



UNIVERSITY *of* NICOSIA

**UNIVERSITY OF NICOSIA  
GENDER EQUALITY PLAN (GEP)**

**2022-2025**

**As approved by the Senate on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2022.**

## **Introduction**

This document presents the University's Gender Equality Plan (GEP). It should be considered a dynamic plan that will adapt to the needs of the University of Nicosia (UNIC) and society.

Removing barriers to equality in the workplace is a strategic priority for UNIC. We recognise that gender equity drives education excellence, matches student needs and enables us to attract and retain top industry talent. Therefore, we offer employees the opportunity to develop, progress, and fulfil their career aspirations based on their talent and motivation, not their gender identity, gender characteristics, expression, or sexual orientation.

Gender equality intends to include people with various identities, including but not limited to cisgender women, cisgender men, trans men, trans women, and non-binary people. We must be an inclusive and diverse University, and, where needed, we must ensure we foster new mindsets to enable this to happen. We believe every employee's responsibility to act for change will allow us to become a genuinely gender-balanced University.

The GEP is a set of commitments and actions that aim to promote gender equity and gender balance policies as the first step towards absolute equality in an organisation through structural change. GEP aims to promote gender equality through the sustainable transformation of organisational processes, culture and structure that produce and sustain gender imbalances and inequalities. GEP addresses an organisation's visible structure and practices through policies and procedures and considers how to evolve espoused values (what people say they believe) and underlying assumptions (unconscious beliefs, thoughts, and feelings), including in the production of knowledge and its applications.

## **Gender Equality at UNIC**

Gender equality has been considered a matter of importance at UNIC since its foundation in 2007 by establishing a Code of Conduct to safeguard all its employees' equality and equal treatment. The University views harassment and bullying as unacceptable. The 'Institutional Values and Code of Practice' notes that faculty and staff must not get involved in anything that could be perceived as sexual, racial or gender-based harassment. Neither should they behave in a manner that may be perceived as intimidating, threatening, oppressive, or bullying.

In December 2021, UNIC was certified as an Equality Employer by the National Certification Body to implement Good Practices on Gender Equality in the Working Environment. This certification is awarded to organisations that have adopted policies that promote gender equality, providing amongst others:

- equal training and development opportunities,
- a work-life-balance,
- equal pay between men and women for the same work or work of equal value.

UNIC is an equal opportunity employer and student recruiter. Currently:

- 68.5% of our students are female,
- 53.5% of our faculty and staff are female,
- 42% of management positions are held by women.

## Statement of Commitment

UNIC is committed to promoting equal treatment and opportunities at all levels and activities. As an employer, we are also committed to equal treatment and respect for the diversity and intersectionality of our employees. Our goal is to integrate these commitments into our day-to-day dealings and interactions with our students, staff, and stakeholders.

Gender discrimination will not be tolerated, and we will strengthen our commitment through:

- Promoting equal opportunities and diversity.
- Encouraging the recruitment of teams that are currently under-represented in the University or the various Departments.
- Promoting an environment free of discrimination, bullying and harassment, and addressing behaviours that lead to such phenomena.
- Recognising and appreciating the contribution of each individual.
- Providing support and encouragement to employees to develop their careers and increase their contribution by enhancing their skills and competencies.

## UNIC GEP (2022-2025)

UNIC's GEP as presented below addresses the overall goals presented in the preceding sections. The University has received on 16 December 2021 the local distinction of "Employer of Equality" by the Cyprus Ministry of Labour. This obliges the University to:

- continuously develop its Human Resources;
- integrate gender equality considerations into official University policies and practices;
- raise awareness of gender equality issues;
- cultivate a collective culture with zero tolerance for sexual harassment and violence;
- and reinforce gender dimensions in managing work-life balance. All gender equality interventions have been incorporated within the "UNIC Gender Equality Plan".

In compliance with the Horizon Europe GEP eligibility criterion, the UNIC GEP aims to meet the four mandatory process-related requirements, as follows:

1. **Public document:** The UNIC GEP is publicly available on the University's website and signed by the top management and actively communicated within the institution.
2. **Dedicated resources:** The University has set up a Committee tasked with reviewing the current Gender Equality measures at UNIC, setting out future actions and measuring their progress annually.
3. **Data collection and monitoring:** The Human Resources and Academic Affairs Departments have the relevant systems to collect and track data related to Gender Equality. This data will be monitored annually to report on the progress made towards the actions mentioned above and to put forward future steps.
4. **Training:** A series of training needs have been identified and will be implemented throughout the GEP, targeting faculty, staff and students.

The five UNIC objectives along with their respective measures and actions are presented in the following sections:

1. Reinforce Gender Equality Awareness among Faculty, Staff and Students
2. Cultivate a Gender Equality Culture
3. Foster Work-Life Balance
4. Eliminate Gender Pay Gap
5. Integrate Gender Dimension into Teaching and Research Content

## **1. REINFORCE GENDER EQUALITY AWARENESS AMONG FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS**

### **Objective**

Build awareness among faculty, staff, and students about the importance of gender equality and the University's gender equality activities.

### **Actions**

- Performing periodic consultation with faculty, staff, and students.
- Conducting focus groups with representatives of all the university departments to increase awareness of gender issues in the University environment.
- Investigating gender through an annual employee engagement survey.
- Organising training courses on gender equality and diversity management for University employees. Examples of such workshops include the free UN Women certificate course on "I Know Gender 1-2-3".
- Introducing continuous training for managers at different levels on GEP policies and implementation.
- Offering free legal advice by the University for any employee.
- Inviting expert speakers to discuss issues relating to gender equality and encourage students to attend, with the aim of having 80% of students attending events by 2025.
- Organising webinars and seminars on gender equality.
- Sharing online resources (e.g., films) promoting gender equality.

### **Responsible Units**

- Office of the Senior Vice Rector
- Learning and Development Units (faculty and staff)
- Office of the Vice President of Human Resources
- Department of Student Affairs
- Student Union and/or Student Clubs

## **2. CULTIVATE A GENDER EQUALITY CULTURE**

### **Objective 2.1**

Build an organizational culture on gender equality.

### **Actions**

- Establishing procedures for systematic collection of gender-related quantitative and qualitative data. Regular reporting of best practices to be carried out by a defined staff/student/department lead.
- Preparing an annual report and annual action plan based on data analysis.
- Organizing promotional activities and communication events inside and outside the University to promote gender equality and diversity.
- Introducing and defining, in separate policy plans, the short-term and long-term practical applications.
- Integrating and implementing an ad hoc annual informative seminar for students.
- Assisting faculty and staff with resolving issues relating to caregiving (of children, elderly relatives, or others).

- Continuously improving the anticipated state of gender equality at the University. This can be measured by tracking the percentage of satisfaction on gender balance issues, with a goal of 85% by 2025.

### **Responsible Units**

- Office of the Senior Vice Rector
- Office of the Vice President of Human Resources
- Office of the Vice President for Marketing

### **Objective 2.2**

Develop recruitment and career progression framework that takes into consideration gender equality.

### **Actions**

- Overseeing hiring and promotion processes through data analysis and suggesting further activities to foster gender equality within the University.
- Ensuring that the hiring process of new faculty members results in gender balance.
- Improving women's representation in managerial positions.
- Further promoting good practice and the role-model principle for women by, for example, showcasing the outstanding work of women at the University.
- Offering training programs to increase the visibility of positive examples in higher education institutions.
- Offering training programs to develop management skills to improve gender equality.
- Offering free legal advice by the University for any employee.
- Adopting a gender-fair institutional/administrative language. Use of inclusive language in all official documents of the University and all external communication channels (website, social media, etc.).
- Establishing gender-neutral policies that remove potential barriers for candidates.
- Improving gender balance in leadership and decision-making bodies and committees.

### **Responsible Units**

- Rectorate
- Senate
- Council
- Office of the Vice President of Human Resources
- Offices of the Deans of Schools
- Academic and Administrative Bodies and Committees

### **Objective 2.3**

Ensure that the University of Nicosia is free from sexual harassment and discrimination.

### **Actions**

- Promoting good practices to reduce instances of sexual harassment and discrimination.
- Organising awareness seminars on discrimination and prevention of sexual harassment that all faculty and staff should have attended by 2025.
- Enhancing institutional protocol for reporting instances of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, and how any such instances will be investigated, and

sanctions/disciplinary measures applied, acting upon sexual harassment and violence cases, and preventing secondary victimization.

- Communicating, constantly and firmly, the University's position that all kind of sexual harassment is intolerable; thus, establishing a culture of zero tolerance.
- Ensuring information and psychological support is provided to victims or witnesses of sexual harassment.

#### **Responsible Units**

- Senate
- Office of the Senior Vice Rector
- Office of the Vice President of Human Resources
- Disciplinary Committees
- Centre for Therapy, Training & Research (KESY)

### **3. FOSTER WORK-LIFE BALANCE**

#### **Objective**

Build a work environment that enables employees to balance their professional and personal duties and responsibilities.

#### **Actions**

- Providing flexible working hours and flexible working conditions at the University.
- Promoting hybrid working modes, which include both remote and physical working.
- Designing and implementing Health and Wellbeing practices that defuse the adverse effect of repetitive work and workplace stress on mental health.
- Introducing an annual report on the use of the opportunities provided and measuring levels of satisfaction with these.

#### **Responsible Units**

- Office of the Vice President of Human Resources
- Health and Safety Office

### **4. ELIMINATE GENDER PAY GAP**

#### **Objective**

Minimise income inequality between men and women.

#### **Actions/Activities**

- Preparing an annual gender pay gap report by gathering quantitative and qualitative data regarding employee income.
- Developing action plans to increase gender equality in income for equal qualifications and work aiming to minimise or eliminate the gender pay gap.
- Reducing the wage difference between equally qualified men-women to less than 10% by 2025.

## **Responsible Units**

- Council
- Office of the Vice President of Human Resources
- Office of the Vice President of Finance

## **5. INTEGRATE GENDER DIMENSION INTO TEACHING AND RESEARCH CONTENT**

### **Objective**

Integrate gender dimension into study programmes.

### **Actions**

- Working with faculty members to strengthen the gender dimension in curricula and research.
- Producing guidelines and conducting workshops for faculty on how to integrate the topics of gender equality and diversity into curricula, course structures and teaching methods.
- Producing generic educational material suitable for courses at all academic levels: undergraduate and postgraduate.
- Increasing the number of study programme courses that integrate gender equality topics.
- Ensuring that the number of courses/seminars that address gender balance issues offered to students are available to at least 60% of students by 2025.

### **Responsible Units**

- Senior Vice-Rector, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, School Deans, Department Heads
- e-Learning Pedagogical Support Unit (ePSU)
- Pedagogical Support Unit (PSU)
- Human Resources Department