

Approved by Rector's directive No 51 of 18.11.2021

## **Gender Equality Principles and Action Plan for 2021-2025**

### **Introduction**

This document describes the principles, objectives and action plan applied at Tallinn University of Technology to promote gender balance and equality of employees in 2021-2025.

The action plan addresses the most important challenges related to work carried out at the university in the coming years to ensure gender equality. The action plan sets out the responsibilities for the activities carried out and the implementation of the measures laid down in the action plan. The action plan must be applied in line with the regulations in force at the university.

The targets related to the achievement of gender equality and balance have been addressed in previous activities and regulations of the university. Continuous staff analysis is carried out and the procedure for handling cases of gender equality has been updated. The Conciliation Procedure signed in 2021 establishes a transparent, harmonised process and appeal mechanism for resolving all equal treatment and workplace conflicts at the university. Nevertheless, the university is faced with a number of challenges, which are also reflected in the surveys conducted among the university staff and the analysis of the terms and conditions of employment contracts entered into with the staff:

- the gender structure of lower-level positions in the academic career model does not pass on to the senior-level academic positions, the proportion of women decreases at higher steps of the academic ladder; 59% of women in academic positions feel that the university does not provide support in shaping their career path;
- as the proportion of women at higher steps of the academic ladder is decreasing, it is necessary to analyse the reasons for this and, inter alia, to prepare an action plan to reduce the gender pay gap;
- although the proportion of women in non-academic positions is significantly higher than in academic positions, there is still a decline in the proportion of women in career progression; the proportion of women in senior and middle management positions is lower;
- women's limited access to participation in decision-making bodies and academic staff recruitment and evaluation committees due to the organisational culture.

### **Principles of gender equality and balance at TalTech**

The activities in the field of equal treatment carried out at Tallinn University of Technology promote equal treatment of the university staff as a whole regardless of their gender, nationality, language, religion and beliefs, functional abilities, sexual orientation, gender identity and age.

The university's Strategic Plan 2021–2025 attaches importance to the promotion of gender equality: the university family is tight-knit and family-friendly and fosters employees' personal fulfilment valuing diversity as the cornerstone of academic freedom and the driving force of breakthrough research and innovation. For that reason, the university makes a sustained effort to ensure gender equality in compliance with academic ethics and to create equal career opportunities for employees, pay fair remuneration, provide equal opportunities for participation in the management of the university and establish a transparent process of handling discrimination cases. The achievement of equality between the genders requires having a long-term, genuine desire to bring about change.

Gender balance leads to greater diversity in the development of the university and strengthens the credibility of the university's actions. Gender balance is assessed based on the understanding that the gender ratio in the lower level of the career path is reflected in the next levels. In order to achieve gender balance, realistic goals must be set, taking into account the gender ratio outside the university in the field of activity of the university. In the recruitment and selection process, if there are two equal candidates, decisions are made based also on the need to maintain gender balance.

The university accepts differences in the pace of career advancement that are related to the fulfilment of family responsibilities and their impact is taken into account in the recruitment and the evaluation of work performance of employees.

Achieving equality requires fairness in the allocation of resources and in the use of the opportunities and tools provided in the university's working environment.

The university contributes to raising awareness of the under-represented gender group, as far as possible, by promoting career counselling activities as well as communication. The university considers it important to take the gender perspective into account when planning and conducting research and teaching.

The university's activities in the field of gender equality are in line with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers.

The university regularly and publicly monitors the indicators of gender balance and equality and assesses compliance with the principles of equal treatment in employment relationships.

### **Legislation and standards**

#### Legal and policy framework for promoting gender equality

- relevant legislation of the European Union (EU);
- the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;
- the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The general prohibition of any discrimination is laid down in §12 of the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia:

*Everyone is equal before the law. No one shall be discriminated against on the basis of nationality, race, colour, sex, language, origin, religion, political or other beliefs, property or social status, or on other grounds.*

In addition, in the Estonian judicial area, the Gender Equality Act focuses primarily on gender equality issues and the Equal Treatment Act deals mainly with other forms of discrimination.

#### Gender Equality Act

The purpose of this Act is to ensure equal treatment of men and women as provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia and to promote equality of men and women as a fundamental human right and for the public good in all areas of social life.

To achieve this purpose, this Act provides for:

- 1) the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sex in the private and public sectors;
- 2) the obligation of state and local government authorities, educational and research institutions and employers to promote equality between men and women;
- 3) the right to claim compensation for damage.

#### Equal Treatment Act

The purpose of this Act is to ensure the protection of persons against discrimination on grounds of nationality (ethnic origin), race, colour, religion or other beliefs, age, disability or sexual orientation and the Act provides for:

- the principles of equal treatment;
- duties upon implementation and promotion of the principle of equal treatment;
- resolution of discrimination disputes.

#### Employment Contacts Act;

An employer shall ensure the protection of employees against discrimination, follow the principle of equal treatment and promote equality in accordance with the Equal Treatment Act and Gender Equality Act.

#### Guidelines of Tallinn University of Technology for Equal Treatment

The Guidelines are a part of the university's good practice that supports the university's values and standards set out in legislation.

Tallinn University of Technology follows the principles set out in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

### **Measures laid down in the Action Plan and their implementation**

The Action Plan sets out a range of activities to ensure gender equality, gender balance and diversity in the university from 2021 to 2025.

The university Rectorate is responsible for ensuring gender equality and gender balance. The Rectorate shall allocate the necessary resources to carry out the activities listed in the Action Plan.

The Rectorate is responsible for raising the strategic issues related to gender equality and ensuring that activities are carried as planned, for setting priority activities, assigning responsibilities, setting deadlines for implementation and, if necessary, launching a public discussion.

Gender equality and gender balance are important issues that are regularly addressed in the development activities for managers.

The Rectorate shall be responsible for keeping the materials relating to gender equality and gender balance, including indicators for evaluating the activities agreed to promote gender equality as well as performance reports, available to the staff.

The Human Resources Office directs the development of the field of gender equality and gender balance at the university. To this end, the equal treatment officer of the Human Resources Office coordinates the implementation of the activities set out in the Action Plan and organises the preparation of the performance reports. The equal treatment officer is also responsible for collecting data on gender balance, compiling reports based on it and making it available to university staff. The officer also arranges regular assessment of the efficiency of the measures applied in this area.

The Human Resources Office shall organise dissemination of information on gender equality and gender balance to employees, incl. by incorporating these issues in the relevant trainings and compiling information materials on the topic.

### **University's objectives**

The university continues to further develop gender equality and related topics, encouraging the development of respective processes, as a result of which:

- adherence to the principles of gender equality has become part of the routines of the university;
- documents have been drawn up in the field to support transparent and clear decision-making processes;
- members of the management team of the university are engaged in the prevention of inequality and discrimination.

### **Objectives for 2021-2025**

In the period of the Action Plan, the three key objectives are the following:

- 1) advancing gender balance in different positions by applying processes that ensure equal career opportunities and good practices in career development;
- 2) promoting gender balance in management and decision-making positions at the university;
- 3) raising awareness on gender equality issues and incorporating the principles of equality into the university's main activities.

The activities to be carried out to achieve these objectives are the following:

Activity	Coordinator/ person responsible
<b>Career promotion, supporting work-life balance and development of the organisational culture</b>	
Promoting women's successful academic careers (Women in Science, etc.).	Human Resources Office, Marketing and Communications Office
Developing the career counselling system.	Human Resources Office
Promoting work-life balance of employees through flexible working arrangements and remote working opportunities.	Human Resources Office, heads of structural units
Keeping employees who are away from the workplace for an extended period of time informed of the developments at work in order to ensure their smooth return to work (constant exchange of information, invitations to the events of the unit, invitations to trainings, etc.)	Human Resources Office, heads of structural units
Collecting data on gender balance and the pay gap and informing the university staff on a regular basis.	Human Resources Office
<b>Improving gender balance in the university's management and decision-making bodies</b>	
Systematic identification and development of female employees with leadership potential.	Human Resources Office
Consciously shaping the gender balance of the university's spokespersons.	Marketing and Communications Office
Providing equal opportunities and ensuring gender balance in the university's decision-making bodies.	Rector
<b>Recruitment and career development</b>	
Taking gender balance into account upon forming recruitment and attestation committees.	Human Resources Office
Providing training to the members of recruitment and attestation committees on aspects of gender equality in the selection process.	Human Resources Office
Taking into consideration the objectives of improving gender balance in the relevant field when seeking candidates.	Human Resources Office and recruitment committees
<b>Reducing gender discrimination</b>	
Dissemination of information on systems established at the university against discrimination.	Human Resources Office
Improving the existing procedural systems (the Procedure for Whistleblowing, the Conciliation Procedure).	Human Resources Office
Raising awareness of the management team of gender equality issues.	Human Resources Office

The following performance indicators have been agreed to measure the effectiveness of the measures agreed to promote gender equality:

Objective	31.12.2017	31.12.2018	31.12.2019	31.12.2020	Baseline as of 31.10.2021	Target in 2025
Improvement of the occupational gender integration index (SAI)	0.827	0.832	0.825	0.827		0.9
Increase of the proportion of female professors	19%	18%	14%	16%	16%	Increase of the proportion of women
Increase of the proportion of women in management positions	21%	17%	15%	23%	28%	1/3 of the management positions held by women