

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

UNION UNIVERSITY IN BELGRADE

[2024-2027]



Belgrade
February 2024

Gender equality implies equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities, equal participation and balanced representation of women and men in all areas of social life, equal opportunities for exercising rights and freedoms, use of personal knowledge and abilities for personal and social development, equal opportunities and rights in access to goods and services, as well as achieving equal benefits from work results, taking into account biological, social and cultural differences between men and women and different interests, needs and priorities of women and men when making public and other policies and deciding on rights, obligations and law-based provisions as well as constitutional provisions.

Gender Equality Act, Article 3

Opening Statement

The Union University in Belgrade (UUB) is a private university based on the ideas of academic excellence and integrity, holding that education is a key link within both the social development chain, as well as within the science and research promotion. Besides offering high quality contemporary education to its students, the UUB finds it important to contribute to raising responsible citizens of any gender, who would act ethically, caring at the same time, while engaging in their future professions, for the entire society and its members. The UUB is dedicated to the welfare of its students, teachers and non-teaching staff, as well as the society in general. Its activities are aimed at maximum personal development, respect and promotion of human rights, advocating an equal opportunities policy in all aspects of its work.

However, it is a reasonable presumption that an equal opportunities policy faces hidden and socially conditioned obstacles. Realizing that, despite advocating an equal opportunities policy, reaching full gender equality is a process, as well as that there are no indicators of whether there are obstacles in its implementation and in which fields, simultaneously considering ways and expressing its readiness to invest all effort within its capacities in order to meet the aim set forth and aspired for, the Union University in Belgrade adopts this

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

I CURRENT LEGAL AND FACTUAL STATE OF AFFAIRS

Despite gender equality being – often and wrongly – reduced to prohibiting discrimination or to prescribed legal equality, the truth is that all human rights and freedoms must necessarily have a gender aspect. That is why gender equality is primarily a matter of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Gender Equality Plan (henceforth: the Plan) relies entirely on the legal framework of the Republic of Serbia provided by the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia. It provides a starting point for further legal elaboration of relevant national regulations, such as the Antidiscrimination Act and the Gender Equality Act (henceforth: GEA).

The GEA defines the notion of gender as “socially constructed roles, opportunities, behaviors, activities and attributes, that a certain society considers appropriate for women and men, including mutual relation(ship)s¹ between men and women and roles in these relationships that are socially determined depending on their sex” (Art. 6, para. 1, pt. 1). Gender equality implies that men and women should have equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities, participate equally and be equally represented in all spheres of social life “taking into account biological, social and cultural differences between men and women and different interests, needs and priorities of women and men”, as stated in GEA (Art. 3). In a nutshell, the issue of gender must neither deteriorate men’s and women’s position nor influence their rights in any detrimental way.

The gender equality legal framework of the Republic of Serbia is solid. Nevertheless, its mere existence does not automatically provide for its implementation. It is necessary to transpire from a legal space of promise to an all-encompassing observation of gender equality in practice. This Plan is a step precisely in that direction.

In its current bylaws, as well as in its activities, the UUB has adhered to the ideas of equal opportunities and zero discrimination on any grounds. It is necessary, however, to boost further action by introducing a gender perspective in its operation. Besides, an incentive to adopt this Plan is incorporated in the conclusion of the National Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2030 (henceforth: *the 2021-2030 Strategy*). It states that gender inequality is one of the characteristics of university education in the Republic of Serbia. This is why the UUB has decided to assess the current state of affairs in the field of gender equality at all levels and in all aspects of its work. In some respects, such consideration is limited to a self-assessment, whilst in others it is aimed at contributing to social changes.

¹ Serbian uses the same word (*odnosi*) for both ‘relation(s)’ and ‘relationship(s)’. The word itself does not overtly distinguish between their social and private spheres (in Engl. relations cf. relationships, respectively). – Transl. note.

II AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The principal aim of the Plan is achieving gender equality by means of its promotion, advancement and sustantation.

This aim is unique, yet two-dimensional and, as such, encompasses a technical and a material objective.

The technical objective of the aim should provide for data collection as a base for an assessment of the current situation pertaining to gender equality at all levels in order to adopt gender-sensitive/-responsive strategies or undertake gender-sensitive/-responsive action.

The material objective of the aim (gender-sensitive/-responsive strategies and gender-sensitive/-responsive action) should provide for a continuous gender equality promotion.

The significance of the two objectives to the aim is the following:



THE TECHNICAL OBJECTIVE OF ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY:

Institutional capacity-building for assessment of the state of affairs pertaining to gender equality

One of the reasons why the value of gender equality is still uncharted territory is a lack of parameters based on which its progress could be monitored, as well as a lack of a standardized data collection and processing system providing for undertaking gender-accountable activities. The aforementioned technical objective of the aim ought to eliminate such drawbacks.

The initial phase would imply designing ways to collect data. Yet, having data, in and of itself, does neither confirm nor deny the existence of gender equality or lack thereof. This is why phase two would imply collection of specific data, which, after their analysis at the third phase, would offer useful insight into the situation pertaining to gender equality, as well as the challenges and obstacles to its implementation, or ways to identify the gender gap.

The processed data might indicate the challenges on the way towards promotion of gender equality. It is precisely in this domain, according to *the*

2021-2030 Strategy, that there is gender disbalance concerning women and men employed in educational institutions, as well as their participation in the management structures (e.g. insufficient representation of women in policy creation and decision-making both at university level and within the academic community itself).

See measure No. 1 below.



THE MATERIAL OBJECTIVE OF ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY:

Advancement and promotion of a gender equality culture

This aspect focuses on welfare to be achieved, not only at the university level, but in the society, by pointing out the significance of gender equality, as well as indicating the threats that might result from neglecting its significance. The presence of an anti-gender discourse, gender stereotypes, as well as patriarchal tendencies, is still apparent. Besides pointing out its significance, gender equality requires additional, gender-sensitive/-responsive action. It is to be expected that, by rule, gender-sensitive/-responsive strategies and actions will have intensified upon completion of all phases of the technical objective implementation and based on data analysis that would indicate the procedural or material obstacles to further promotion of the gender equality mainstreaming process.

See measure No. 2 below.

III MEASURES AND ACTIVITIES

In order to achieve the aim and its objectives, the following measures need to be implemented:

- * Capacity-building in gender-sensitive statistics (as Measure No. 1, concerning primarily the technical objective of the aim);
- * Awareness-raising about the significance of gender equality and its promotion (as Measure No. 2, concerning primarily the material objective of the aim).

A table illustrating the aforementioned measures and their consequential activities is to be found below:

Measure No. 1: Capacity-building in gender-sensitive statistics

Activities to implement the measure:

Phase No. 1:	Phase No. 2:	Phase No. 3:
<p>Drafting data collection and processing plans; Working on creation of database or data storage; Developing gender equality monitoring tools and indicators.</p>	<p>Data collection based on the system created in phase No. 1; The data pertain but are not limited to: gender and age of male and female candidates for academic position, gender structure of the UUB bodies, bodies of the UUB member faculties, as well as committees for academic promotion, No. of men and women awarded a PhD diploma in a certain period.</p>	<p>Data processing and analysis, as well as situational analysis based on data collected in phase No. 2; Reporting and establishing an academic/research career monitoring system.</p>

Outcome:

<p>A data collection system has been established.</p>	<p>Gender-relevant data have been collected; Missing data for creation of gender-sensitive/-responsive strategies have been identified; A base for a gender-sensitive statistics promotion roadmap has been created.</p>	<p>Indicators with a gender component have been created; A possibility of proposing gender-sensitive/-responsive strategies, procedures and activities aimed at gender equality promotion has been created.</p>
---	--	---

Time frame:

Starting in October 2024	Starting in October 2025	Starting in October 2026
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Activity implemented by:

<p>The UUB Rectorate (with its member faculties and assisted by its IT service)</p>	<p>The UUB Rectorate (with its member faculties and assisted by its IT service).</p>	<p>The UUB Rectorate with its member faculties.</p>
---	--	---

Activities' effectiveness assessment:

Reports

Measure No. 2: Awareness-raising about the significance of gender equality and its promotion

Activities to implement the measure:

Primary activity to implement the measure: Introducing female and male students, teachers and non-teaching staff with priority materials concerning gender equality.	Additional activities: Considering the normative development in the field of gender equality, as well as the development of practical measures to mainstream gender equality, as preparation for further gender equality promotion measures (esp. considering <i>the 2021-2030 Strategy</i>).
Primary activity implementation: Sending materials or uploading them on a designated platform.	Additional activities implementation: The usual activities implemented while considering normative development and the actual situation in practice.
Primary activity outcome: Recognizing/acknowledging the significance of gender equality.	Additional activities outcome: Additional contribution to gender equality.
Primary activity time frame: Starting in October 2024	Additional activities time frame: Depending on the primary activity, measure No. 2 and the assessment of the current situation based on data collected during implementation of measure No. 1.
Primary activity implemented by: The UUB Rectorate (along with its member faculties who are bound to operationalize it).	Additional activities implemented by: The UUB Rectorate (with operative support provided by its member faculties).
Primary activity effectiveness assessment: Materials distribution reports, polls, etc.	Additional activities effectiveness assessment: Reports

IV IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

This Plan has been devised with an aim comprised of its guiding objectives, as well as measures and activities for its implementation. An Action Plan will be adopted to specify the originally planned measures and activities, along with their implementation dynamics time frame.

The data collected and analyzed under Measure No. 1 will make the objectives, measures and activities of the original Plan susceptible to amendments and alterations to further promote and maintain the reached level of gender equality.

Monitoring, evaluation and coordination of the planned measures and activities is to be implemented by the Rectorate.

An annual report is considered a regular implementation process monitoring tool pertaining to the Plan.

Concluding Statement

This is the first Gender Equality Plan adopted by the Union University in Belgrade. Its implementation will determine the direction of the UUB's additional efforts aimed at gender equality promotion.

The Union University in Belgrade commits to a wholehearted and diligent implementation of the Plan. (The Plan has been composed by Ana Vladislavljević, MA, Teaching Fellow, and Prof. Tatjana Papić, Full Professor, both from the Union University Law School Belgrade.)

Belgrade,
27 February 2024

Professor Nenad Malešević, D.A.
Acting Rector
Union University in Belgrade

