CITY College, University of York Europe Campus



Gender Equality Plan

v2 December 2024

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 to enhance 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 enforcing 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 updated Gender Equality Plan constitutes a driving force towards that end, and it ensures 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.

1 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

CITY College, University of York Europe Campus recognises that its people are the most valuable asset in achieving its vision and mission in teaching, research and excellence. In today's highly globalised world, educational and research-oriented institutions must leverage 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 values 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, CITY College has made the development and regular update of a Gender Equality Plan (GEP)[1] a strategic priority. This plan aligns with the relevant European and National normative framework, as well as the vision and mission of the University of York.

1.1 GENDER IMBALANCES IN THE EUROPEAN AND GREEK ACADEMIC FIELD

Despite gender equality being high on the EU and national agenda, gender imbalances remain a prominent challenge in various spheres including the professional, economic, social or political ones. At EU level, although there has been overall incremental progress, particularly regarding time distribution of women due to technological advancements, significant gaps, discrepancies and gender stereotypes persist in decision-making positions and roles of women in society and unpaid care. Gender-based violence incidents also continue at an alarming rate (2024 Annual report on GE in EU, p.1).

Academia traditionally exhibits a persistent gender gap, manifesting in various forms such as female representation among doctoral graduates of specific disciplines (e.g. STEM) and representation in high-authority positions (the so-called 'glass-ceiling' and 'sticky-floor' effects). Gender (in)equality is not merely a statistical problem calculated in quantitative percentages in academic and research-oriented positions. It also highlights imbalances in working conditions. Indicatively, in the EU-27, more women than men work part-time, while in two-thirds of EU countries, female researchers in the higher education sector tend to work under precarious agreements more often than their male colleagues.[2] Additionally, while female and male researchers are equally mobile in early career stages (e.g. during a PhD), men seem to maintain higher mobility rates during middle or senior career stages.

Against this backdrop, Greece has considerable progress to make. With very low scores, particularly in the areas of political representation, economic status and educational level, the country continues to rank very low (24th) in EIGE's Gender Equality Index.[3] However, significant improvement has been reported in recent years, as the gap in the domain of time and national employment is reduced to the point of approaching the EU average. In the R&I sector, there has been a noticeable increase of female researchers over the last decade, with strong representation in the government sector.[4] In some fields, such as the

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

[2] She Figures 2021

[3] EIGE is the EU's European Institute for Gender Equality.

[4] Eurostat 2022, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=R%26D_personnel&oldid=641520#Researchers

average share of women in the R&I workforce of energy sector companies, the national average is significantly higher than that of the EU.[5]

1.2 THE EC 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*. The EC has set new guidelines for the development of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) in public bodies, research organisations and higher education establishments, rendering the adoption of GEPs a prerequisite for participation in Horizon Programmes.

In its recently adopted *Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe,* the EC includes gender equality and equal opportunities as core values and among the priority areas for joint action. The aim is to advance fair and inclusive careers in R&I, combat gender-based violence, establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to sustain institutional change and address gender imbalances emerging from the intersection of gender with other discrimination grounds.[6] The *ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024* echoes the Pact in its action to promote gender equality and inclusiveness, focusing particularly on intersectionality and geographical and sectorial inclusiveness.[7]

From a legislative perspective, a new Directive on Pay Transparency came into effect in June 2023, promoting pay transparency and pay equity, ensuring employee protection from direct and indirect gender-based discrimination.[8]

1.3 THE GREEK LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Legislative efforts have concentrated on creating a solid normative framework to foster gender equality and equal opportunities in the labour market. The new Individual Labour Law Code (P.D. 80/2022, published in OGG A 222/4.12.2022), codifies existing scattered norms into a single legal document, extending gender-related initiatives to both public and private work environments. Specifically, Part I of Section B prohibits gender-based discrimination in payment and social insurance (art. 36-39); recruitment, career progression and training (art. 40-42); termination of contract (art. 43); and regulates the protection of parenthood, return from maternal leave and family life (art. 45-50). Notably, article 48 stipulates that adopting special or positive measures to eliminate existing gender imbalances and promote gender

[5] She Figures, 2021, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/assets/rtd/shefigures2021/index.html

[6] European Commission, Council Recommendation (EU 2021/2122 of 26 November 2021 on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe

[7] The ERA Policy agenda and its alignment with the Pact Priority Areas can be found here: https://european-research-area.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-02/Infographic_ERA%20actions%20by%20Priority_0.pdf

[8] Directive (EU) 2023/970 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 10 May 2023 to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through pay transparency and enforcement mechanisms

equality shall not be considered discriminatory. Pursuant to articles 51-53, victims of gender discrimination are not only entitled to full compensation, but also the burden of proof before a civil court lies with the defendant.

Part II of the same Section focuses on eliminating harassment and violence at work in the private sector, including GBV and sexual harassment (art. 57 – 68). This encompasses all forms of harassment and violence manifested during one's employment or directly related to employment against current and former employees, interns, apprentices, volunteers, job seekers and workers in the informal economy (art. 58). Private entities with a minimum of 20 employes are required to adopt a policy to prevent and address violence and harassment in the work environment and manage internal reports of such incidents (art. 61 and 62). These provisions also apply to the public sector, along with relevant norms embedded in Law 4270/2014 and Law 3850/2010.

In addition to the existing legislation, the *National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021-2025* addresses numerous aspects of gender inequalities in the workplace through four priority areas. Indicatively, planned actions aim to combat gender-based violence at work, to promote equal participation of women in the labour market through enhancing work-life balance, reducing gender pay and pension gap, strengthening female employment and advancing education of women in research, and to increase female participation in decision-making in the public and private sector.

Finally, drawing on the Report of the "Pissaridis Committee" (2020) on the Development plan and suggestions for the Greek economy, emphasis has been placed on addressing unequal opportunities for women in the labour market. Companies are encouraged to enhance the concept of social responsibility and support women during maternity leave (p. 152), by considering this 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

As an international, research-led university that relies on equality in participation, progression and success for all, the University of York endorses the promotion of gender equality as an issue of utmost importance. It is an. In this light, the University 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 (EDI Strategy) 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.

Responsible for the development and implementation of the EDI Strategy is the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, which issues an annual report on progress and priorities regarding EDI in the University.

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 early adopted 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.

1.5 CITY COLLEGE RELEVANT POLICIES

The Gender Equality Policy and plan are complemented by a number of institutional internal policies which are based on the vision and priorities of the Gender Equality Declaration and the CITY College Strategy. These are the following:

- Regulations 2022-2023, (pages 21-27)
- Policy for discrimination, bullying, cyberbullying, sexual harassment, and abusive behaviour

2 GENDER MAINSTREAMING AT CITY COLLEGE

Endorsing EIGE's definition of a Gender Equality Plan in R&I institutions, CITY College's GEP is structured against the mandatory building blocks and adopts a set of priorities aligned with the recommended thematic areas.

2.1 DEDICATED RESOURCES

Within the context of the CITY GEP, a **Gender Equality Committee** was formed. In line with the University of York's policies and practices, and to reflect its broader mandate and ensuing responsibilities, the Committee was renamed the **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDI Committee).**

The Committee comprises:

- A Gender Equality Officer, who also serves as the contact point for reporting instances of sexual and gender-based harassment (including manifestations of gender-based violence)

- One representative from each of the CITY departments (currently four)
- A representative from SEERC, the South-East European Research Centre of CITY College
- The Welfare and Education Officer of the CITY Student Union (CSU) as the students' representative.

With the exception of the student representative, who is invited to one annual meeting for consultation, all EDI Committee members regularly convene twice per academic year. Ad hoc meetings may also be organised to address urgent matters. The following table outlines the Committee's tasks and responsibilities, allocated among the members.

Task	Responsible Committee member
Collection of gender-disaggregated data and carrying out the annual reporting based on indicators.	SEERC representative
Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the GEP.	SEERC representative
Organising and coordinating the gender-oriented training and capacity-building of the institution.	CITY Depts representatives
Organising the regular meetings (minimum once per semester).	EDIC members
Updating the GEP content (including action points, indicators etc.).	CITY Depts representatives
Publishing relevant progress reports.	CITY Depts representatives
Providing input to the Executive Board of CITY, as well as to CITY's strategic plan.	GE Officer
Reporting GBV incidents to senior management	GE Officer

In terms of financial resources, CITY College annually allocates funding for organising awareness-raising and training activities related to gender equality. To ensure financial efficiency, these activities are combined with other events or co-organised with local stakeholders. This approach not only maximises resource utilisation but also fosters collaboration and strengthens external stakeholder engagement in promoting gender equality.

2.2 Data Collection and Monitoring

Data collection

In preparation of the institution's first Gender Equality Plan, baseline, sex-disaggregated data depicting the organisation's gender situation were collected. An initial assessment of the state-of-play of gender equality was conducted using statistical analysis of the collected data, complemented by a documentary analysis of institutional strategic and operational documents. The conclusions of this analysis were published in the first gender data reports for CITY College and SEERC, in 2021, presenting data on the following categories:

1. Gender representation among academic staff (segregated according to academic position)
2. Gender representation among non-academic staff (segregated according to seniority level)
3. Gender representation among students

4. Gender representation in governance positions (i.e. leadership/high-authority/decision-making positions)
5. Gender pay gap

This list will be continuously updated with new categories of data. The updated 2024 reports, which will be published shortly and contain information for the academic years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, place emphasis on intersectionality by presenting data on the intersection of gender with other parameters, i.e. ethnicity and age. The new reports indicate institutional progress regarding gender representation of students at all levels but stresses the need to increase efforts to achieve gender balance mainly in management and decision-making positions.
While the collected data provides valuable insights, we acknowledge the need to address certain gaps to gain a more comprehensive understanding of gender equality at CITY College. In the upcoming reporting period, nuanced data shall be collected on the following:
a) social gender rather than the biological sex of students and staff
b) work-life balance, the use of parental leave and flexible working arrangements by gender
c) additional intersectional parameters shall be considered such as family status, parents' educational level for students, socio-economic background, and disability status
d) career progression and student completion rates combined with gender and other intersecting factors.
The gender data reports will be updated biannually and include data for the two previous academic years, juxtaposing this data with previous findings. Metrics and indicators which will enhance the data collection process are outlined in section 2.4, in correspondence to the GEP strategic areas and action points.

Monitoring and evaluation
To ensure the effectiveness of the Gender Equality Plan, an integrated monitoring and evaluation strategy is adopted, including the following:

- **Quantitative methods: feedback collection** from participants to evaluate the effectiveness of the planned activities, as well as **internal surveys** to assess understanding of gender equality within the university.
- **Qualitative Methods**: Focus groups and interviews to understand in depth the nuanced experiences and challenges of staff and students related to gender equality and gender-based violence in the university.
- **Biannual review and update of the GEP**: The EDI Committee will review and update the GEP biannually to evaluate progress, identify areas for improvement, and adjust strategies as needed. Findings from the monitoring and evaluation process will be incorporated in the GEP, highlighting successes and topics requiring further attention.
- **Biannual update of gender data reports**: The gender data reports for CITY College and SEERC will be biannually updated to showcase progress and set new goals for the upcoming reporting period.

2.3 TRAINING AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

The institution is committed to organising a series of training events and informative workshops, addressing internal and external stakeholders, depending on the content. The list below illustrates the

topics and targeted stakeholders of the main events organised in the two previous academic years and focused on promoting gender equality:

Name of activity	Type	Date / Location	Targeted stakeholders	Topic/Comments
Domestic violence and mental health: Data from the international and Greek area	Lecture	21/11/2022, YMCA	General public	Part of the joint campaign with YMCA for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
Responding to violence against women: our power is our support (in collaboration with Diotima)	Interactive workshop	28/11/2022, YMCA	General public	
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education	Workshop	10/05/2023, CITY College	CITY College students and staff	Annual event – part of the Student Spring Symposium
Diversity in the workplace	Lecture	25/05/2023, Online	CITY College students	Guest lecture from the University of York on how diversity and inclusion is not just a moral imperative, but a strategic advantage
Uncovering opportunities for entrepreneurship and small business development	Webinar	21/09/2023, Online	General public, SME owners	Organised in the framework of the MORE project, discussed how women can play a key role in the economy of rural areas
Best practices in women entrepreneurship	Lecture	22/11/2023, Prishtina	General public	Presented in the Global Entrepreneurship Week Kosovo
Breast cancer: Manage and LIVE!	Half-day discussion	24/11/2023, CITY College	General public	Awareness-raising campaign on the prevention and management of breast cancer

In the following period of the GEP implementation (2024-2026), a number of awareness-raising and training activities will focus on the following topics:

- Induction to the content and implementation of the GEP
- Unconscious gender bias
- Achieving work-life balance through smooth reintegration into academic life after parental leave

- 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

The CITY College GEP identifies **five Strategic Areas** of intervention, corresponding to the recommendations made by the EC for the development of GEPs and the Greek context and legislation (sections 1.2 and 1.3). These strategic areas reflect the **GEP objectives** and the development needs, which have emerged from the monitoring and evaluation of the existing GEP's progress during the first phase of implementation. A **set of relevant action points** are thus identified, each one followed by the **timeline** of implementation, **involved stakeholders** and output and outcome **monitoring indicators**, based on which the periodic monitoring and evaluation of the applied action points takes place.
The five strategic areas cover the following aspects:

- **Work-life balance and organisational culture:** moving towards pay equity, inclusive practices in the workplace regarding women's health, and providing incentives for the equal distribution of unpaid housework and childcare among genders.
- **Leadership and decision-making:** promoting equal division of power and influence within the institution by increasing female representation in senior management positions and decision-making bodies.
- **Female career progression:** ensuring equitable career advancement opportunities for women targeted professional development, training, and support.
- **Gendered science:** Integrating gender perspectives into research and teaching to ensure inclusivity across disciplines
- **Addressing sexual harassment and gender-based violence:** Establishing a safe and supportive environment by mapping the existing situation, preventing gender-based violence and activating a reporting and handling mechanisms for incidents of harassment and violence.

Drawing to these five strategic areas and corresponding aspects, a set of action points were developed within the context of the CITY GEP, with the purpose to be continuously refined and updated in the long-term by the EDI Committee. Thus, the action plan in Section 3 has been updated in terms of content and structure, to feature the competent implementing body and timeline.