 2020, it was halted following a ruling by the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights (Het College voor de Rechten van de Mens, CRM), which stated that TU/e's approach of opening up jobs exclusively to women was disproportionate. Since the start of the ICF Programme, 57 women have been hired as permanent academic staff at TU/e: four full professors, two associate professors and 51 assistant professors. In addition, 63 men were hired. This means that the growth in the number of women in academic positions at TU/e doubled, which was an unprecedented shift. The ICF Programme resumed on 1 May 2021, with the same goal of having women make up at least 30 % of academic staff by 2024. Its new format has been endorsed by the CRM, going so far as to provide room for customisation in job groups where the numbers of women academics are far behind. Within the adjusted ICF Programme, 30–50 % of permanent academic jobs will be offered. For each position that becomes vacant, the existing gender ratio will be taken into account. If the percentage of women is less than 35 %, the vacancy will be considered for inclusion in the ICF Programme. The Programme will run until at least 2024 and will be evaluated annually. As an Irène Curie Fellow, women receive a five-year tenure-track position as assistant professor. After a maximum of four years, a decision is made on tenure. If women already have a more senior profile, they can apply as associate or full professor. As an Irène Curie Fellow, women are offered the opportunity to establish an independent research programme in collaboration with colleagues at the university, and at national and international institutions. They are also expected to contribute to the curriculum of the department. Fellows receive a substantial start-up package to start their research and, for example, hire a PhD candidate.

Further information

TU/e recruits first 35 top female scientists with Irène Curie Fellows program