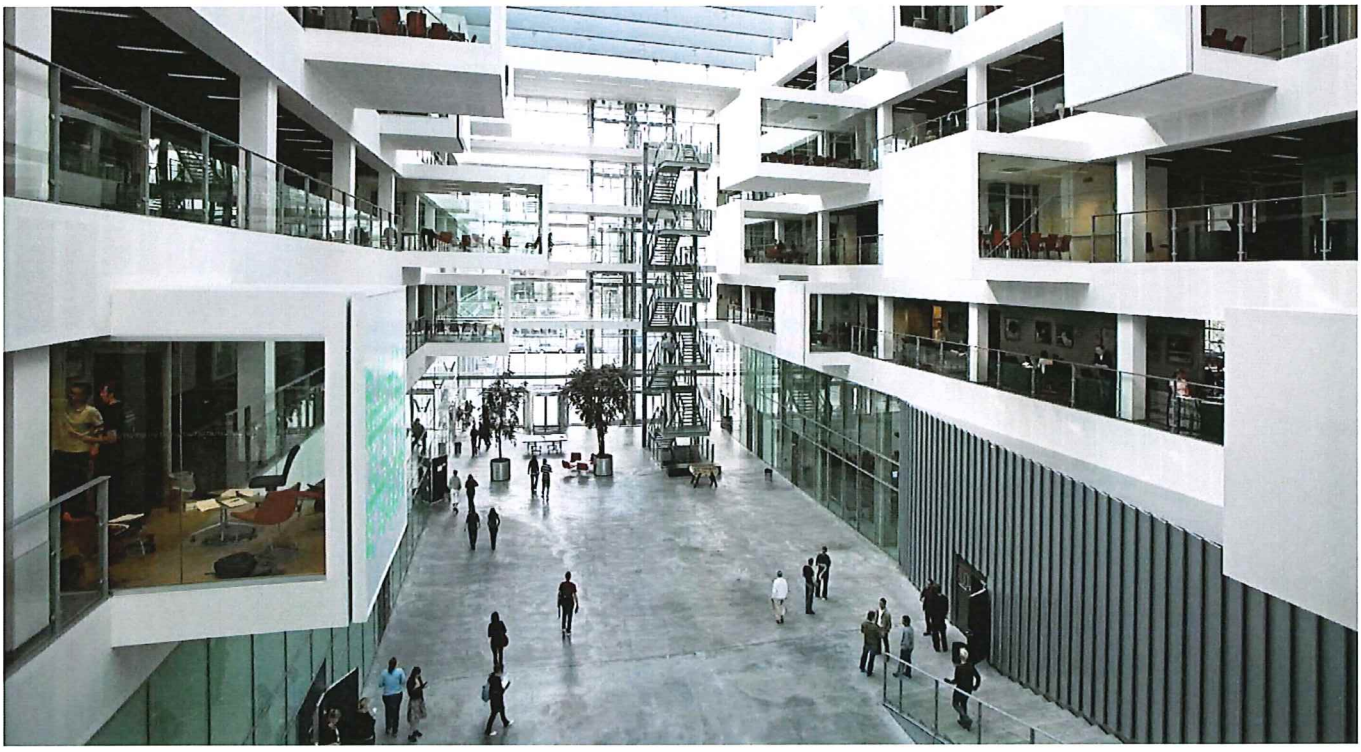
Gender Equality Plan

IT University of Copenhagen

May 2023
Updated version



Introduction

The IT University of Copenhagen's (ITU) Gender Equality Plan sets a framework for the gender equality work at the university by ensuring a formal, systematic, coordinated, and supportive structure for the continued attention to this area as well as the qualification of actions taken to achieve the goals set for gender equality at ITU.

The purpose of ITU's Gender Equality Plan and its connection to ITU's mission and strategy are outlined in the vision statement for gender equality at ITU.

ITU's Gender Equality Plan contributes to a continuation of the important and successful work done to promote gender equality at ITU. The Gender Equality Plan is based on the EU-recommended quality assurance for actions taken to promote equal opportunities cross-gender. The Gender Equality Plan ensures that ITU meets the eligibility criterion from Horizon Europe and is a contribution to the fulfilment of the UN's sustainable Development Goals. Further, ITU's Gender Equality Plan corresponds to ITU's strategy and the increased focus on an attractive and inclusive study and work environment for staff and students alike.

This document is the definition of ITU's Gender Equality Plan, and it reflects ITU's continued and future commitment to gender equality. In addition, the document describes – or links to - the process set up to promote and anchor gender equality at ITU, including principles, dedicated resources, goals, actions, and annual reporting for gender equality at ITU.

ITU's Gender Equality Plan covers both staff and students at ITU.

Historic View on Gender Equality Efforts at ITU

In 2015, the IT University of Copenhagen decided to (a) increase the number of graduates from the most technical study programs, and (b) prioritize gender equality and inclusion at the university. The former was motivated by the huge societal demand for graduates, and the latter was motivated both by student recruitment concerns – it is irrational to recruit only from one half of the potential student population – and by a desire to ensure that societally important information technology is developed by a more diverse set of people.

ITU began a concerted effort to recruit more female students to its more technical study programmes. A recruitment strategy involving a new approach to communicating what an education in IT offers while combating stereotypes and prejudice was adopted. Between 2015 and 2020, the number of female students admitted to the university's bachelor's degree programmes rose from 25 to 33 percent, and specifically for software development it increased from 10 to 24 percent.

The success of the effort is in part based on outreach programmes, such as Digital Dannelse for high schools, and especially Coding Café and IT Camp, in which female ITU students introduce high school-age women to IT and programming and act as role models and mentors.

In addition to working on securing an open and inclusive study environment, ITU has implemented initiatives such as BootIT, Study Lab, and Live Coding which help students with little or no prior programming experience to keep up with their programming curriculum at ITU. Similarly, ITU has adopted the "BEWISE" strategy – six strategic drivers (balanced learning, empowerment, wellbeing, inclusion, support, engagement) – specifically aimed at reinforcing and maintaining a high-quality study environment.

In 2022, Study and Career Guidance at ITU invited an external consultant agency to create a series of workshops for student tutors on inclusion, sexism, and conflict prevention. The workshops will enable ITU's student tutors to tackle issues relating to discrimination and sexism among students during the beginning of term social activities.

There has also been a positive development on the staff side at ITU. At the Computer Science Department, where the gender gap has traditionally been pronounced, new initiatives to secure more diversity have also been in effect since 2015. With an emphasis on avoiding bias, creating gender neutral, inclusive, and family friendly job announcements, and working on maintaining an inclusive work environment, the department has gone from one female faculty member in 2015 to 14 in 2022 (while the department's total number of faculty grew from 23 to 52).

In 2020 and in 2021, all with managerial responsibility at ITU took part in the workshop *Inclusive Environment at ITU*. The purpose of the workshop was to spotlight measures to maintain an open and inclusive work environment as well as recognising unconscious bias.

Similarly, ITU has conducted a pilot project in which educators are taught how to deal with issues such as sexual harassment in the teaching and student environments.

Eligibility Criterion from Horizon Europe

In 2010, the EU created the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)[1] to promote and strengthen gender equality in the EU. One of the objectives of EIGE's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025[2] is to reduce structural barriers cross-gender in European universities by increasing gender equality, diversity, and inclusion. The preparation and implementation of a Gender Equality Plan is a method[3] to reduce these structural barriers and strengthen gender equality by setting up actions aiming at

- conducting impact assessments of procedures and practices to identify gender bias
- identifying and implementing innovative strategies to correct any bias and
- setting goals and monitoring progress via indicators

To ensure reduced structural barriers for gender equality in academia, Horizon Europe, the EU's Research and Innovation Programme from 2021-2027, has set up the eligibility criterion to have a formal and public Gender Equality Plan, including the fulfilment of four mandatory requirements[4] as a prerequisite for eligibility as a public institution from 2022[5].

With this Gender Equality Plan, ITU establishes a comprehensive structure for gender equality work outlining how the effort is organized, databased, and monitored in this area, as well as clarifying – through the action plan – selected interventions, implementation, and follow-up processes. ITU is thus in compliance with the EU recommendations and eligibility criterion.

In addition, ITU's Gender Equality Plan also constitutes a contribution to the fulfilment of gender and equality dimensions in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals[6].

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[1] https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/institutions-and-bodies-profiles/eige_en
[2] Gender equality strategy | European Commission (europa.eu)
[3] What is a Gender Equality Plan (GENDER EQUALITY PLAN) | European Institute for Gender Equality (europa.eu)
[4] https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/democracy-and-rights/gender-equality-research-and-innovation_en
[5] https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/democracy-and-rights/gender-equality-research-and-innovation_en
[6] Take Action for the Sustainable Development Goals - United Nations Sustainable Development

Vision Statement for Gender Equality at ITU

ITU's mission *is to deliver internationally leading teaching and research which enable Denmark to become exceptionally good at creating value with IT.* ITU's ability to attract and retain talented and skilled scientific and administrative staff as well as students is vital to the success of ITU's mission and to meet the rapidly growing demand for IT specialists.

ITU strongly believes that talent and skills have no gender!

ITU pledges to continue to strengthen its successful efforts in attracting new staff and students from the total talent pool, and not just part of it. Bringing the total talent pool into play requires that barriers limiting access to this talent pool must be reduced as much as possible.

ITU further pledges to continue ensuring an attractive and inclusive study and work environment that embraces diversity by first and foremost providing equal conditions and opportunities for all, regardless of gender, creating the best possible foundation for staff and students to develop and unfold their full potential.

ITU is therefore working systematically and strategically to promote gender equality and diversity in all parts of the university with the clear objective of nurturing a diverse and inclusive work and study environment that is attractive to the broad pool of talented people ITU seeks to attract and retain.

The focus on gender diversity, and diversity in general, is anchored in ITU's strategy with a clear objective of bettering the gender balance among graduates and enable all students and staff to thrive and excel together in an attractive and inclusive study and work environment – a prerequisite to fulfil the strategic goals of ITU as well as ITU's mission to deliver internationally leading teaching and research.

ITU's Commitment to Gender Equality

Based on the vision statement ITU has initiated the following to promote gender equality at the university:

- Formulated general principles for the gender equality work at ITU
- Dedicated resources for gender equality work at ITU, including the establishment of a Committee for Diversity and Inclusion
- Established a process for setting concrete goals for gender equality at ITU
- Established a process for planning concrete actions to promote gender equality at ITU, based on the goals set for gender equality, in a one-year cycle
- Established a process for annual reporting on gender equality at ITU

The initiatives and commitments will be described separately below.

General Principles for Gender Equality Efforts

ITU views diversity, in all aspects, among staff and students as a significant asset to the university and a necessity for its ability to succeed. Further, the gender diversity of ITU staff and students should reflect the gender diversity of the population as much as possible.

The following principles will act as a general framework for the gender equality efforts at ITU:

- Gender equality in both work and study environment requires an active effort and an inclusive, respectful, and dialogue-based culture among management, staff, and students with the overall vision and goals for gender equality at ITU in mind.
- Gender equality efforts involve the whole organisation and actions, and initiatives must be anchored in the entire organisation/department/team/part concerned.
- All genders must be represented and involved in the gender equality work.
- Staff in all layers of the organisation and students must be involved in the gender equality work.
- Initiatives and actions to promote gender equality must be seen in context and coordinated with other initiatives as well as the vision and goals for gender equality at ITU.

Goals for Gender Equality

The goals for gender equality at ITU are based on the current strategy for ITU, the vision statement for gender equality at ITU, the Annual Diversity and Inclusion Report at ITU, the (education) Quality Policy, and the (ministerial) Framework Contract.

The Committee for Diversity and Inclusion is responsible for recommending the goals for gender equality for staff and students.

The goals apply during the timeframe of ITU's strategy and are approved by Executive Management.

Committee for Diversity and Inclusion

ITU has dedicated resources to the Gender Equality effort by establishing a Committee for Diversity and Inclusion in March 2022.

The committee is responsible for coordinating the continued attention and fulfilment of goals for gender equality at ITU, including actions, monitoring, and annual reporting.

The committee acts in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for Committee for Diversity and Inclusion.

Action Plan for Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives

The primary focus and purpose of the Action Plan for Diversity and Inclusion at ITU is to implement initiatives that increase gender equality among staff and students.

The action plan is based on the goals set for gender equality at ITU.

The action plan outlines how ITU will work to promote gender equality in practice. Consequently, it details concrete and clear goals, specific initiatives, a timeframe for these as well as the parties responsible for implementation.

The Committee for Diversity and Inclusion gathers and prepares the Action Plan for Diversity and Inclusion in a one-year cycle. The committee is supported by HR in this matter.

The Committee for Diversity and Inclusion is responsible for actions in relation to ITU's staff and students.

The action plan for the year is approved by Executive Management in March.

The action plan is presented first to relevant groups and boards and hereafter communicated throughout the rest of the organisation.

Annual Reporting of Diversity and Inclusion

In the annual diversity and inclusion report the Committee for Diversity and Inclusion will report on action plan initiatives regarding staff and students.

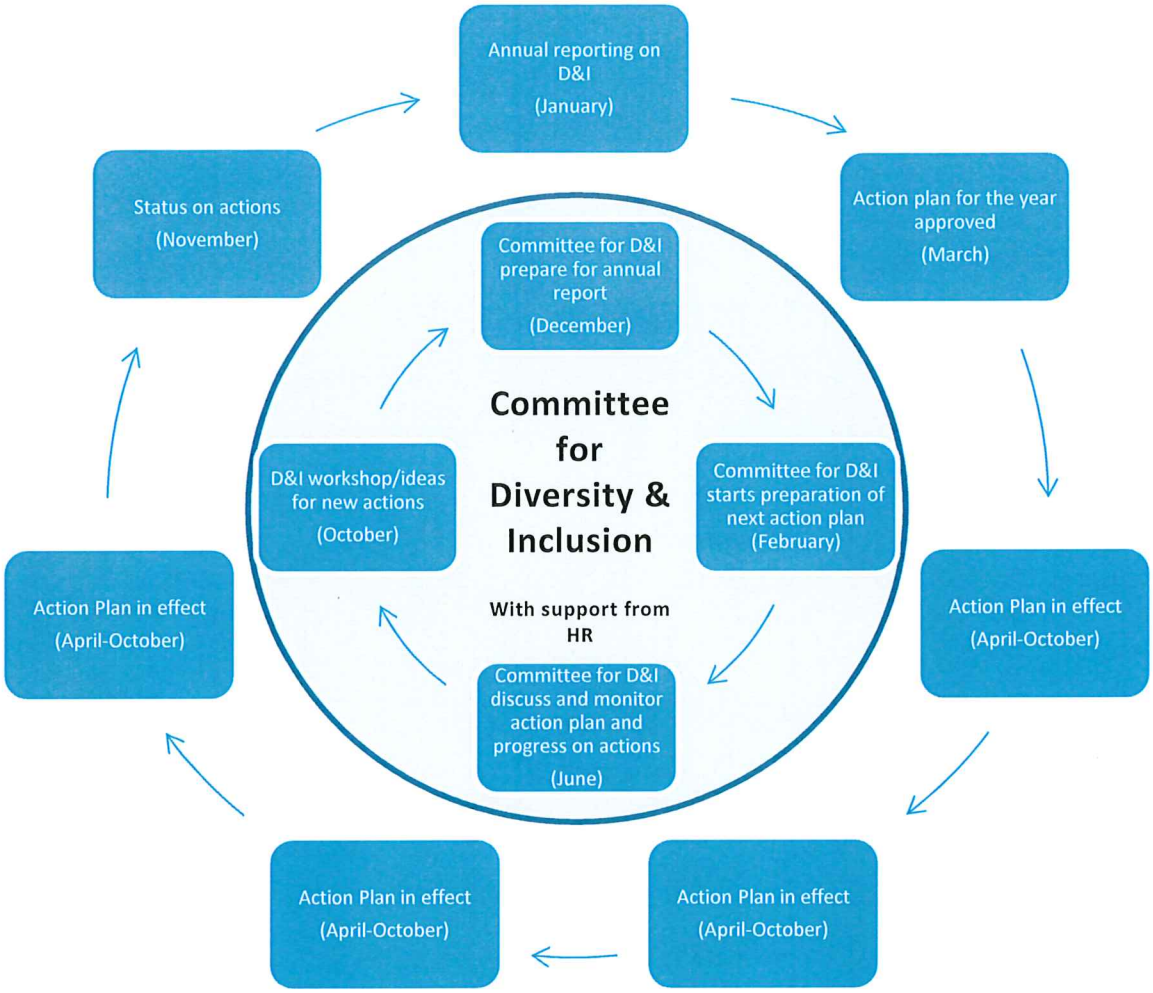
The Committee for Diversity and Inclusion gathers and prepares the Annual Diversity and Inclusion Report for the year in January the following year.

To illustrate the effect of the initiatives, the Annual Diversity and Inclusion Report will include overviews based on figures and data from ITU's database, Quality Policy, and Framework Contract.

The annual report is presented first to relevant groups and boards and hereafter communicated throughout the rest of the organisation.

Annual Cycle for Gender Equality Efforts

The gender equality efforts at ITU run in a one-year cycle as illustrated in the figure below.



Approved by:

4 May 2023

Per B. Brockhoff

Vice Chancellor, Per Bruun Brockhoff