

Gender Equality in Academia and Research

Estonia

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN RESEARCH

Legal framework

The [Gender Equality Act](#), adopted in 2004 and last amended in June 2014, includes relevant references related to the promotion of gender equality in research:

§ 10. Promotion of gender equality in education and training

Educational and research institutions and other organisations delivering training shall ensure equal treatment of men and women in vocational guidance, education, professional and vocational development and re-training. The curricula, study materials used and research conducted shall facilitate the abolishment of unequal treatment of women and men and promote equality.

§ 11. Employers as promoters of gender equality

(1) Upon the promotion of equal treatment of men and women, an employer shall: 1) support that both women and men apply for vacant positions and that persons of both sexes are employed to fill vacant positions; 2) ensure that the number of women and men hired to different positions is as balanced as possible and ensure equal treatment on their promotion; 3) create working conditions which are suitable for both women and men and enhance the reconciliation of work and family life, taking into account the needs of employees; 4) ensure that employees are protected from gender-based harassment and sexual harassment in the working environment; 5) inform employees of the rights ensured by this Act; 6) regularly provide relevant information to employees and/or their representatives concerning equal treatment of women and men in the organisation and measures taken to promote equality.

(2) An employer shall collect sex-disaggregated statistical data concerning employment that allow, if necessary, the relevant institutions to monitor and assess whether the principle of equal treatment is complied with in employment relationships. The procedure for the collection of data and a list of data shall be established by the Government of the Republic by a regulation.

Policy framework

The Estonian Research and Development and Innovation [Strategy 2014-2020 Knowledge-based Estonia](#) was initiated by the Ministry of Education and Research in 2012. It includes four measures, one of which – labelled Measure 1. Ensuring the high level and diversity of research – deals in the subsection 1.6. also with gender equality:

“Develop a career model which supports cooperation with enterprises and individual development possibilities, encourages occupational mobility, incl. in the entrepreneurship sector, and motivates young people to choose the profession of a researcher or an engineer. Support the openness of competitions for academic positions to foreign researchers. Monitor that equal opportunities, including gender balance, be ensured when filling positions, allocating grants and forming decision-making bodies”.

Other stimulatory initiatives

Until October 2015, no stimulatory initiatives have been put in place in Estonia.

Key actors

The [Ministry of Education and Research](#) implements national research policy, organises the financing and evaluation of the activities of R&D institutions and coordinates international research cooperation at the national level. The Ministry is also responsible for the planning, coordination, execution and monitoring of research policy related to the activities of universities and research institutes. The Ministry is also in charge of implementing gender equality policies in public research. The Minister of Education and Research is advised by the Research Policy Committee.

INITIATIVES FOR GENDER EQUALITY BY RESEARCH PERFORMING ORGANISATIONS

From 2014 to 2016, a group of Estonian universities – Tallinn University, University of Tartu, Tallinn University of Technology and Estonian Business School – is participating in the project ['Development of the career model of researchers in order to support the women's career path'](#). This project is supported by Norway Grants for 2009-2014 for Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance. The project, led by Tallinn University, aims at mapping the key conditions for gender sensitive recruitment and promotion within the academy and at establishing a programme, based on experiences from abroad, to support young women researchers' career. The programme will be pilot-tested in Tallinn University. More specifically, the project is looking at the mechanisms to promote career planning for young (women) researchers and it seeks to identify key factors in the process. It considers not only young scientists but also those responsible for recruitment and career promotion. The project also monitors the situation of gender equality in the participating universities. The project is engaging existing structures of the institution (e.g. human resources department, and persons at different levels of leadership) to carry out the tasks. Gender equality plans promoted by universities and research organisations have not been set up in Estonia yet.

RELEVANT EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES

Agreement on Good Practice in the Quality of Estonia Universities

This agreement, initiated in 2011 by the Rectors' Conference, representing all universities in Estonia, specifies the duties and tasks to be undertaken by participating higher education institutions. Point 10 of the Agreement refers to the implementation of the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (which includes gender equality principles). According to the agreement, the universities recognise the main principles of the Charter and the Code. Universities will improve and strengthen their human resources in science following the general principles, requirements and values to develop a researcher career and an attractive, sustainable and open labour market. The practice has remained declarative in its content and there are no tangible results to show yet.