

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ŽILINA (2026 – 2030)

Processor: Personnel Department and Department for International Relations and Marketing
Job position of the contact person: Vice-rector for International Relations and Marketing.

“The University of Žilina (hereinafter referred to as “UNIZA”) rejects all forms of discrimination. The potential use of the masculine gender in this text is for linguistic and technical purposes and simplification only and should be understood as gender-neutral.”

Current European gender equality policies promote a human rights-based approach to men and women. The fundamental premise for eliminating inequalities in both public and private life is the elimination of all forms of discrimination.

Gender equality means fair treatment of women and men, whether equal or different, so that treatment is fair in terms of rights, benefits, responsibilities, and opportunities. It is based on the principle that all human beings have the right to freely develop their abilities and choose among options without the limitations imposed by gender roles. Differences in the behaviour, aspirations, and needs of women and men are recognised, valued, taken into account, and supported equally and without discrimination.

According to the Council of Europe, “gender equality means an equal visibility, empowerment, and participation of both sexes in all spheres of public and private life.”^[1]

Gender equality aims to **bridge gender gaps**, i.e., the differences between women and men in participation, opportunities, rights, and outcomes across the public and private spheres. This includes, for example, inequality between women and men in access to power, resources, social benefits, education, health care, and so on.

The University of Žilina pledges to adhere to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), and further include them in its strategy documents and exercise them in everyday practice. We understand that we are leading by example, spreading the EDI principles in our community, which can then result in positive structural changes. In our Long-Term Plan, we aim to be a responsible employer and to provide a creative, motivating, and non-discriminatory environment for our employees and students. Similarly, we have integrated transparency and equal opportunities for researchers, teaching staff, and students into our core values and principles.

Through its **Code of Ethics** UNIZA is committed to “*comply with the principle of equal treatment, which prohibits discrimination based on gender, religion or belief, race, nationality or ethnic origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status and family status, skin colour, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status, or on the grounds of reported criminality or other antisocial activity. In adhering to the principle of equal treatment, UNIZA respects public decency and protection against discrimination; at the same time, it fully supports equal opportunities and equal representation of men and women in all areas of its activities and advocates for the elimination of gender disparities between women and men in terms of participation, opportunities for access, rights, and outcomes in any area of its activities.*”

In practical terms, the commitment to the principle of equal treatment in the area of gender equality is implemented through the proposed Gender Equality Plan of the University of Žilina for 2026–2030 (hereinafter referred to as the “Plan”), adopted by the university management and consisting of three parts. The first one is general: A. Gender-equal UNIZA, and the other two are specific: B. Reconciliation of work and private life (Work-life balance), and C. Physical and psychological violence. The plan naturally builds on the previous document, the UNIZA Gender Equality Plan 2021–2025.

Based on this document, several specific measures were adopted and incorporated into the internal documents, in particular those promoting **reconciliation of work and private life (work-life balance)**. The university remains committed to addressing this issue comprehensively. The university remains committed to addressing this issue comprehensively. Measures taken include flexible working hours,

the establishment of a kindergarten, regular inspections of lighting and safety in our facilities, an online form for reporting physical and psychological violence, monitoring of staff needs, and staff training regarding gender equality. UNIZA will continue to **monitor the gender equality status** and its development over time, adjusting monitored indicators if necessary. The university management is informed of the results on an ongoing basis, and they are published in the Annual Report on the Activities of the University of Žilina.

Our goal is to **institutionalise** the principles of equal opportunities, specifically the principles of **gender equality**, which will be represented by the **Equal Opportunities Ambassador**, who will oversee the implementation of the submitted plan, update it if necessary, and regularly, but at least once a year, review the plan and inform the university's management about its progress. The position of Ambassador was established to improve the coordination and evaluation of activities promoting equality and to monitor any problems which may need to be addressed. UNIZA is obliged to continue its established activities, such as training on unconscious bias, gender equality and gender-sensitive language for different target groups, along with popularisation activities directed at the academic community and beyond (including the promotion of informatics studies among high school female students as part of the *Aj Ty v IT* (Female Potential in ICT) initiative, as well as activities organised by the Centre for the Popularisation of Science and Technology at UNIZA – Motio), **consideration of the gender dimension in pedagogical practice and its more significant expansion into the area of research.**

UNIZA strictly **opposes any form of violence, whether physical or psychological** (including sexual harassment as defined in the Anti-Discrimination Act). The members of the Ethics Committee, including staff from the Counselling and Career Centre, have been retrained. Complaints/suggestions related to violence can be submitted not only under Article 11 of the Code of Ethics (“Submission of complaints/suggestions to the Ethics Committee and Ethics Committee proceedings”) but also directly to the superior staff member of the Counselling and Career Centre, or via the online form available on the UNIZA website. Such a report is then addressed under the internal directive on the Prevention and Elimination of Physical and Psychological Violence at the University of Žilina.

The university management believes that the implementation of the submitted Gender Equality Plan will result in a deeper understanding of the gender equality principles among members of the UNIZA academic community and their practical application. We believe that the institutions that embrace diversity and strive to create suitable working and learning conditions for all, without the constraints of gender stereotypes, shall prove successful in the world of education, science and research. Gender equality is therefore not only a value in and of itself, but: *„the application of the principle of equal opportunities and gender equality contributes significantly to the quality of research and to the development and strengthening of scientific and technological innovations. Equal opportunities are associated with excellence - as well as with wider applicability of the results.“* [2]

The University of Žilina hereby reaffirms its commitment to create an environment of respect for all, to actively promote cooperation and a vibrant UNIZA community that goes beyond the boundaries of a formal community formed only by an existing employment relationship or enrollment in a study programme.

In Žilina, 24 November 2025

Prof. Ing. Ján Čelko, CSc. – rector

A. Gender-Equal UNIZA

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE		RESPONSIBLE	PERIODICITY/DATE DUE
Advancement of the academic community in the area of gender sensitivity	Training – unconscious bias and gender equality in academic practice	Compulsory training for senior staff	HR and Institute of Lifelong Learning	every two years
		Voluntary training for people interested in gender equality issues		
Enhancing the profile of women in public spaces	Mass media communication training for researchers		Department for International Relations and Marketing	June 2026
Statistical evaluation of gender equality	Monitoring of the representation of women in the student and staff sections of the academic community		for HR employees	once a year in the annual report
			for students Department for Education	
Promoting women's career development	Within the implementation of a workplace mentoring system for new employees.		individual workplaces	Q3/2026
	Incorporating the issue into the adaptation training for university teachers at UNIZA		HR and Institute of Lifelong Learning	
Increased emphasis on a gender perspective in research and teaching activities	The gender dimension in educational practice – integration into the adaptation training for university teachers at UNIZA		Institute of Lifelong Learning	continuously
	The gender dimension in research – integration into the adaptation training for university teachers at UNIZA		Institute of Lifelong Learning	
More women in IT fields of study	Aj Ty v IT (Female Potential in ICT)		Faculty of Management Science and Informatics	once a year
Measures to increase the proportion of women in management and decision-making bodies	Adding questions to the employee satisfaction survey for female employees, aimed at identifying their subjective perception of barriers that prevent them from holding (or even applying for) management and decision-making positions, as well as mapping out the support measures they would welcome.		HR	every two years
Information regarding gender equality for new employees	Information provided during induction training and in the new employee handbook		HR	continuously

B. Reconciliation of work and private life (Work-Life Balance)

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE		RESPONSIBLE	PERIODICITY/DATE DUE
Identification of needs	Benefits	Reassessing and expanding the offer of benefits	HR	continuously
		Communicating benefits		continuously
	Employee satisfaction survey			every two years
Inclusion of future generations at the university	Open Door at UNIZA, UNIZA Kindergarten, and summer camps organised by UNIZA		UNIZA management, Department for International Relations and Marketing, Equal Opportunities Ambassador	continuously
Considering parental responsibilities in the fulfilment of work obligations	Recommendation: Schedule meetings to start no later than 2:00 p.m.		Equal Opportunities Ambassador through notification to the Rector's Advisory Board and through a collective announcement	once a year
	Upon agreement with the immediate superior, the possibility of part-time work for a parent providing permanent care for a child up to 15 years of age under the Labour Code [3] or for a person providing care for another person		immediate superior, following approval from the dean or rector	continuously
Reintegrating employees and maintaining contact during and after their return from maternity/parental leave or unpaid leave	Maintaining contact with employees on maternity or parental leave, or during and after extended unpaid leave		managers at individual workplaces	continuously

C. Physical and Psychological Violence

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE	RESPONSIBLE	PERIODICITY/DATE DUE
Establishing a process for the prevention and elimination of physical and psychological violence	Gender equality and sexual harassment at UNIZA – incorporation of the issue into Health and Safety training.	Health and Safety Officer	once a year
	Raising awareness of physical and psychological violence as part of the adaptation training for university teachers at UNIZA	Institute of Lifelong Learning	continuously
	Informing about the prevention of physical and psychological violence as part of the training for new UNIZA employees	HR	continuously
	Monitoring issues related to physical and psychological violence	Equal Opportunities Ambassador	once a year
	Monitoring the lighting conditions on the university campus	Department of Economic Administration	once a year
Information regarding gender equality for new employees	Information provided during induction training and in the new employee handbook	HR	continuously

HR – human resources department, ILL – Institute of Lifelong Learning, Department for International Relations and Marketing, Department of Economic Administration

2. GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Workplace equality in practice means that **all employees have fair and equal opportunities**, regardless of their personal characteristics or background. In essence, success, remuneration and career advancement depend on skills, performance, and contribution, not on gender, age, background, health status, or other factors.

Diversity in the workplace means that the company employs a diverse team of people who reflect the society in which it exists and operates. It encompasses all elements that make individuals unique from one another, and although there are endless differences among people, most of us often perceive diversity only in terms of a handful of social categories, such as gender, race, and age. **Diversity in the workplace refers to the presence and recognition of differences among the people who form the working team.** Truth is, employees differ in numerous aspects – and these differences can be an asset to the employer if properly leveraged and supported by an inclusive culture.



Inclusion in the workplace means creating an environment where **all employees feel respected and valued and have equal opportunities regardless of their differences** (e.g., gender, age, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion, cultural background, or work style).



Diversity refers to the traits and attributes that make people unique, while inclusion refers to the behaviours and social norms that ensure people feel welcome.

Gender refers to the socially and culturally constructed roles assigned to men and women. It represents a set of characteristics, habits and traits that shape how we, as men and women, present ourselves. Gender is shaped by upbringing, education, environmental influences, expectations, language, and so on,

and varies across time and cultures. [6] Put simply, it is the answer to the question of what it means to be a woman or a man in a specific historical and cultural context. For example, “being a man” in terms of the expectations associated with that role was different in the 18th century than it is today. It is also different to “be a woman” in present-day Slovakia than it is to be one in a specific Third World country.

Gender equality or equality of women and men, means that men and women have the same social status in all spheres of public and private life; its goal is to ensure full social participation based on individual qualities and abilities. In a broader sense, it means treating women and men fairly, considering their specific needs and life circumstances. [2]

Gender sensitive language uses linguistic elements to raise the singularity of women and men – for example, when addressing the teachers of elementary schools (85% of which are female), instead of using the masculine form of denomination (učiteľ), the phrase “učiteľ, učiteľka” is used (i.e. using both masculine and feminine versions); the language does not use the masculine gender to refer to a profession when it is practised by a woman;... [7] When considering gender-sensitive language, it is important to bear in mind that language not only describes reality but also helps shape it. Terms such as "gender-correct", "symmetrical", "fair", "neutral", and "competent" are also used to refer to gender-sensitive language. [4]

Gender-sensitive research considers differences between men and women in all aspects of the research process, from the initial idea through the formulation of research questions, objectives, and methodology, to the final outputs and presentation of results. [5] In practice, this could involve researching how a specific drug affects male versus female bodies, or better accounting for female physiology in automotive crash testing.

Gender-sensitive education incorporates gender differences into both syllabus design and actual classroom instruction. [5] Owing to frequent misconceptions where gender equality and the equal rights of women and men are viewed as approaches that deny biological sex differences, we provide an additional explanation of a term that is not included in the main body of the document:

Gender equality between women and men means equal visibility, support, and participation for both genders in all areas of public and private life. It means equality not only de jure (by law), but also de facto (in practice). Equality does not mean that the sexes are the same, nor understanding men’s living conditions as the universal 'norm.' [7]

3. RECOMMENDED LITERATURE

- [1] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions. Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, 2.
- [2] Celoštátna stratégia rovnosti žien a mužov a rovnosti príležitostí v Slovenskej republike na roky 2021-2027 (National Strategy for Gender Equality and Equal Opportunity in the Slovak Republic for 2021–2027)
- [3] Action Plan for Gender Equality and Equal Opportunity for 2021–2027 <https://www.employment.gov.sk/files/sk/ministerstvo/spolocny-sekretariat-vyborov/vybor-rodovu-rovnost/dokumenty-udalosti/ap-rovnosti-zien-muzov-rovnosti-prilezitosti-2021-27.pdf>

- [4] Labour Code, Section 164, par. 2.
- [5] Cviková J., Juráňová J., Kobová Ľ., Maďarová Z., Ostertágová A., Satinská L., Vrábľová, J., Terkanič M. (2014): Ako používať rodovo vyvážený jazyk. Možnosti, otázky, príklady, s. 5, 4.
- [6] Trbovc J. M., Hofman A. (2015): Toolkit for Integrating Gender-Sensitive Approach into Research and Teaching (GARCIA Working Papers 6), s. 4.
- [7] Gender Equality: <https://www.gender.gov.sk/aktivity/temy/zakladne-pojmy/rod-gender/>
- [8] Glossary of Gender Terminology, Equality of women and men
<https://glosar.aspekt.sk/default.aspx?smi=1&ami=1&vid=103>
- [9] Documents – Equality of women and men and equality of opportunities -
<https://www.gender.gov.sk/dokumenty/>