

Approved:

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## **Gender Equality Policy 2023 – 2027**

**MEDICAL UNIVERSITY – SOFIA**

***The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy of Medical University – Sofia sets out the university's goals for the period 2023-2027. These goals support the university's commitment to treat all faculty, students, lecturers, researchers, administrative staff and stakeholders fairly with dignity and respect .***


Equality and diversity issues are not considered the responsibility of specific experts within the University, but are intended to form part of an overall approach to equal opportunities that reflects the organizational culture of the University.

Equality between women and men is a fundamental right, a common value of the European Union and a necessary condition for achieving the Union's goals for growth, employment and social cohesion. The equality of women and men is an important element of democracy and a prerequisite for the full exercise of human rights. It is key to achieving social justice and cohesion, sustainable, smart and inclusive economic growth. It affects all areas of life and therefore the integration of the principle of equality between women and men in all policies is a necessary condition and guarantee for good governance and progress of society. In the field of equality between women and men, efforts are aimed at ensuring conditions for equality between women and men in all areas of public life, prevention and protection from discrimination.

Equality between men and women in the field of research and innovation is among the main priorities in the policies to build the European Research Area, which aims to remove barriers to the recruitment, retention and career development of female researchers and to eliminate gender imbalances in the taking of decisions. This priority is also preserved in the updated concept of the European Commission for a new European Research Area based on excellence. A priority activity for the European Commission in the development of the new European Research Area is the development of concrete plans in the member states to promote gender equality, diversity and inclusion in science, research and innovation . Strengthening policies for gender equality in universities is also one of the leading recommendations in the European Commission's report "Towards a vision for the future of universities in Europe by 2030". In the context of research organizations and higher education institutions, the European Commission promotes the adoption of Gender Equality Plans developed as a series of actions <sup>1</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup><file:///C:/Users/PC/AppData/Local/Temp/MicrosoftEdgeDownloads/26816bfb-1adc-4e1b-8093-2814573ab091/horizon%20europe%20guidance%20on%20gender%20equality%20plans-KI0221806ENN.pdf>

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- identification of the dimensions of equality in the organization;
  - identifying strategies to correct any kind of inconsistencies;
  - setting goals , implementing and tracking progress through relevant indicators.

With the adoption of the Policy of Medical University - Sofia for gender equality, a step is taken towards the explicit institutionalization of equality between men and women. Regarding its structure and content, the Policy follows the practices promoted by the European Commission. It is aligned with the principles of the platform for the interaction of researchers, entrepreneurs, universities and companies EURAXESS , formulated in the Charter of European Scientists and the Code of Conduct for the recruitment of scientists <sup>2</sup>. The policy is based on the results of an assessment regarding the equality between men and women at the MU - Sofia, conducted in the period February - May 2023. The main objective of the assessment is to highlight significant deficits and/or weaknesses, as well as good practices related with the equality between men and women in MU - Sofia. The assessment includes a review and analysis of international, national and university policies, practices and initiatives on equality ; collection and analysis of quantitative data on the university's academic and administrative staff, as well as on students, disaggregated by gender.

#### **I. Identification of the dimensions of equality in MU – Sofia**

The national legal framework creates a good environment for the implementation of the Gender Equality Policy at the Medical University - Sofia. Bulgarian legislation guarantees complete equality of women and men in all spheres of public life. The legal guarantees for equal treatment of women and men are contained in the main legal acts of the country, such as the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Labor Code, the Social Security Code, the Law on Protection from Discrimination, the Law on the Equality of Women and Men, the Law on Social Assistance , Employment Promotion Act, Domestic Violence Protection Act, Civil Servant Act, Higher Education Act, as well as in the National Strategy for Promoting Equality between Women and Men for the period 2021-2030, the National Action Plan for promotion of equality between women and men for 2021-2022, etc.

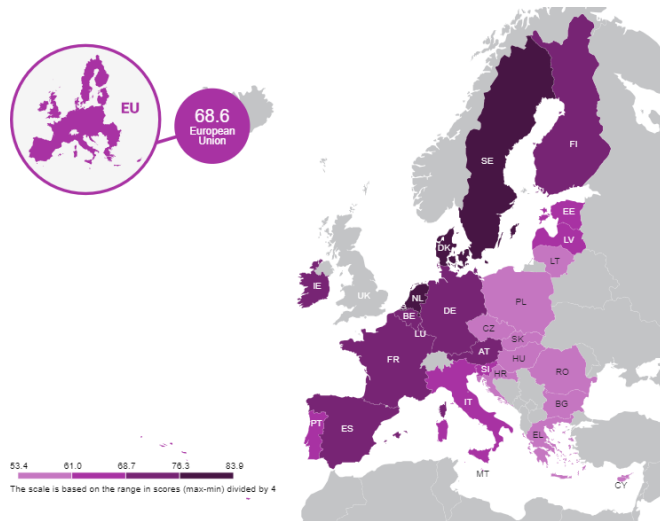
Bulgaria carries out a consistent policy on the equality of women and men, which is consistent with the national specifics and the commitments under international treaties to which it is a party, including as a member of the European Union. The measures taken by the country, as well as the achieved results, are subject to periodic evaluation by the European Institute for Gender Equality through the Gender Equality Index <sup>3</sup>. It is a statistical tool for measuring progress on gender equality in the Member States and the European Union as a whole. It uses a scale of 1 to 100, where 1 equals complete inequality and 100 equals complete equality. The index is a composite indicator and comprehensively measures progress on gender equality in six areas: Work, Money, Knowledge, Time, Power and Health. In the 2022 edition of the Index, Bulgaria, with its 60.7 points, ranks 19th among the EU-28 member states and is 8.1 points below the EU score of 68.8 points. Bulgaria has the highest score in the area of "Health" - 78 points, but only in the area of "Government" - 63 points, the country has a score higher than that of the EU. The overall progress of our country compared to the last edition of the Index is 1.1 points.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2022>

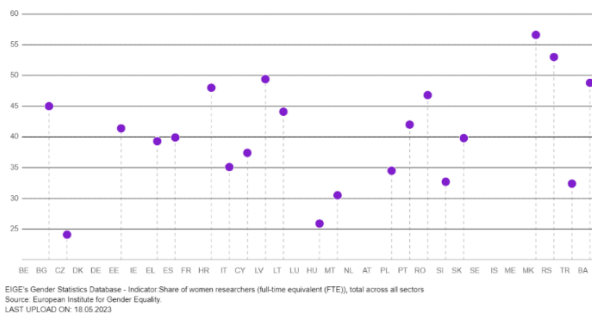
**Figure 1. EU Gender Equality Index 2022**



European Institute for Gender Equality, Gender Equality Index 2022  
 Source: European Institute for Gender Equality<sup>4</sup>

In the field of equality between men and women in science and scientific research, Bulgaria consistently demonstrates higher than average indicators for EU countries in most areas of statistical data collected by the European Institute for Gender Equality. Bulgaria ranks seventh among European countries in terms of the percentage of female researchers ( Figure 2 ).

**Figure 2. Share of female researchers in total for all sectors in EU countries**



EIGE's Gender Statistics Database - Indicator Share of women researchers (full-time equivalent (FTE)), total across all sectors  
 Source: European Institute for Gender Equality  
 LAST UPLOAD ON: 18.05.2023

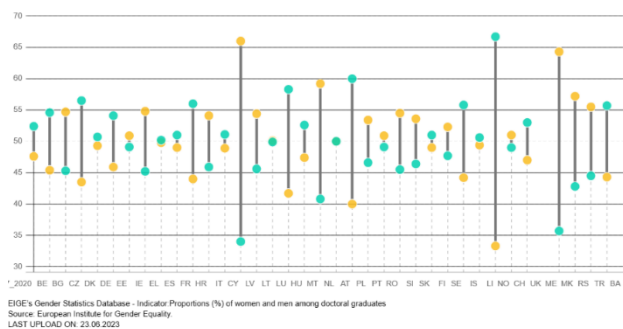
Source: European Institute for Gender Equality<sup>5</sup>

In terms of the percentage of doctoral graduates, Bulgaria is among the first six countries in the EU with a predominant percentage of doctoral degree holders women (55%) ( Figure 3 ).

<sup>4</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2022/compare-countries/index/map>

<sup>5</sup> [https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/ta\\_resdig\\_sctech\\_rdpes\\_perf\\_tsc.00006](https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/ta_resdig_sctech_rdpes_perf_tsc.00006)

**Figure 3. Percentage ratio between men and women who defended a doctorate in EU countries**



Source: European Institute for Gender Equality<sup>6</sup>

The MU-Sofia gender equality policy is part of the university's overall institutional policy and commitment to provide equal learning opportunities and working conditions, avoiding any form of discrimination. This policy is expressed in the following main institutional documents: Regulations for the structure and activity of the Medical University - Sofia, Regulations for the internal working order of employees at the Rectorate of the Medical University - Sofia, Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions in the MU - Sofia, Regulations for the attestation of the academic staff of the MU - Sofia, the Code of Ethics for academic unity in the MU - Sofia and Regulations for the preparation and conduct of the academic year.

The gender equality policy and its legislative dimensions within the EU and Bulgaria, reflected in the main documents regulating the activity of Medical University - Sofia, have influenced the main regulations regarding the appointment and attestation of teachers, researchers and other staff, remuneration, career development and admission of students at MU – Sofia.

It should be especially noted that the policy of the MU - Sofia for the promotion of equal opportunities for pregnant women and mothers with small children both among the students and among the academic staff and administrative staff of the MU - Sofia is very well regulated. The provided rules and procedures are well chosen and formulated so that they really help women to overcome the challenges of their training and professional development.

As a good practice supporting the implementation of the Policy and its regulatory documents for gender equality at MU - Sofia is the work of the Committee on Ethics and Academic Unity, to which complaints can be submitted on all issues related to the Code of Ethics for Academic Unity at the Medical University - Sofia. The activity of the committee covers reports of irregularities and complaints against members of the academic staff by other members; against teaching and administrative support staff, against guest lecturers; against persons who, although external, are part of the academic exchange.

<sup>6</sup> [https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/ta\\_resdig\\_sctech\\_phd\\_educ\\_uoe\\_grad02\\_prop](https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/ta_resdig_sctech_phd_educ_uoe_grad02_prop)

### Good practices in the implementation of policies for equality, diversity and inclusion in MU – Sofia

"Yordanka Filaretova" Medical College conducts training for the "Massageist" Specialty for the visually impaired. Graduates have developed their dexterity, have acquired maximum adaptability and independence for full social and economic realization in society.

The Faculty of Medicine has set an explicit annual goal of "inclusion of disadvantaged students in mobilities" in the plan with measures for the implementation of the Development Policy of MU - Sofia.

"Prof. Dr. Ivan Mitev" Branch - Vratsa implements two projects with measures for inclusion of students of Roma origin: Project "Mentoring support for students of Roma origin studying health specialties" and Project ROLES - "Opportunities for leadership, education and Roma Success III".

The staff structure at MU - Sofia demonstrates a predominant percentage of women (68%) compared to men (32%), and this ratio is manifested in the majority of the university's structural units. In the largest structure of MU - Sofia - Faculty of Medicine, the difference in percentage terms is the smallest - 60% women and 40% men. The only structure with a predominant number of male employees in the university is the Development Technical Base (Table 1).

**Table 1. Staff structure of Medical University - Sofia**

Structural units	Total	Women	Men	Women %	Men%
Rectorate	89	71	18	80%	20%
Medical Faculty	1017	612	405	60%	40%
Faculty of Dental Medicine	474	351	123	74%	26%
Faculty of Pharmacy	145	111	34	77%	23%
Faculty of Public Health	198	141	57	71%	29%
Medical College	97	73	24	75%	25%
Vratsa Branch	58	38	20	66%	34%
DEOS	40	31	9	78%	23%
Central Medical Library	57	50	7	88%	12%
Developmental technical base	16	3	13	19%	81%
SOSBOS	36	25	11	69%	31%
Rest base Kiten	24	21	3	88%	13%
Research University	100	70	30	70%	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2351</b>	<b>1597</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>32%</b>

Source: "Human Resources" Department at the Rectory of the MU - Sofia

The share of women in management positions of the MU - Sofia (60%) is slightly higher than the share of men (40%), and only in two units do men predominate in management positions - Development

Technical Base (67%) and SOSBOS (75% ). The largest university structure, the Faculty of Medicine, again has indicators demonstrating the smallest gender gap in management staff (Table 2).

**Table 2. Structure of the management staff of Medical University – Sofia**

Structural units	Total	Women	Men	Women %	Men%
Rectorate	16	11	5	69%	31%
Medical Faculty	57	30	27	53%	47%
Faculty of Dental Medicine	22	12	10	55%	45%
Faculty of Pharmacy	12	7	5	58%	42%
Faculty of Public Health	14	10	4	71%	29%
Medical College	5	5	0	100 %	0 %
Vratsa Branch	5	4	1	80%	20%
DEOS	1	1	0	100 %	0 %
Central Medical Library	5	4	1	80%	20%
Developmental technical base	3	1	2	33%	67%
SOSBOS	4	1	3	25%	75%
Rest base Kiten	1	1	0	100 %	0 %
Research University	9	6	3	67%	33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>40%</b>

Source: "Human Resources" Department at the Rectory of the MU - Sofia

The distribution of students by gender at the university in all educational units has a very pronounced disproportion in favor of women - 67% compared to 33% men. (Figure 3). The biggest disparities are observed in the Faculty of Public Health, the Medical College and the Vratsa Branch, where female students are over 80%. The distribution of students in the Faculty of Medicine is closest to the even distribution - 55% women to 45% men.

**Table 3. Gender distribution of students at Medical University - Sofia**

Structural units	Total	Women	Men	Women %	Men%
Medical Faculty	2823	1550	1273	55%	45%
Faculty of Dental Medicine	1175	664	511	57%	43%
Faculty of Pharmacy	755	583	172	77%	23%
Faculty of Public Health	1195	1035	160	87%	13%
Medical College	822	656	166	80%	20%
Vratsa Branch	353	316	37	90%	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7123</b>	<b>4804</b>	<b>2319</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>33%</b>

Source: "Human Resources" Department at the Rectory of the MU - Sofia



## II. Strategies for maintaining balance and correcting identified discrepancies

### ***Aims:***

The main goals of MU – Sofia, in line with the UN SDGs goals, especially Goal 5: "Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls", as well as with the EU Strategy for Gender Equality for the period 2020-2025 and the Charter of Basic rights of the European Union, Title III: Equality, Art. 23 - Equality between women and men, are:

- 1. Establishment of a sustainable organizational structure guaranteeing equality between men and women at MU - Sofia, including an organizational culture based on equality, diversity and inclusion, with main areas of impact:**
  - Gender equality in employment and career development;
  - Gender balance in leadership and decision-making;
  - Balance between work and personal life;
  - An organizational culture that admires equality, diversity and inclusion, helping to prevent discrimination and violence based on differences, including gender, religion, race.
  
- 2. Integrating the gender dimension in research and teaching content, with key areas of impact :**
  - Integrating the gender dimension in research;
  - Integrating the dimension of women and men in the curriculum

### ***Strategies:***

Based on the survey and analysis of the collected data, two main strategies have been identified to maintain the balance and correct the discrepancies found in terms of The Gender Equality Policy of Medical University – Sofia:

#### **1. Building and maintaining a monitoring system through regular data collection and analysis**

MU - Sofia is a living system that is constantly changing, and in order to ensure up-to-date knowledge about the implementation of the Gender Equality Policy, a regular monitoring system must be built. This process should include the collection and analysis of quantitative data on staff and students disaggregated by gender with annual reporting by indicators. The regularly collected data should allow for analysis in various aspects of the problem, such as the ratio between genders among staff and students, between those occupying leadership positions, among students, etc. The study of these aspects will allow highlighting the currently existing inconsistencies, which is a basis for improving and building on existing good practices. An annual staff and student survey should be added to the quantitative data collection system, which will deepen knowledge and give additional depth to the information collected. Collected quantitative and qualitative data should be analyzed at least once a year.

The data from the regular monitoring will be used to inform and continuously assess progress in the implementation of the Gender Equality Policy, as well as to update, if necessary, the goals, strategies and main activities set out in the Implementation Plan.

## 2. Regular information and training of staff and students

Conducting regular information campaigns and trainings are a major tool for increasing knowledge and understanding of the issue, as well as for building commitment to equality issues. Planning these activities as a long-term regular process will allow focusing efforts on priority topics and target groups. This approach will also provide opportunities for timely consideration of the current needs and information deficits of the various groups of interested parties.

### III. Plan for the implementation of the Gender Equality Policy at the MU - Sofia for the period 2023-2027.

*Goal 1. Establishing a sustainable organizational structure guaranteeing equality between men and women at MU – Sofia, including an organizational culture based on equality, diversity and inclusion*

Planned activities	Addressed area of impact	Deadline for implementation	Units responsible for implementation	Indicator
Designing a system of indicators for regular monitoring, including the collection of quantitative and qualitative data on the various aspects of equality in the MU - Sofia	Gender equality in employment and career development  Gender balance in leadership and decision-making  Work-life balance  An organizational culture that admires equality, diversity and inclusion	12. 2023	Head of the "Human Resources" department in the Rectorate with the participation of the "Human Resources" departments/employees in the units of the MU - Sofia, the "Education" department in the Rectorate, the "Students" departments in the units of the MU - Sofia, the University Electronic Information Education Center and the Student council	Designed system for regular monitoring
Carrying out regular monitoring and analysis of the data on the various aspects of gender equality in MU – Sofia	Gender equality in employment and career development  Gender balance in leadership and decision-making  Work-life balance	Annually	Head of the „Human Resources“ department in the Rectorate with the participation of the „Human Resources“ departments/employees in the units of the MU - Sofia and the University Electronic Information and Education Center	Report with summary data and analysis from the conducted monitoring




	An organizational culture that admires equality, diversity and inclusion			
Popularization of the Report from the annual monitoring of gender equality in MU – Sofia	An organizational culture that admires equality, diversity and inclusion	Annually	"Public Relations" expert in the Rectorate with the participation of "Public Relations" experts in the units of the MU - Sofia	Published Report on the Internet sites of MU - Sofia and the units of the University  Presentation of main highlights from the Report at a meeting of the Academic Council of the MU - Sofia  Held an informational event for students and staff of the MU - Sofia for the presentation of the Report
Review and, if necessary, update the goals and strategies in the Gender Equality Policy in the MU - Sofia for the period 2023-2027 and the Implementation Plan as a result of the results of the annual monitoring of equality in the MU – Sofia	Gender equality in employment and career development  Gender balance in leadership and decision-making  Work-life balance  An organizational culture that admires equality, diversity and inclusion	Annually	Head of the "Human Resources" department in the Rectorate with the participation of the "Human Resources" departments/employees in the units of the MU - Sofia, the "Education" department in the Rectorate, the "Students" departments in the units of the MU - Sofia, the University Electronic Information Education Center and the Student council	Updated Gender Equality Policy at MU - Sofia for the period 2023-2027 (when applicable)
Survey of awareness on issues of equality among the staff and students of the MU - Sofia and development of an Annual Dissemination and Communication Plan	Gender equality in employment and career development  Gender balance in leadership and decision-making  Work-life balance  An organizational culture that admires equality, diversity and inclusion	Annually	„Human resources“ department - internal communication expert, in the Rectorate with the participation of "Human resources“ department/experts in the units of the MU - Sofia	Annual Dissemination and Communication Plan

Implementation of the activities of the Annual Dissemination and Communication Plan	<p>Gender equality in employment and career development</p> <p>Gender balance in leadership and decision-making</p> <p>Work-life balance</p> <p>An organizational culture that admires equality, diversity and inclusion</p>	Annually	„Human resources“ department - internal communication expert, in the Rectorate with the participation of "Human resources“ department/experts in the units of the MU - Sofia	According to the Annual Dissemination and Communication Plan
Establish collaboration with other teaching and research institutions, national and international networks and communities in the field of gender equality for research and exchange of experiences and good practices	<p>Gender equality in employment and career development</p> <p>Gender balance in leadership and decision-making</p> <p>Work-life balance</p> <p>An organizational culture that admires equality, diversity and inclusion</p>	Always	Department "International integration and project financing" in the Rectorate	<p>Cooperation agreement signed</p> <p>A joint project</p>
Exploring and enriching the possibilities for flexible working/learning modes and remote working/learning	Work-life balance	12.2023	Head of the "Human Resources" department in the Rectorate with the participation of the "Human Resources" departments/employees in the units of the MU - Sofia, the "Academic" department in the Rectorate, the "Students" departments in the units of the MU - Sofia	Introduced new flexible working modes (where applicable)

**Objective 2. Integrate the gender dimension in research and teaching content**

Planned activities	Addressed area of impact	Deadline for implementation	Units responsible for implementation	Indicator
Recruiting and promoting information about data sources to attract young scientists and PhD students to this interdisciplinary field	Integrating the gender dimension in research	Annually	„Human resources“ department - internal communication expert, in the Rectorate	Information event/Seminar to inform young scientists and doctoral students



Recruitment and promotion of information about realized research projects and teams of researchers integrating the dimension of women and men in scientific research	Integrating the gender dimension in research	Annually	„Human resources“ department - internal communication expert, in the Rectorate	Information event/Seminar
Pilot evaluation of training courses and materials by an expert group for compliance with the ideas of gender equality and analysis of the need to introduce a separate specialized elective course in the curricula.	Integrating the dimension of women and men in the curriculum	12.2025	An expert group including representatives of all educational units in the MU - Sofia	Report

**The assigned Implementation Coordinator is Prof. Tsvetalina Tankova, MD, DMedSc, Vice Rector for International Integration and Project Funding**

***The plan was adopted by decision of the Academic Council of MU-Sofia under protocol No. 34 of 07.06.2023.***