

Equality Action Plan: operational follow-up

VERSION December 2021

This document provides an overview of concrete measures, targets, and annual reports with indicators relevant for monitoring the implementation and progress of the Equality policies at VUB.

Together with the [Equality Action Plan 2021-2024](#) (ASP4) and the biennial data report to the governing bodies by the Equality Team ([report of 2019](#)), it gives an overview of what VUB is doing in the field of gender, inclusion, and equality.

Equality is one of the transversal policy axes of the General Strategic Plan 2018-2021 (ASP3) "[VUB as a university of the 21st century](#)", and this under the denominator of "Radically Diverse: united in diversity and equality". This transversal axis is also continued in the current policy cycle of Rector Caroline Pauwels (2021-2024).

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1. Communication of the Equality Action Plan

Via the [Equality website](#)

Contact: equality@vub.be

2. Labels, Codes of Conduct, policy recommendations and regulations

Human Resources Strategy for Researchers quality label

In 2011 VUB was awarded the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers quality label (HRS4R). With this "HR Excellence in Research award", the European commission gives public recognition to research institutions that have made progress in aligning their human resources policies with the principles set out in the "Charter & Code", based on a customized action plan and HR strategy for researchers. [More information, incl. the current VUB HRS4R action plan.](#)



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

Gender representation and organizational culture

- [Work-life balance and organizational culture](#)
- Gender balance in leadership and decision-making: gender provisions included in the [Organic Statute of the VUB, article 5 "Gender balance"](#)
 - The VUB strives for gender balance in the filling of governing mandates and in the composition of the governing bodies, as well as in the granting of the titles and honorary titles that can be conferred by virtue of this Organic Statute. This applies at least to the bodies mentioned under Title IV, Title V, Title VI, Title X and Title XI of this Organic Statute (including University Council, Board of Governors, Academic Council,

Education Council, Research Council, Innovation and Valorisation Council, International Policy Council, Faculty Bodies, Governing College of UZ Brussel), with at least one-third of the voting members belonging to the opposite sex.

- Research Policy Plan ASP4 period 2021-2024: all (evaluation) panels and (selection) committees are in principle gender balanced (1/3-2/3)
- [Gender balance for the Student Facilities Council imposed by decree](#): at least one-third of the members are of the opposite sex.

Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

- [VUB in the picture: people, campuses, values and facts](#)
- One Academic Director per faculty monitors the academic HR policy
- Specific action in the Equality Action Plan 2019-2021 and that of 2021-2024

Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content

- Is part of the Research Policy Plan ASP4 period 2021-2024 (transversal strategic objective)
- Specific action in Equality Action Plan 2021-2024

Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment

- Legislation of the Federal Public Service for Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue
- [Student codex article 2 "Values and Code of Conduct"](#)
- [VUB Code of Conduct](#)
- [Reporting point for inappropriate, transgressive behaviour](#), including gender-based violence and sexual harassment for students and staff
- Yearly (optional) bystander intervention training for students and staff (see also under point 6. Training and capacity building)
- [Charter](#) Transgressive Behaviour in Higher Education in Flanders (2018)
- Specific action in Equality Action Plan 2021-2024

3. Annual reports

- Reporting point for inappropriate, transgressive behaviour, including gender-based violence and sexual harassment: annual internal reporting to the Student Council and the Committee for Prevention and Safety at Work
- An annual monitoring and benchmarking of the diversity of the staff and [student population](#) as well as of the [representativeness in governing bodies](#) takes place via the Gender and the [Diversity and Social Policy working group](#) of the Flemish Interuniversity Council
- Biennial data reporting on gender and diversity in various VUB governing bodies by the Equality Team: [2019 report](#)
- 6-monthly internal reporting on the progress of the actions in the Equality Action Plan to the Executive Committee
- [Presentation of the statistics](#) of the participation of the VUB in the European research and innovation framework programme with gender breakdown (Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe) to the VUB Research Council

4. Resources

The VUB provides the necessary resources for the design, implementation, and monitoring of the progress of the actions within the Equality Plans.

In terms of dedicated staff, it is not only specific positions such as Equality Officers or gender equality teams, but also earmarked working time for academic, management and administrative staff.

Equality Team (2.1 FTU)

- Karen Celis: Academic Coordinator for Equality (0.2 FTU)
- Nellie Konijnendijk: HR Equality Advisor HR Department (0.8 FTU)
- Lisa Van der Schueren: Policy Officer Education and Student Policy (0.1 FTU)
- Cheyma Al Mehraj: Project officer EUTOPIA and Coordinator VUB Equality Network (0.7 FTU)
- Lisa Wouters: Policy officer Strategy and Policy Department (0.3 FTU)

Other stakeholders (non-exhaustive)

- Tania Van Loon, European Liaison Office Coordinator (Vice-Rectorate for Research)
- Inas Djelloul, Equality Coordinator of the Student Council

- Hannah Vermaut, Coordinator [Brussels Interdisciplinary Research Centre on Migration and Minorities](#) BIRMM
- Suzan Dierickx, Coordinator [Research Centre on Gender, Diversity, and Intersectionality](#) RHEA
- Dalilla Hermans, VUB Fellow and coordinator of the series of lessons on (anti)racism (2021)
- Elly Audenaert, Coordinator Reporting point for inappropriate, transgressive behaviour, including gender-based violence and sexual harassment (Safety and Prevention Service)
- Emilie Van Rhede, Project Coordinator Transgender Policy
- Numerous students working on projects through student jobs or internships

Funding: Central funds for the Equality Action Plan 2021-2024 [approved by the Executive Committee](#)

The Executive Committee approved the budget for supporting the transversal policy (equality, sustainability, and cultural diplomacy) within the framework of the General Strategic Plan. In order to support the implementation of these transversal policies, academic coordinators have already been appointed (i.e. 0.2 FTU prof. dr. Karen Celis for Equality). The allocated budget should give them the necessary space to achieve effective implementation of these policies in all layers of the university.

5. Indicators and targets

The VUB provides for the collection and monitoring of data. The Equality plans are evidence-based with gender-disaggregated data collected across all staff categories. This data informs the objectives and targets, indicators, and continuous evaluation of the progress of the Equality Plan.

At the moment, VUB gender data is split between male and female. In the future we want to go for a more inclusive approach, i.e. male, female, not binary (following the example of Horizon Europe).

The table below summarises the indicators, targets, latest validated data, and sources.

Indicator	Target	Data 2020 (unless specifically mentioned)		Publication
		M	F	
% m/f students (N)		44	56	Facts & figures p. 26
% female students per faculty (N)		Social Sciences & Solvay Business school Medicine & Pharmacy Engineering Physical Education & Physiotherapy Arts & Philosophy Psychology & Educational Sciences Law & Criminology Sciences & Bioengineering Sciences	52 65 23 47 60 82 67 40	Facts & figures p. 29
% m/f international students (N)		46	54	Facts & figures p. 30
% m/f incoming students (N)		42	58	Facts & figures p. 31
% m/f outgoing students (N)		35	65	Facts & figures p. 32
% m/f student refugee programme (N)		70.6	29.4	Facts & figures p. 39

% m/f student refugee programme preparatory trajectory (N)		67.7	33.3	
% m/f VUB alumni (N)		54	46	Facts & figures p. 58
% m/f total staff (FTU)		53	47	Facts & figures p. 64
% m/f academic staff (FTU)		60.2	29.8	Facts & figures p. 64
% m/f supporting staff (FTU)		37.7	62.3	Facts & figures p. 64
% female tenured academic staff (ZAP) at VUB (FTU)	At least 1/3 female ZAP in 2021	71	29	Facts & figures p. 65
% female tenured academic staff (ZAP) per faculty (FTU), 2-yearly monitoring	Range between 40 and 60% of the underrepresented gender	Data 2019 Social Sciences & Solvay Business School Medicine & Pharmacy Engineering Physical Education & Physiotherapy Arts & Philosophy Psychology & Educational Sciences Law & Criminology Sciences & Bioengineering Sciences	Data 2019 32.17 34.98 24.4 26.45 34.61 46.92 33.13 16.97	Equality website
Gender in governing entities: % female representatives (N)	Gender equality and at least 1/3 belonging to the opposite sex for certain governing bodies, see above under point 2. Article 5 of the Organic Statute	University Council Management Committee UZ Brussel Board of Directors Academic Council International Policy Council Innovation & Valorisation Council Education Council Research Council	39 63 26 31 47 33 44 50	Facts & figures p. 65

	+ gender balance for the Student Facilities Council imposed by decree: at least one-third of the members are of the opposite sex	Student Facilities Council	63	
% m/f doctoral students (FTU)		51.9	48.1	Facts & figures p. 72
% doctorates by female students per faculty (N)		Social Sciences & Solvay Business School Medicine & Pharmacy Engineering Physical Education & Physiotherapy Arts & Philosophy Psychology & Educational Sciences Law & Criminology Sciences & Bioengineering Sciences	45.5 70 28.3 69.2 42.3 64.7 55.6 38.9	Facts & figures p. 78
% f/m certificates for the Doctoral Training Programme (N)		49.3	50.7	Facts & figures p. 80
f/m Fellows (N)		66	50	Facts & figures p. 91
f/m Honorary Fellows (N)		76	42	Facts & figures p. 91
% female Principal Investigator with ERC grant (N)	At least as good as EU level		21 (EU 23%)	Annual report to the Research Council
% female researchers involved in MSCA actions	At least as good as EU level		46.9 (EU 42%)	Annual report to the Research Council
% female researchers promoter of an MSCA action	At least as good as EU level		24 (% EU tbc)	Annual report to the Research Council

6. Training and capacity building

Actions to support the achievement of the Equality Action Plan objectives include developing gender competencies and addressing unconscious gender biases among staff, leaders, and decision-makers, establishing working groups on specific gender-related issues, and raising awareness through workshops and communication activities.

Examples of training and workshops:

- Workshop on bystander training (sexual) harassment for students and staff (annual)
- Implicit bias training in all faculties (on a voluntary basis) and for the Evaluation and Promotion Committee of the Research Council (recurrent)
- Setting up a dedicated gender and diversity working group per faculty with the task of developing a faculty-specific policy. This is a specific action in the Equality Action Plan 2021-2024.
- Activities in the context of the gender week (annually in March, around International Women's Day)
- Training courses for executives, available via the L(ea)RN platform, e.g. on well-being (recurrent)

Other concrete actions realised in 2021

- RHEA Gender week (online)
- Online info session to VUB researchers on the Gender dimension in R&I Horizon Europe programme 03/2021 (during the Gender week), 20 participants

Because of Covid-19, a lot of sensitising activities were cancelled or rescheduled.

7. History and related documents

List of previous documents and plans that will be built upon:

- [Diversity plan 2005-2006](#)
- [Gender Action Plan in 2014-2016](#), on request of the government (ASP2) and with targets for % gender ZAP for each faculty
- [Equality Action Plan 2019-2021](#) (ASP3), with this plan VUB obtained the [Actiris Diversity Label of the Brussels Capital Region](#)
- [Equality Action Plan 2021-2024](#) (ASP4)

Interuniversity engagements:

- Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR) Action Plan Gender. Women in academic careers and university policy (2013)
- Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR) and the Young Academy [Charter Gender in Academia](#) (2019)
- Flemish [Charter](#) Transgressive Behaviour (2018)