

CITY College, University of York Europe Campus



Gender Equality Plan 2021-2026

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GENDER EQUALITY DECLARATION

Gender equality is about universal and fundamental human rights and is an integral part of our aspiration and commitment to being a leading educational institution. Considerable efforts have been made in previous years for enhancing gender equality and equity within our organisation; initiatives for enhancing and increasing female representation in high-authority and leadership positions, initiatives for creating a flexible working environment, and a zero tolerance towards any type of gender-based discrimination and harassment. CITY College now aspires to further strengthen its policies and lines of action in favour of an equality-driven organisational reality, as well as in favour of an equal representation, recognition, reward, and value of employees irrespective of their gender and other intersecting features.

Towards this direction and in line with the relevant policies of the University of York, a Gender Equality Plan has been developed with the following objectives: to foster an inclusive and respectful culture; to introduce meaningful actions to address gender inequities for both staff and students; to address the additional effect of gender intersecting with other inequities and the overall impact this can have on personal and professional development; to create a safe working and educational environment. On top of a record of relevant policies and practices already in place, if we want to continue to be committed to teaching, research and excellence, it is vital that we enhance and utilise the skills and capacities of all staff members.

Our institution further accompanies the creation of its Gender Equality Plan with its wide dissemination to all staff members and students, as well as with the establishment of a Gender Equality Committee assisting in the implementation, monitoring, and continuous update of the Plan. Having individuals being dedicated to the institution's cause on equality contributes to expanding the comprehension of new aims and the commitment to them, while further establishing relevant dialogues and a new organisational culture.

In order to ensure that gender equality is under constant progress, we must continue to challenge the perspectives and attitudes that hinder this progress. The Gender Equality Plan will constitute a driving force towards that end and it will ensure that gender equality is a responsibility of the institution. Our institution will ultimately succeed at rendering gender equality and equity both at operational and cultural norm, as well as at ensuring an equal allocation of opportunities to all individuals irrespective of their gender, sexual orientation and other intersecting features.

The Principal and President

1. Strategic Context

CITY College, University of York Europe Campus recognises that its people are the most valuable asset towards achieving its vision and mission about teaching, research and excellence. In fact, in today's highly globalised world, educational and research-oriented institutions should utilise at an optimum level the capacities of all their staff members for achieving the aforementioned goals. At the same time, creativity, diversity and inclusion have proved to be significant assets that considerably ameliorate the performance of all kinds of organisations. Ensuring therefore an environment drawn by the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion is of utmost importance for our institution.

Drawing on these aspirations, the development of a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) that is aligned with relevant European and National (Greek) directions and legal requirements is seen as a prerequisite¹. The alignment to the vision and the mission of the University of York (from a gender and equality/equity-related perspective) is also a major goal of CITY's strategic agenda.

1.1 Gender imbalances in the European and Greek Academic field

Irrespective of various provisions in both Europe and Greece, gender imbalances remain a prominent challenge in various spheres including the professional, economic, social or political ones. Academia is one of the core fields exhibiting a constant gender gap, manifesting itself in various forms and ranging from female representation among doctoral graduates of specific disciplines (e.g. STEM) to representation in high-authority positions (the so-called 'glass-ceiling' and 'sticky-floor effect').

Gender (in)equality is not simply a statistical problem calculated in quantitative percentages in academic and research-oriented positions. It is worth highlighting certain imbalances in working conditions both in Europe and Greece (e.g. conditions of employment, type of contract etc.). Indicatively, in the EU-28 more women than men are working part-time, while in 2/3 of EU countries particularly female researchers in the higher education sector tend to work under precarious agreements more often than their male colleagues². Finally, while at the early career stages (e.g. during a PhD) female and male researchers are equally mobile, men seem to maintain higher mobility rates during middle or senior career stages.

1.2 The EC framework for promoting Gender Equality in Research and Innovation

Within the context of its R&I Framework program Horizon Europe 2021-2027, the European Commission (EC) is taking concrete steps to address various gender-related challenges—in line with the *Communication "A New ERA for Research and Innovation"* and the new *Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025*". More specifically, the EC has proceeded to a set of new indications towards the development of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) in public bodies, research organisations and higher education establishments.

¹The GEP of CITY College applies to its research centres as well: the South-East European Research Centre (SEERC) and the Neuroscience Research Centre (NEUREC).

²She Figures, 2021 <https://ec.europa.eu/assets/rtd/shefigures2021/index.html>

1.3 The Greek context

It should be further highlighted that the **Greek context** enhances the initiation of activities fostering gender equality in both the social and professional sphere. At the same time, recent **legislation in Greece** imposes the realisation of gender-related initiatives in various organisations. The Hellenic parliament recently voted the Law No. 4808 (mandatory) aiming to eliminate violence and harassment in both public and private work environments (Government Gazette, 2021).

In more details, articles 3 and 4 of Law No. 4808 indicate accordingly that every form of violence and harassment –including gender-based violence and sexual harassment– which is manifested during one’s employment (or is being directly related to their employment) is explicitly prohibited. Articles 9 and 10 prescribe that each organisation with minimum 20 employees is **obliged** to adopt a policy for the preventing and addressing violence and harassment in the work environment as described in articles 3 and 4; zero tolerance towards violence and harassment-related behaviours is expressed and there is a further description of the employers' and employees' responsibilities for preventing and addressing such incidents. In addition, it is stated that this policy should be embedded in or be accompanied by an overall policy on promoting equal opportunities and fighting against discrimination.

Finally, drawing on the Report of the “Pissaridis Committee” (2020) on the Development plan and the suggestions for the Greek economy, emphasis has been placed on addressing the unequal provision of opportunities for females in the labour market. It is suggested that companies should enhance the concept of social responsibility and consequently support females during maternity leaves (p. 152), by considering this time period as a standard part of their career rather than an obstacle. Intersectionality and the rights of disadvantaged/minority groups should similarly be considered for battling against discriminations (p. 155).

1.4 The University of York policy framework

The University of York is founded on the principles of excellence, equality and opportunity for all, and thus gender equality is an issue of utmost importance. It is an international, research-led university that relies on equality in participation, progression and success for all. The University further creates a working, learning, social and living environment that enables all staff and students to achieve their potential, while experiencing and celebrating diverse cultures, knowledge and identities.

Within this context, the University has already initiated a series of relevant policies and initiatives, while aspiring to further enrich them. Its core Strategy on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion highlights that the aim is to create a University community where diversity is recognised, valued and celebrated. Its four core objectives are the following:

- 1) Embed equality into all aspects of university life;
- 2) Attract, attain, and succeed (in developing a diverse university community);
- 3) Be flexible and adaptive to the needs of our diverse University community;
- 4) Adopt an inclusive campus approach.

In more details and through this strategy, the University attempts to proactively advance equality and inclusive practices in the areas of staff and student recruitment and admissions processes, in research activity and teaching, within the campus environment and in the experiences offered to the academic and professional services and the student community.

Additional activities and strategies complement the realisation of the University's vision with respect to equality, inclusion and other intersecting features. A Sexual Violence Action Plan has been developed for the years 2021-2022, continuously informed by student voices, regulatory requirements, sector best practices, and lessons learned, and regularly revisited by the University's Sexual Violence Steering Group. It touches upon the following aspects: Cultural Change, Leadership, Investment and Resourcing, Regulatory Matters, Education, Training and Raising Awareness, Communication.

The University of York has been an early adopter of the Athena Swan Charter and continues to develop innovative best practices in this area. It is working towards reducing the gender pay gap and improving gender representation at all levels of employment. The University has been further positioned in relation to racist manifestations; their anti-racism statement has been publicly published, accompanied by the creation of a Staff Race Equality Forum. Finally, and in terms of summarising the University's responsibilities regarding the commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, these refer to: legal responsibilities abiding by equality laws; collecting and publishing a range of equality data; carrying out equality impact assessments on relevant policies and activities; applying equality monitoring.

2. Implementation of the CITY GEP

2.1 Dedicated resources

Within the context of the CITY GEP, a **Gender Equality Committee** has been formed. The Committee is comprised by: the representatives of all (currently four) CITY departments; a representative of each one of CITY's research centres (i.e. SEERC and NEUREC); a representative of the City Student Union; a Gender Equality Officer, who is also the person allocated as a contact point for reporting instances of sexual and gender-based harassment (including manifestations of gender-based violence).

In terms of **tasks and responsibilities**, the members of the Gender Equality Committee are responsible for:

- The collection of gender-disaggregated data (please see section 2.2 below) and the carrying out of annual reporting based on indicators.
- Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the GEP.
- Organising and coordinating the gender-oriented training and capacity-building of the institution.
- Having regular meetings (minimum once a year).
- Updating the GEP content (including action points, indicators etc.).
- Publishing relevant progress reports.
- Providing input to the Executive Board of CITY, as well as to CITY's strategic plan.
- With particular reference to the Gender Equality Officer/contact point for sexual harassment and gender-based violence, they are also additionally responsible for reporting in their turn such incidents to senior management.

2.2 Data Collection (Internal Gender Audit)

Prior to defining the exact content of the Gender Equality Plan (GEP), relevant data depicting the situation of the organization from a gender perspective were collected; an initial assessment of the state-of-play of gender equality in the institution include the collection and statistical analysis of quantitative sex-/gender-disaggregated data (baseline data), complemented by a documentary analysis of national legal and policy documents along with the organisation's strategic and operational documents.

The **main categories** across which sex-/gender-disaggregated data have been and will continue to be collected are:

- Gender representation among academic staff
- Gender representation among non-academic staff
- Gender representation among students
- Gender representation in governance positions (i.e. leadership/high-authority/decision-making positions)
- Gender pay gap

It should be finally underlined that this list will be continuously updated and that relevant data will continue to be collected **during the GEP implementation** (annually) within the context of **monitoring and evaluation**. Metrics and indicators that can help in this data collection are outlined in section 2.4, in correspondence to the GEP strategic areas and action points. They will be reported annually. The first such report will provide data for 2021.

This report will be updated annually.

2.3 Training and capacity-building

The institution is committed to organizing a series of training events and informative workshops, addressing both staff and students –depending on the content of the training/workshop– and engaging the whole organisation. The list below illustrates the primary areas/topics on which the training will focus during the implementation of the GEP 2021-2026, while such relevant trainings will take place twice per year. The target areas and topics refer to:

- Induction to the content and implementation of the GEP (for the entire organisation)
- Unconscious bias training
- Work-life balance
- Gender balance in leadership and decision-making
- Female career progression (including recruitment and retention)
- Gender in research and teaching (including academic curricula)
- Sexual harassment and gender-based violence

It should be finally noted that staff members of CITY College will also have the opportunity to attend relevant training delivered by the University of York.

2.4 The GEP strategic areas

This section presents the content of the GEP, in terms of activities and interventions promoted. There are **five Strategic Areas** (areas of intervention) in the CITY GEP, in correspondence to the recommendations made by the EC for the development of GEPs and the Greek context and legislation (please see section 1.2 and 1.3). These strategic areas also reflect the **GEP objectives**, and assemble **a set of relevant action points**; next to each action point, **monitoring indicators** and **target values** are indicated. The **target values particularly describe** what kind of initial targets the institution has set with reference to each action point (based on these target values the annual monitoring and evaluation of the applied action points will take place).

The five strategic areas cover the following aspects:

- **Work-life balance and organizational culture**
- **Leadership and decision-making**
- **Female career progression**
- **Gendered science**
- **Addressing sexual harassment and gender-based violence**

Drawing to these five strategic areas and corresponding aspects, the table below illustrates the action points that have been set within the context of the CITY GEP –the action points will be continuously refined and updated in the long-term by the Gender Equality Committee. It should be underlined that action points related to training and informative workshops are not included in this section, since they are embedded in the overall gender-related training and capacity building of the institution.

2.5. CITY College relevant policies

A number of CITY College internal policies have been reviewed and updated based on the vision and priorities of the Gender Equality Policy. These are:

- Regulations 2021-2022, (pages 22-27)
- Policy for discrimination, bullying, cyberbullying, sexual harassment, and abusive behaviour

3. Action Plan

Action points	Monitoring indicators
Support mechanisms for parenthood (maternity leaves, encouragement towards paternal leaves).	Standard procedure for parental leave.
Number of female employees in leadership and decision-making positions of the institution.	Representation of men and women in leadership positions of the institution.
Transparent and bias-free recruitment, including equal provision of opportunities.	Protocols / policies for transparent recruitment and equal opportunities.
Job vacancies with gender-neutral and/or gender-sensitive language.	Gender neutral and/or gender sensitive language in employment vacancies/ads: All job vacancies and advertisements use gender neutral and/or gender sensitive language
Bridging the gender pay gap, and for having starting salaries aligned to ranks/positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay equity reports. • Ratio of female starting salaries vs. male starting salaries (for the same ranks and positions).
Gendering the content of research performed at CITY and its two research centres	Number of research projects (internally and externally funded) to include consideration of gender and intersecting aspects
Gendering the content of teaching curricula –including the gender perspective in the components of some courses.	Number of courses with gender aspects.
Internal policy for preventing and addressing sexual harassment and gender-based violence (including statement against harassment, relevant training, allocation of a contact point, support to victims).	Internal policy for preventing and addressing sexual harassment and gender-based violence.
Information campaign on fighting sexual harassment and discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posters • Information posts at the web site Seminars