

Pursuant to Article 31.2 of the Statute of the University of Novo Mesto, the Senate of the University of Novo Mesto, at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021, adopted the following

## **University of Novo mesto Gender Equality Action Plan 2021–2025**

### **Introduction**

The University of Novo mesto (UNM) is one of the youngest Slovenian universities. Since its establishment in 2017, it has placed excellence in teaching and research, as well as collaboration with the environment, at the heart of its activities. At its core, it builds interpersonal relationships based on diversity inclusion, as understanding and coexistence with dissenting voices are the cornerstones of a critical academic and broader social community that respects human rights and shows zero tolerance for discrimination and intolerance.

On 5 March 2020, the European Commission adopted the *European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025*, which requires equal opportunities as a tender condition for project applications to the European Commission. As such, the 2021 University Gender Equality Plan has become an access condition for applications to the Horizon Europe calls (2021-2027). UNM took advantage of the European Commission's initiative to require every public higher education and research institution to submit a so-called Gender Equality Plan in order to apply for the new Horizon Europe Framework Programme to analyse the situation and develop the UNM Gender Equality Plan.

As required by the European Commission, the Gender Equality Action Plan covers these minimum procedural requirements:

- Public publication - an official document published on the institution's website and signed by the managers,
- Special-purpose assets - the institution must provide certain financial resources and expert support to implement the plan,
- Data collection and monitoring – gender disaggregated data collection and annual reporting,
- Training – awareness raising, education on gender equality and hidden discrimination for employees and managers.

The Gender Equality Action Plan contains five basic pillars:

- equal opportunities for women and men in employment, career advancement and studies,
- gender balance in management and decision-making positions,
- balancing work, study and private life within the organisational culture,
- the inclusion of gender dimension in research and teaching,
- measures to prevent gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and

*two horizontal pillars:* governance and equality communication.

The present document, which focuses on gender equality, was developed in the autumn and winter of 2021 through collaboration between the UNM leadership, the Working Group and UNM members. To ensure that UNM addresses gender equality issues in a systematic and organised manner, on 8 October 2021, the UNM Rector Prof. Dr. Marjan Blažič appointed a Working Group for the preparation of the action plan for equal opportunities at the UNM, composed of: Prof. Dr. Karmen Erjavec, Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation, Prof. Dr. Jasmina Starc, Vice Chancellor for Education, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Andrej Lipej, Dean of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, and Miloš Šuštar, BSc in Law, Secretary General.

The University of Novo mesto Gender Equality Action Plan 2021 – 2025 is an official UNM document adopted by the UNM Senate and published on the UNM website. UNM staff and students are or will be informed about the content of the document in various ways (member senates, pedagogical conferences, academic assemblies, student councils and e-mail). We will organise various forms of training for employees on equal treatment and ensuring protection against discrimination, as well as talks and other forms of presentation of the Action Plan for students.

## **Status**

At UNM, we see the equal inclusion of both genders in the academic community as an asset and an advantage, both of which contribute to the faster and better development of our university.

Equality is largely regulated by national legislation and by-laws, which UNM is obliged to respect and implement. The principles of equality, which are enshrined in the legal system at the national level, are reflected in UNM's fundamental documents, such as the Statute, the Code of Ethics, the Development Strategy and the Resolution on Measures to Prevent Harassment and Mistreatment of Workers and Students. UNM also unconditionally allows employees and students to extend their employment rights and student status at the expense of parenthood, e.g. allowing part-time work, extending the time limit for taking leave, allowing part-time work due to breastfeeding, extending habilitation and student status.

An analysis of data on the representation of women and men at UNM shows that:

- UNM has a gender-balanced leadership and management structure,
- There are more women in top teaching and research positions,
- The gender structure of staff employed by educational fields reflects the traditional gender division. An imbalance occurs in the fields of:
  - more men: computer and information science (100%) and mechanical engineering (66%),
  - more women: business (75%), nursing (84%) and physiotherapy (100%),
- Professional, administrative and technical staff are dominated by women (75%),
- More than half of UNM students are female (64%),
- The student structure by educational fields is unbalanced:
  - more men: computer and information science (100%), business informatics (63%) and mechanical engineering (86%),
  - more women: business (86%), nursing (88%) and physiotherapy (73%),
- Women dominate the study population (65%) at all levels of study.

Despite a relatively balanced leadership and management structure, there is still more we can do in the area of gender equality and the elimination of discrimination based on sexual orientation, and we are committed to doing so through this Action Plan.

UNM's vision is to become an inclusive academic community that provides equal opportunities to all, regardless of their personal or social circumstances. In doing so, it contributes to the building a just society based on the creation of well-being for the individual, the local and the wider community.

UNM's mission in the area of equality is aligned with the overall mission of UNM. Openness, acceptance of diversity and inclusion and equal opportunities are the basic principles on which the achievement of UNM's overall objectives is based.

## UNM Gender Equality Plan 2021 –2025

### Objective 1: To educate and raise awareness of the importance of gender equality to the good functioning of the University

#### Actions:

- Raising awareness in the academic community that the university will function better if its management includes individuals of different genders.
- Gender equality is a compulsory component of the training that University Members' and University leaders receive when they take office.
- Efforts by organisers of various events at UNM and its member institutions (round tables, conferences, etc.) to ensure gender balance among invited speakers and programme committee members.
- Promoting research with a focus on gender equality.

### Objective 2: Improved gender balance in decision-making positions and on university and faculty collective bodies

#### Actions:

- *The principle of non-discrimination* should be enshrined in the UNM Statutes: *discrimination on the basis of nationality, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, political or other opinion, property, birth, education, social status, disability, physical or mental characteristics or disability, social or regional origin or any other personal circumstance is prohibited at UNM.*
- The **principle of gender balance** at university and faculty level should be enshrined in the UNM Statutes (e.g. in the composition of the UNM Quality Assessment Committees, the Doctoral Committee, the Personnel Committee, etc.), following the example of Article 14 of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. Suggested wording: *UNM shall observe the principle of gender balance, i.e. a minimum of 40 % representation of one gender in the composition of consultative and coordinating bodies, working bodies and bodies operating at the level of UNM and its Members, as well as in the appointment or nomination of female and male representatives of the University or its Members to working groups and bodies outside the University.*

Notwithstanding the previous paragraph, the principle of gender balance cannot be taken into account:

- a) when appointing or nominating the sole representative.*
  - b) in the appointment or nomination of three women or men representatives, with at least one representative of each sex being appointed or nominated, unless this is not possible because of the exceptions provided for in the following two indents.*
  - c) if membership is determined by function.*
  - d) if, at the time the proposal is prepared, there is no person of a particular sex who is familiar with the field of work and meets the other requirements for the post to be filled.*
- Awareness-raising for bodies electing or approving Vice Chancellors and Vice-Deans, Senators and Members of Habilitation Committees to strive for gender-balanced proposals and management teams in the light of the principle of gender balance.
  - Improve gender balance of the UNM Habilitation Committee – the task of the Rector to informally consult the Members on proposals to achieve a gender-balanced composition of the UNM Habilitation Committee.

### **Objective 3: Gender equality in employment**

- Every three years, data on UNM representation should be presented in a report on the implementation of the UNM Gender Equality Action Plan.
- The UNM and Member self-evaluation reports monitor data on the gender employment picture and respond to any imbalances in leadership positions that may be disrupted by the Member's action plan.

### **Goal 4: Eliminate all forms of discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, sexual violence and harassment**

- The UNM and Members' websites should identify the authorities and procedures in the event of sexual discrimination, discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, sexual violence and harassment that are available to students and staff when such incidents occur, both within and outside of UNM. Regular reviews should also be conducted to ensure that students and staff are informed about who they can contact in the event of discrimination and sexual violence.
- Student and staff satisfaction surveys should include questions about whether students or staff perceive gender discrimination or any form of violence related to their gender or sexual orientation.
- Analysis of the results of relevant questions from student and staff surveys and determine appropriate action.
- Informing students about their rights during induction week/day or through student representative bodies.
- In the event of a report of sexual harassment to the Ethics Committee, the committee formed to investigate cases of sexual harassment must include an independent representative who is sensitised and trained to talk to people who have experienced sexual harassment.

### **Objective 5: Equal opportunities for career advancement and work-life balance**

- UNM management (Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation) regularly surveys target groups (pregnant women, young mothers, women with disabilities, foreign women at UNM, women in STEM fields, fathers who have taken parental leave, men in feminised professional fields, LGBTIQ employees and students) to examine the existence of barriers to their academic and professional development related to their marital status, gender or sexual orientation, and to suggest on how these barriers might be removed.
- UNM and faculties' leaders work to find ways to create a supportive environment appropriate for meeting habilitation requirements.
- Adopt the principles and measures of a family-friendly university, such as flexible working hours and teleworking.
- Business mail should be limited to weekdays and 4:00 pm as much as possible, so that employees are not expected to work overnight and on weekends, and important university and faculty documents should normally not be sent during collective holidays and annual breaks.

### **Goal 6: Introduce gender-inclusive language use at all levels of UNM operations**

- Development of guidelines for gender-inclusive language use.
- Implementation of guidelines in UNM and Member States' language policies and documents.
- Promotion of guidelines in the university media (UNM website, member websites).
- A job system that takes into account the gender of the job holder.

### **Goal 7: Provision of libraries with literature in the field of gender studies**

- Encouraging the UNM Library to acquire literature in the field of gender studies.

The indicators for these actions, the deadlines and the individuals responsible for the implementation of each action are listed in the tables attached to this document. The implementation of the actions listed in the Action Plan will be monitored annually by the **Career Centre** and reports on the implementation of the action plan to the UNM Senate.

Novo mesto, 22 December 2021

Prof. Dr. Marjan Blažič  
Rector of the University of Novo mesto



A handwritten signature in blue ink, corresponding to Prof. Dr. Marjan Blažič, is written over the printed name and title.