



UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU GENDER EQUALITY PLAN 2022–2025



INTRODUCTION

The University of Tartu ('university') bears social responsibility in supporting the sustainable development of society and considers it important to promote gender equality among its members. This gender equality plan is the first major step towards addressing this issue more extensively and systematically at the university.

Pursuant to [Gender Equality Act](#), men and women must be ensured equal rights, obligations, opportunities and responsibility in professional life, upon acquisition of education and participation in other areas of social life. In practice, it means that we have to knowingly offer equal opportunities regardless of gender, eliminate rules and practices that create inequality, work actively to prevent sexual harassment, provide favourable conditions for reconciling work and family life, and integrate the theme of gender equality into education, from the kindergarten to higher education. Awareness of the importance of gender equality and changing people's attitudes therefore need much more communication and explaining.

Promoting gender equality is a hallmark of an international organisation focused on sustainable development.

It is necessary and important not only from legal and ethical aspects, but it also builds a competent workforce, improves performance, helps reduce absenteeism and staff turnover, and enhances the reputation of the university. Equality allows making the best use of the intellectual potential of staff for the benefit of the university and society. Research shows that more diverse research groups are more innovative and successful, they are able to consider more aspects, including the needs of different target groups, and to create solutions that better meet the expectations of society. Diversity, including gender equality, is also directly linked to countries' economic growth.¹

At the beginning of 2021, the University of Tartu's Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS) completed the study "[Gender equality in Estonian science – current situation and ways of improving](#)". The study concludes that gender gap in Estonian science is a serious problem that is not easily resolved due to societal attitudes

and prejudices. There is the so-called leaky pipeline phenomenon: although women outnumber men in higher education, they are much less likely than men to reach higher academic positions.

The academic world is assumed to be gender-neutral and unequal treatment is ruled out, as academic staff are evaluated based on their performance and competence.² Academic capability and quality of research are, and must be, the priority. However, attention should also be paid to whether women have been ensured the same opportunities as men to reach or maintain the same level of academic competence.

Gender inequality is not just a women's issue, as gender stereotypes can also harm men: greater power, the associated responsibility, expectations and workload on the labour market may lead to risk-taking behaviour and early death.³

Equality in society, however, improves both women's quality of life and men's satisfaction with life, according to research.⁴

As inequality is hidden in different layers (societal attitudes, work culture, family reasons, personal beliefs), it is difficult to address the issue, identify the causes and solve them, and an active and sustained effort at different levels of society is needed to bring about change.

The University of Tartu Gender Equality Plan has been prepared in the knowledge that promoting gender equality is a continuous process and that small steps can lead to bigger results. We have set four goals, the implementation and progress of which we will monitor in the years 2022–2025; after that we can make summaries and set new targets.



1. European Institute for Gender Equality. Economic Benefits of Gender Equality in the European Union. – https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/economic_benefits_of_gender_equality_in_the_european_union_overall_economic_impacts_of_gender_equality.pdf
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GENDER BALANCE AT THE UNIVERSITY

At the end of 2020, there were 3,767 employees at the university, including 53% academic staff. Over the last five years, the share of women among all academic staff has been stable at 50%. Still, the number of women in higher academic positions is significantly lower. In 2020, only 26% of university professors were women (Figure 1).

■ Gender balance, however, is defined as a situation where at least 40% of both genders is represented.

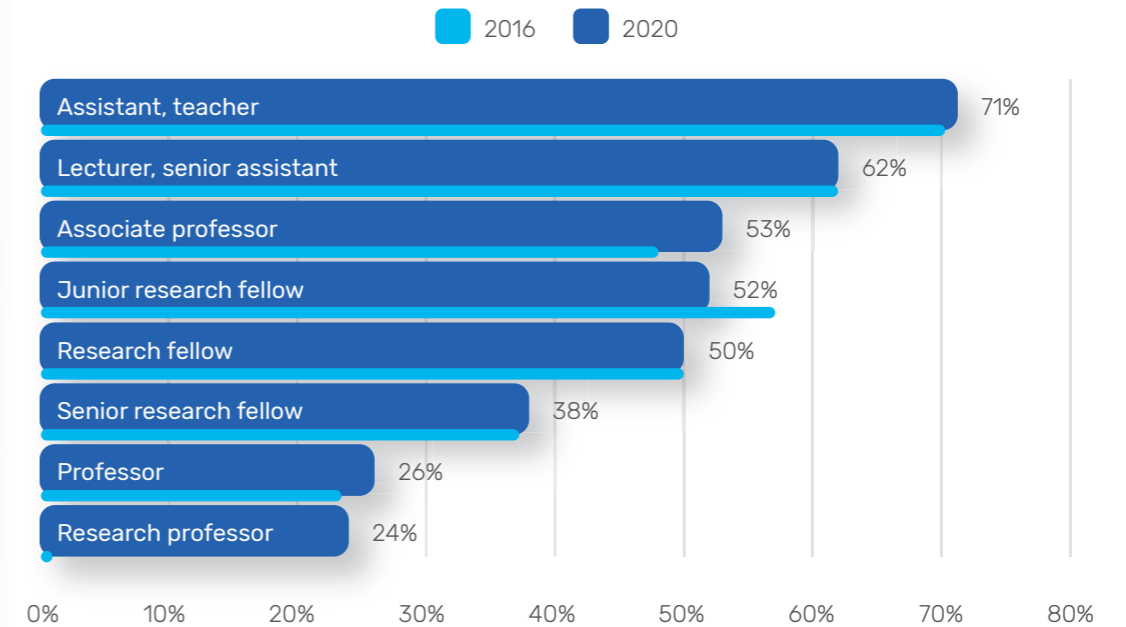


Figure 1. Share of women in academic positions in 2016 and 2020⁵

Among support staff, women outnumber men in most salary grades, except the highest grade, the eighth, which includes vice-rectors and area directors (Table 1).

Table 1. Gender distribution by salary grade in August 2021

Salary grade	Academic staff				Support staff				All staff			
	Women	Men	Total	% of women	Women	Men	Total	% of women	Women	Men	Total	% of women
1			-		70	34	104	67	70	34	104	67
2			-		332	175	507	65	332	175	507	65
3			-		528	240	768	69	528	240	768	69
4	310	196	506	61	237	129	366	65	544	322	866	63
5	402	338	740	54	33	16	49	67	435	354	789	55
6	219	300	519	42	2		2	100	221	300	521	42
7	64	181	245	26	17	7	24	71	81	188	269	30
8			-		2	4	6	33	2	4	6	33
Total	995	1,015	2,010	50	1,221	605	1,826	67	2,213	1,617	3,830	58

5. In 2021, the university introduced a new [career model](#), which also involved changing certain job titles. Former positions of associate professor and senior research fellow were joined into the position of associate professor, and the position of research professor was joined with the position of professor. The assistant's position was discontinued and the people formerly working as assistants now hold the position of a teacher or a junior lecturer, depending on the nature of their duties. The position of junior lecturer is a new one.

Looking at more detailed gender distribution by academic positions in the university's four faculties in August 2021 (Figure 2), one can see that the Faculty of Social Sciences is the only one with gender balance among professors. In the Faculty of Science and Technology, the proportion of female professors and associate professors is small – 11% and 30%, respectively. However, there is gender equality in lower-level positions. In other faculties, generally more women work in lower positions (excl. the junior research fellow's position in the Faculty of Social Sciences).

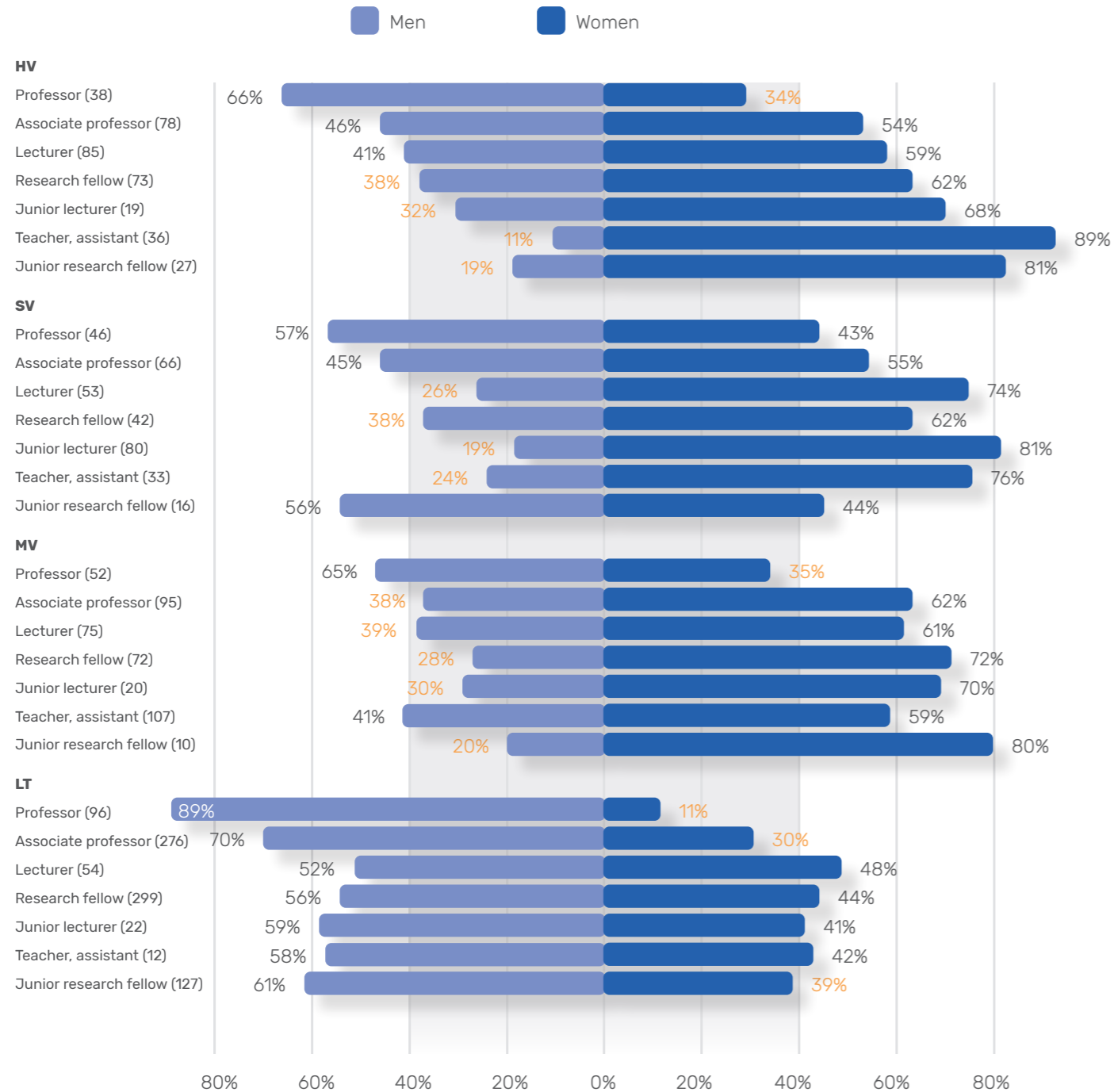


Figure 2. Gender distribution of academic staff by faculty and position in August 2021

Note. In this figure and in the ones below, men are shown on the left and women on the right (in each line, men + women = 100%). Next to the job title, the number of employees in this position is shown in brackets. Silver background denotes a gender-balanced area – the columns that fit entirely in the silver area are gender-balanced. Orange indicates cases where the proportion of one gender is below 40%.

Figure 3 reveals that in each faculty there are institutes where there are only male professors. Men are over-represented in the Faculty of Science and Technology, where half of the institutes have only male professors, and the proportion of men in the remaining institutes is also very high (75% or more). In the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Medicine, there are also institutes with only women professors. The best gender balance among professors is found of the institutes of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

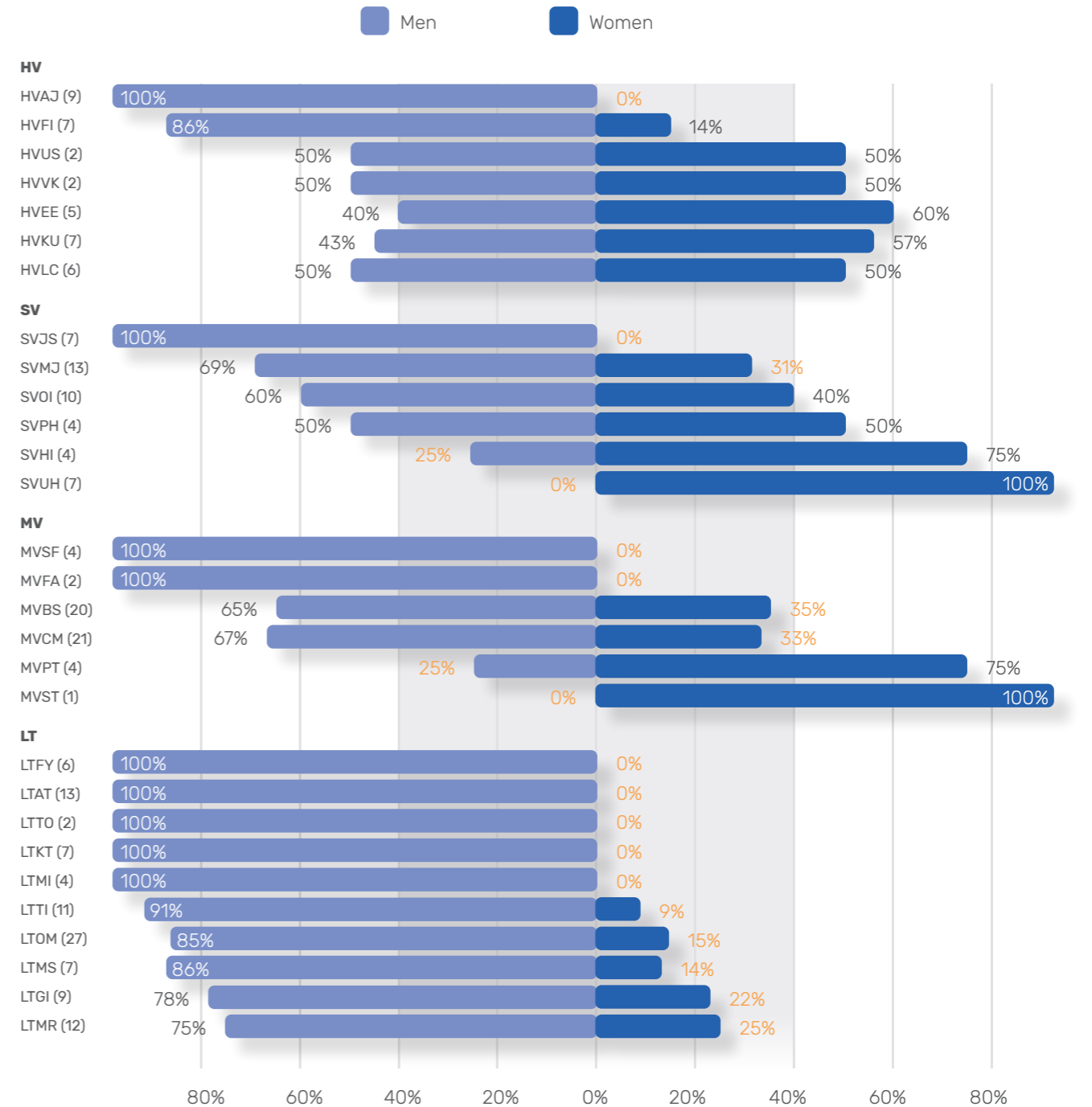


Figure 3. Gender distribution of professors in institutes and colleges in August 2021

The gender distribution of members of the university's highest bodies, i.e. the council and the senate, is balanced (Figure 4). Among members of the Rector's Office, men are clearly in the majority. Deans – the leaders of faculties – are all men, while the heads of all dean's offices are women. The gender balance of heads of institutes and colleges is slightly skewed towards men, but the heads of support units and institutions are predominantly women. There are fewer men in the council of the Faculty of Social Sciences, but the gender distribution of the council members of other faculties is balanced.

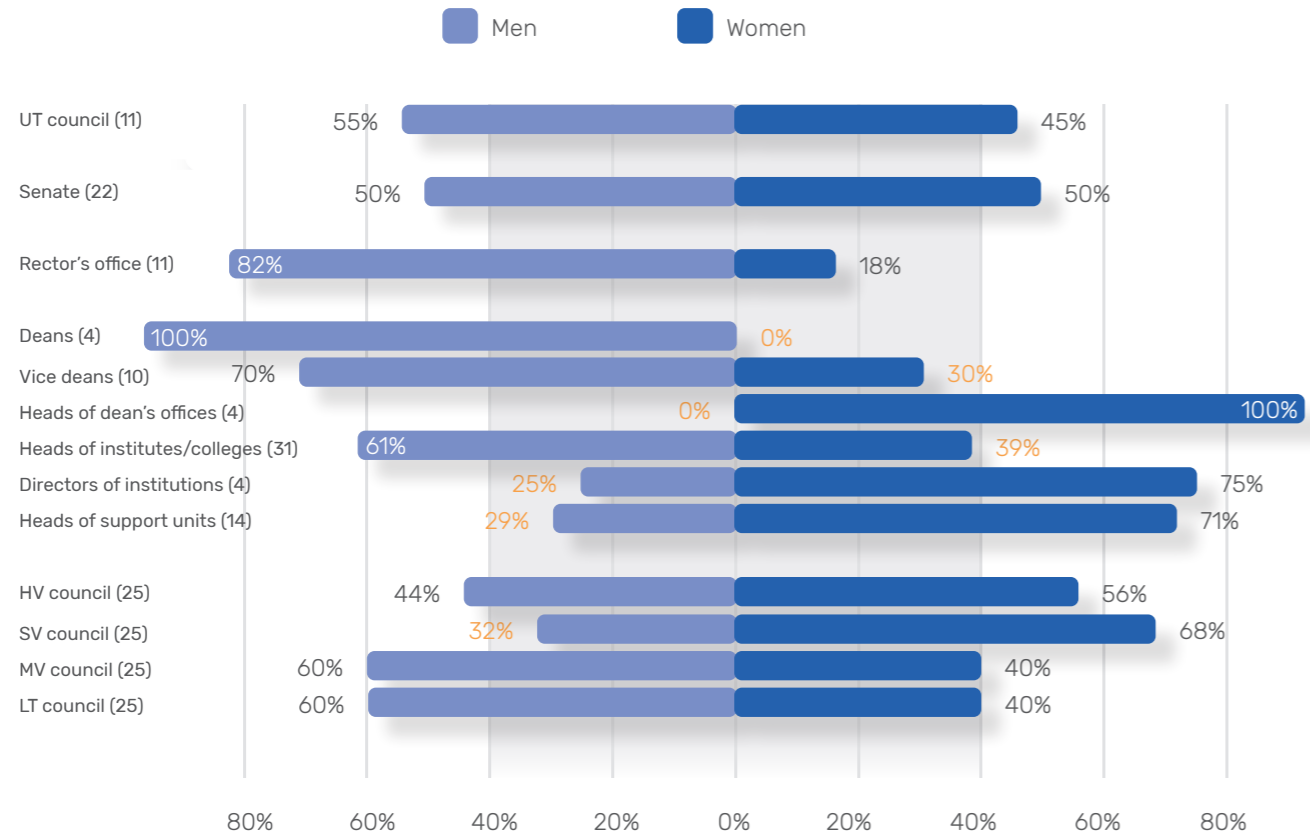


Figure 4. Gender distribution of managers and members of decision-making bodies in August 2021



Photo: Renee Altrov

According to Figure 5, gender breakdown of the councils of institutes and colleges is very different. There are noticeably more men in more than half of the institute councils of the Faculty of Science and Technology, while the councils of three institutes of the same faculty are gender-balanced. In other faculties, there are some institute or college councils with considerably fewer women, but also some gender-balanced councils.

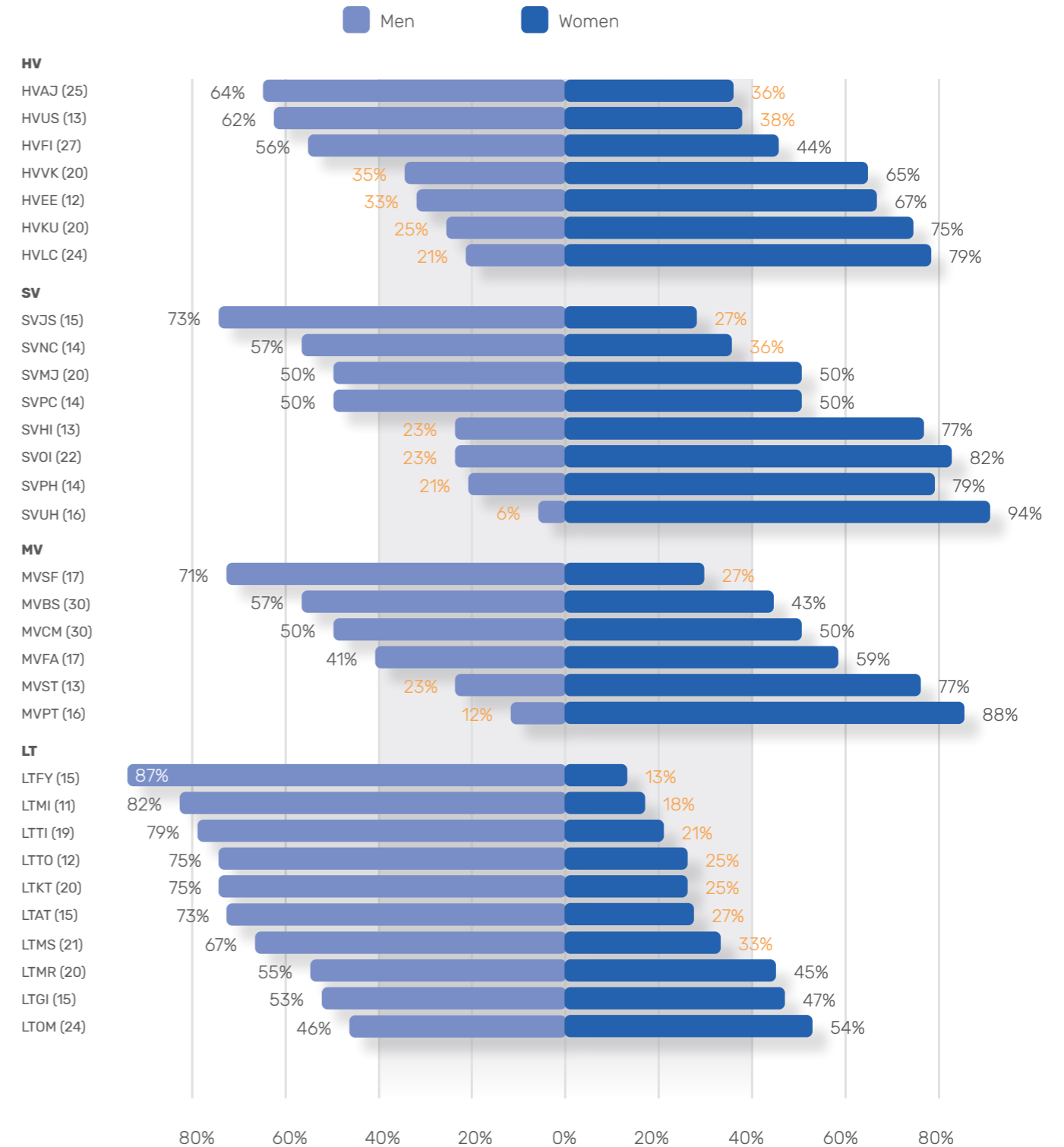


Figure 5. Gender distribution of members of institute and college councils in August 2021

Figure 6 gives an overview of gender pay gap at the university. In 2020, there was a more than 10% pay gap in favour of women in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities in the position of research fellow. However, there are considerably more positions where women's average salary is 10% lower than that of men. For example, among professors, lecturers, assistants and teachers of the Faculty of Science and Technology, and assistants, teachers and junior research fellows in the Faculty of Social Sciences, the pay gap was in favour of men.

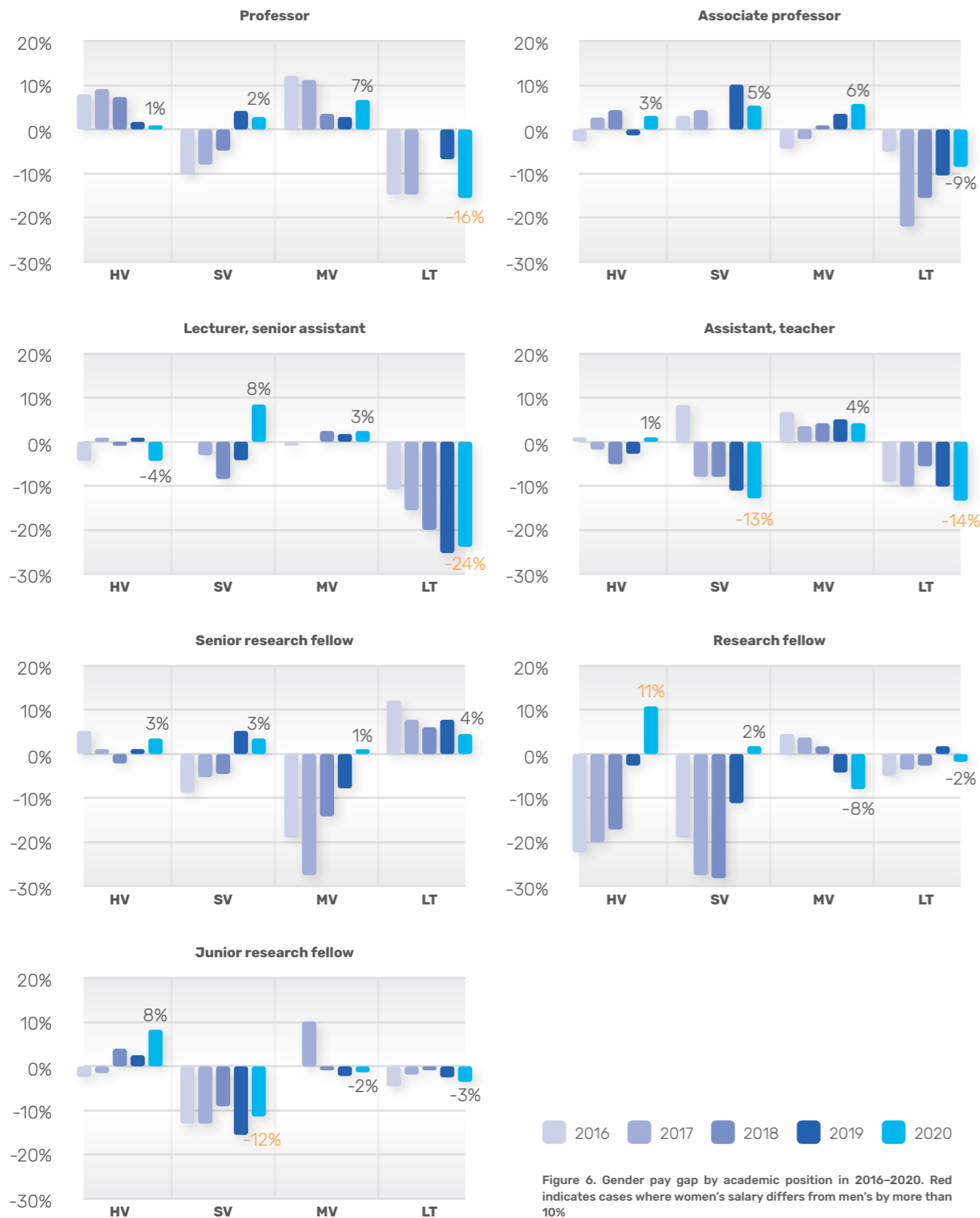


Figure 6. Gender pay gap by academic position in 2016-2020. Red indicates cases where women's salary differs from men's by more than 10%

In three faculties of the university, there are considerably more female students than male students. At the first-level study in the Faculty of Science and Technology, the situation is the opposite, and at higher study levels, the gender breakdown is balanced (Figure 7). Only one of the fields of study is balanced (Figure 8).

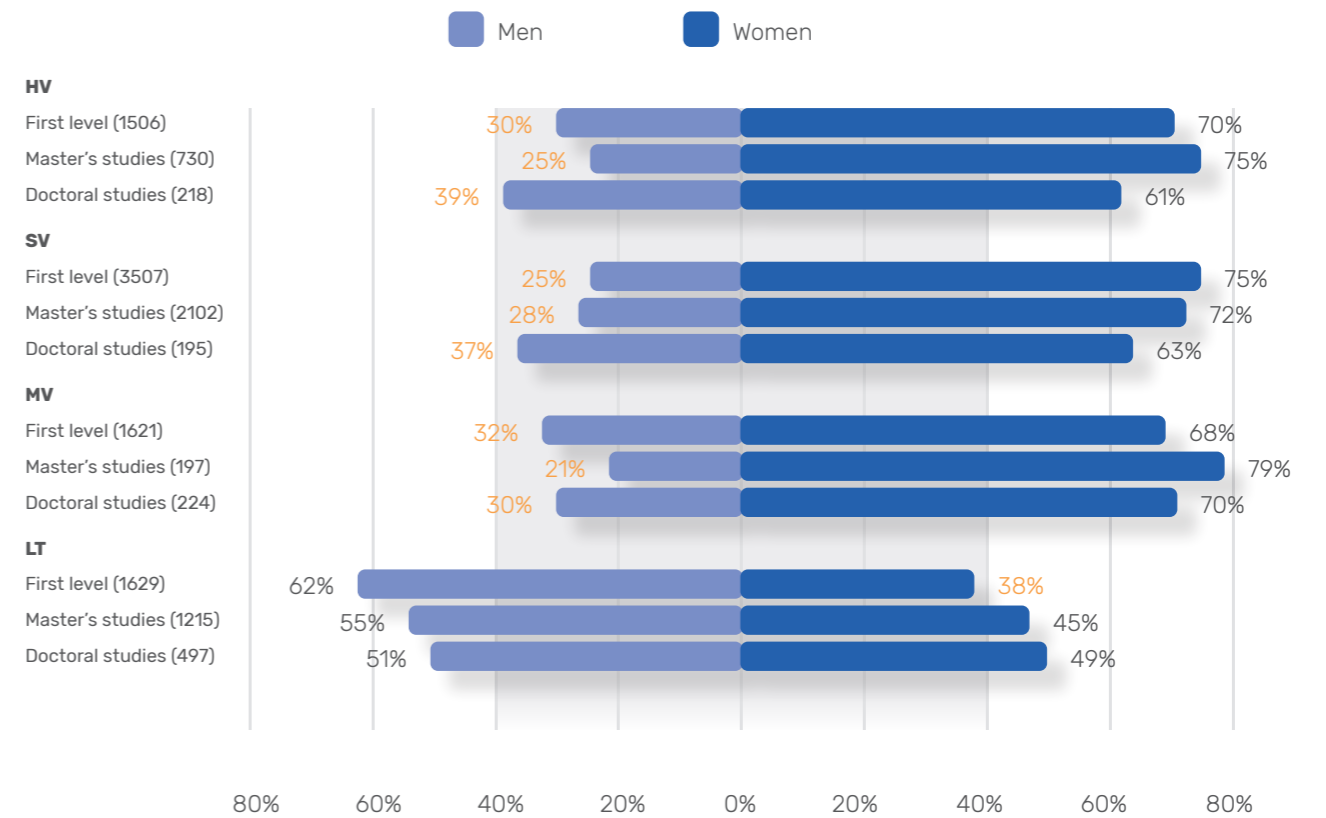


Figure 7. Gender distribution of students by faculty and study level in August 2020. The number of students is shown in brackets next to the level of study

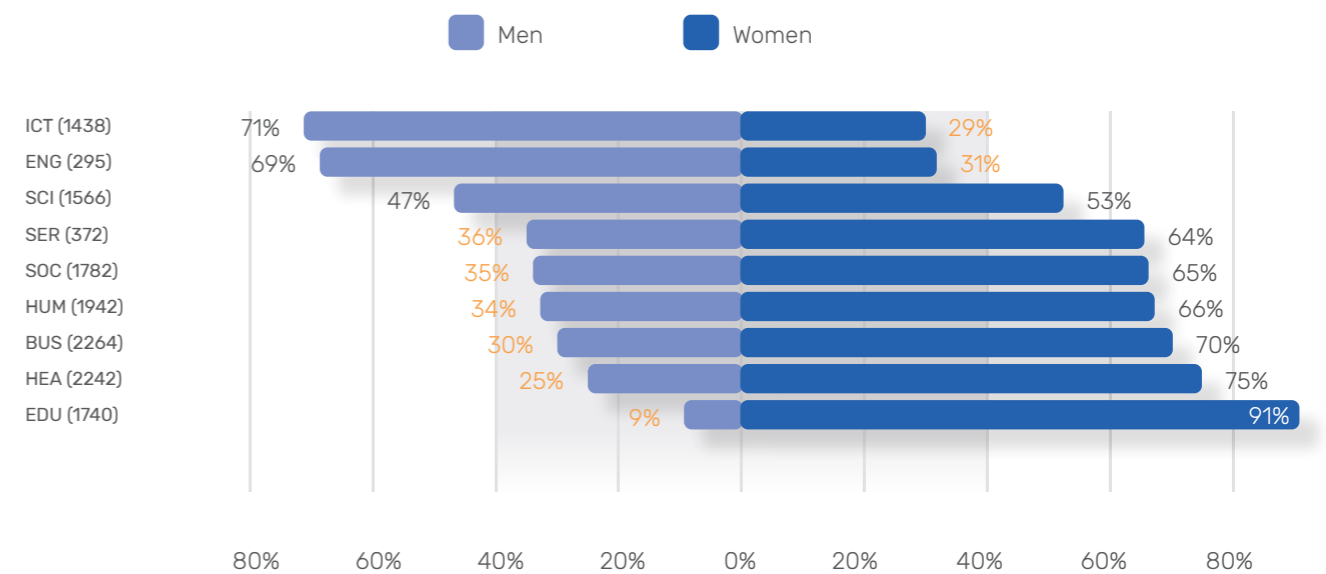


Figure 8. Gender distribution of students by field of study in August 2020. The total number of students is shown in brackets next to the field of study

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

An objective of the university's strategic plan [A2025](#) is to be an innovative organisation that is focused on sustainable development, provides equal opportunities and follows the best practices, and aims to set an example for Estonia with its organisational culture and activities. A human-centred approach and individual development are among the core values of the university, supported by the [good practices](#), including the [guidelines for equal treatment](#)⁶.

Gender equality brings greater diversity to the university's development, strengthening the credibility and quality of our activities.

The university promotes the equal treatment of its members regardless of gender, ethnicity, language, religion and belief, functional ability, sexual orientation, gender identity and age. We continue work to provide staff with equal career opportunities, fair salary arrangements and equal opportunities for participating in the university governance, and to ensure fair and transparent proceeding of discrimination cases. To this end, it is important to set targets and agree on actions that are realistic and take into account the overall gender balance in the areas of activity.

For the years 2021–2025, the university has set four main objectives:

- 1.** to enhance the members' awareness of gender equality and to show its connections with the university's main activities (teaching and studies, research, service to society);
- 2.** to promote gender equality among the members through
 - 2.1.** gender-responsive recruitment, creating equal career opportunities, career counselling and mentorship,
 - 2.2.** reducing the gender pay gap,
 - 2.3.** creating flexible working arrangements that support work-life balance;
- 3.** to involve, in a balanced way, employees of both genders in governing bodies and decision-making;
- 4.** to promote an organisational culture that values the equal treatment of all members, incl. to improve the members' awareness of equal treatment and sexual harassment; to focus on preventing and solving of problems.

The achievement of the objectives is supported by gender-responsive marketing and communication activities.

Led by the Human Resources Office, an annual review of the implementation of the gender equality plan is prepared for the Rector's Office and the senate, and the key activities and results related to gender equality are also reflected in the university's annual report. In future, the university's key performance indicators should also include gender equality indicators.

6. See also <https://ut.ee/en/content/equal-treatment>



OBJECTIVE 1:

To enhance members' awareness of gender equality and show its connections with the university's main activities (teaching and studies, research, service to society)

The university has various possibilities to keep the topic of gender equality in spotlight more than so far and spread it to large audiences. Currently, a search on the intranet only returns a few news on gender equality, and these are mostly about the professional work of some members of academic staff. In the university regulations, gender equality has been briefly dealt with in the Work Rules and the Guidelines for equal treatment. By means of gender-responsive communication and marketing activities it is possible to draw more attention to gender inequality and to the need to find a balance, to introduce important topics and overturn gender stereotypes.

Gender attitudes need to be guided from an early age and the university has the power to influence it. Gender-responsive teaching methods can be introduced to teachers and preschool teachers, and diversity and gender studies can be integrated into the courses of all levels of higher education and to continuing education. Many courses already address the gender aspect, and it can be highlighted in course learning outcomes.

ACTIVITY	PERSON RESPONSIBLE OR IN CHARGE
1.1. Organising training and information sessions, seminars, conferences on gender equality	Human Resources Office
1.2. Bringing focus on gender awareness in the network of marketing and communication staff, specifically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> language use, selection of pictures and spokespeople are guided by gender awareness publishing interesting and educational news and research-based opinion pieces on gender equality, incl. wider coverage of the respective activities and research of academic staff to overturn stereotypes, highlighting the achievements of staff members acting in specialisations traditionally regarded as more suitable for the opposite sex 	Marketing and Communication Office with the university's marketing and communication network
1.3. When organising public events, speakers and spokespersons of different genders are invited	Marketing and Communication Office, International Cooperation and Protocol Unit
1.4. Offering students the opportunity to carry out research on gender equality and presenting the results through the university's information channels and at public seminars	Teaching staff, marketing and communication staff
1.5. Increasing the number of university-wide courses that deal with the topic of gender awareness and diversity	Vice rector for academic affairs
1.6. Integrating the topic of gender equality in relevant courses and reflecting it also in the course description in the SIS	Vice rector for academic affairs, programme directors
1.7. Integrating the teaching of gender-aware studies in teacher education	Institute of Education
1.8. Organising (institute-based, programme-based) training sessions, seminars and experience exchange for teaching staff on how to integrate gender issues in study programmes, and compiling a collection of good practices	Vice rector for academic affairs, Centre for Professional Development

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- events have been organised to raise awareness of gender equality
- more focus is placed on gender equality in communication and marketing activities, evidenced by an increase in the number of news articles, social media posts, etc. on gender equality and reflected in the content of marketing activities
- the integration of gender issues into curricula has started and there is an increased number of courses where diversity, including gender equality, is dealt with as a main topic or sub-topic
- the development of courses dealing with the teaching of gender-aware studies has started

OBJECTIVE 2:

To promote gender equality among the members

The second objective has three sub-objectives to promote gender equality among staff.

Gender-aware recruitment and creating equal career opportunities is an inevitable and essential measure for promoting gender equality.

The university will aim, more than so far, to promote diversity as a value in recruitment and encourage all people to apply for jobs, regardless of gender or other characteristics. Diversity must also be considered when selecting experts to evaluate applicants to a job and members of the committee to evaluate academic staff. The university's career model must not create obstacles and career breaks must be taken into account, if necessary, when evaluating the performance of employees.

SUB-OBJECTIVE 1: GENDER-AWARE RECRUITMENT, CREATING EQUAL CAREER OPPORTUNITIES, CAREER COUNSELLING AND MENTORSHIP	
ACTIVITY	PERSON RESPONSIBLE OR IN CHARGE
2.1. Information about appreciating the diversity of staff members is included in promotional materials introducing the university as an employer, and in job offers	Human Resources Office
2.2. Inviting persons of the underrepresented gender to participate in public competitions	Head of structural unit or future immediate supervisor
2.3. Drawing more attention to the achievements of female professors and associate professors to overturn gender stereotypes and inspire young female researchers to aim for higher positions. In February, the Day of Women in Science is celebrated	Marketing and Communication Office
2.4. Giving importance to having experts of different genders among the experts evaluating applicants to a job and the members of the committee evaluating the academic staff.	Person setting up the committee, Human Resources Office
2.5. Encouraging high-performing women researchers to apply for promotion and take up managerial positions	Head of structural unit, immediate supervisor, colleagues
2.6. Offering support to female researchers to advance their career through leadership training, mentoring programmes and collegial coaching groups	Centre for Professional Development

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- increase in the percentage of female professors in underrepresented structural units
- a network of mentors has been created and the necessary training is ensured
- leaders of collegial coaching groups have organised training courses and the groups are working
- experts of different genders are represented among members of evaluation committees and experts evaluating applicants to a position
- special attention has been paid to gender equality in the training of evaluation committee members

The **gender pay gap** for all employees of the university in 2020 was 20% and for academic staff 14% (According to Statistics Estonia, the gender pay gap in 2020 in Estonia as a whole was 15.6%). While there are gender differences in average pay by positions between women and men at university, these differences are not unambiguously in favour of men. The main reason for the pay differences of women and men lies in the structural difference: the percentage of women is higher in Estonia in sectors that are, on average, lower-paid (education, humanities and arts), and in lower academic positions (lecturer, teacher, assistant).

It is important to study the reasons for the pay gap and compile an action plan to reduce the structural and the unexplained gender pay gap.

SUB-OBJECTIVE 2: REDUCING THE GENDER PAY GAP	
ACTIVITY	PERSON RESPONSIBLE OR IN CHARGE
2.7. Gathering and analysing gender pay statistics and publishing it on statistics dashboard	Human Resources Office
2.8. Analysing gender pay gap at the university to identify its causes and the possible solutions to reduce it	Human Resources Office
2.9. Raising awareness among managers by means of unit-specific reviews so that managers can identify and recognise unexplained pay gaps and treat employees equally – the same salary should be paid for the same work and equivalent contribution.	Human Resources Office

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- gender pay statistics is published regularly
- pay gap has been analysed and an action plan for reducing structural and unexplained gender pay gap has been made



Finding balance between work and family life is important for all employees and it is directly related to wellbeing at work and productivity.

According to the university's annual job satisfaction survey, one in five employees feels that work does not leave them enough time for their personal life, so it is necessary to adapt working conditions to suit all employees, improve work-life balance and thereby increase employee commitment and job satisfaction. Traditionally, the need to combine work, studies and family life has affected women more than men. Although men have gradually started taking parental leave, it is still mostly taken by women and this can affect the development of their career. At the university, only six men out of 178 employees (3.4%) took parental leave in 2020, and none among male academic staff.

It should also be mentioned that not all families have two parents of different genders – there are single-parent families, blended families, families with same-sex parents and foster parents. In addition to caring for children, responsibilities may include caring for other close relatives or elderly parents. Therefore, many people need support to successfully perform their roles at work and in family life.

SUB-OBJECTIVE 3: CREATING FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS THAT SUPPORT WORK-LIFE BALANCE	
ACTIVITY	PERSON RESPONSIBLE OR IN CHARGE
2.10. Offering flexible working arrangements, part-time work and remote work opportunities to balance work and family life	Head of structural unit, immediate supervisor
2.11. If possible, academic staff returning from parental leave are offered some time without teaching obligations (a free semester) or with lower teaching workload and fewer administrative duties, so that the employee could readjust to the academic world, prepare new teaching materials, etc.	Head of structural unit, immediate supervisor
2.12. If possible, parents of young children and employees caring for close relatives are given priority in choosing lecture times	Head of structural unit, immediate supervisor, programme director
2.13. A survey on the use of working time is carried out among staff to study the extent and more precise causes of possible overwork, and on the basis of the survey, an action plan is made to improve the situation	Human Resources Office
2.14. Ensuring that the university's academic staff (both evaluators and those being evaluated) are aware of the principles laid down in the university regulations that require them to take into account the evaluated person's stay on parental leave, both when applying for the job and during evaluation	Human Resources Office, Marketing and Communication Office, managers
2.15. Employees on parental leave are kept informed of key information and allowing them to take part in training if they wish	Head of structural unit, immediate supervisor

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- active promotion of the above-mentioned activities through various information channels and their inclusion in the faculties' strategic plans, and, where necessary, regulation in bylaws
- increase in the proportion of respondents to the job satisfaction survey for whom work and personal life are in balance

OBJECTIVE 3:

Involving in a balanced way, employees of both genders in governing bodies and decision-making

The diversity, incl. gender diversity, of the university's decision-making bodies (e.g. council, senate, faculty councils and institute councils) is the basis for more varied decision-making and considering the interests of various groups.

Pursuant to the results of the CASS study "Gender equality in Estonian science – current situation and ways of improving", the reason for the imbalance in decision-making bodies lies partly in the unequal distribution of men and women in different positions, as some of the members – mostly those holding higher academic or managerial positions – are ex officio members. For example, professors are ex officio members of the councils of 14 institutes of the university. The appointment of members of the university committees, however, is less regulated and often the free choice of the person setting up the committee.

ACTIVITY	PERSON RESPONSIBLE OR IN CHARGE
3.1. Reviewing the statutes of institutes and colleges to reduce, if necessary, the number of ex officio members and increasing the number of elected members	Head of institute and director of college, dean
3.2. Encouraging employees of the underrepresented gender to apply for membership in decision-making bodies	Heads of institutes and colleges, council members
3.3. Giving importance to gender diversity when appointing members to university committees	Person setting up the committee
3.4. Amending the good practice of leadership by adding modern leadership principles, incl. adding information about the importance of diversity	Human Resources Office

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- gender balance of the councils of institutes and colleges has improved
- the university committees are gender-balanced
- the good practice of leadership has been amended

OBJECTIVE 4:

To promote an organisational culture that values the equal treatment of all members, incl. to improve the members' awareness of equal treatment and sexual harassment; focus on preventing and solving of problems

In 2016, the university was the first public organisation in Estonia to adopt guidelines for equal treatment, aiming to provide an overview of the issues related to equal treatment and workplace harassment, give employees and students clear instructions on how to inform about a violation of the principles of equal treatment and describe the procedure of resolving discrimination and bullying cases.

More effort, however, needs to be placed in information and prevention activities related to equal treatment, thereby influencing organisational culture and values.

ACTIVITY	PERSON RESPONSIBLE OR IN CHARGE
4.1. Creating an online environment in which information on equal treatment is gathered (in Estonian and English) and making it easily accessible and visible	Academic secretary, Human Resources Office, Office of Academic Affairs
4.2. Finding and training support persons for equal treatment who are responsible for advising people on filing complaints regarding unequal treatment (e.g. who to contact, how to submit)	Academic Secretary, faculties' dean's offices, Centre for Professional Development
4.3. Creating a support network of experts who would help resolve specific or complicated cases of unequal treatment	Academic secretary, Human Resources Office
4.4. Organising training courses and events to raise university members' awareness of equal treatment (incl. gender equality, unconscious gender bias and gender identity), involving experts from Estonia as trainers	Centre for Professional Development
4.5. Improving the managers' counselling skills to address unequal treatment issues by offering workshops	Centre for Professional Development
4.6. Adding questions regarding equal treatment in the annual job satisfaction survey	Centre for Professional Development

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- information related to equal treatment is easy to find
- a network of support persons has been created and its members have received training
- managers have received necessary support to develop their counselling skills
- training courses and events have been organised to highlight the theme and to enhance the awareness of the university members





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