

# GENDER EQUALITY PLAN



Turun yliopisto  
University of Turku



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## 5 UTU Gender Equality Plan

### 5.1 Introduction

This Gender equality plan (GEP) was created for the Information Systems Science (ISS) Unit in Department of Management and Entrepreneurship, Turku School of Economics, University of Turku (UTU). This GEP will not replace the Equality plan<sup>44</sup> of UTU, but offer more detailed actions for realizing gender equality in the unit of ISS at University of Turku under the umbrella of the Equality plan of UTU. The Gender equality plan was created by the joint efforts of both the project researchers of and a GEP working group of ISS. The main actions are mainly based on the action suggested by the staff members of ISS through the Crowdsourcing exercise and the daily practices in ISS. Meanwhile, the administration of UTU helps to come up with the GEP by offering the needed information during internal auditing phase.

In addition to the Equality plan of UTU and Gender equality plan for Information Systems Science, University of Turku is committed to the principled laid by the *code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers* by European Commission. University of Turku has gained the "HR Excellence in Research" award that gives public recognition to research institutions that have made progress in aligning their human resource policies with the principles set out in the "Charter & Code".

In UTU, the GEP will be put in action at the department level (in ISS unit) because in our university there is official Equality plan that is legally mandatory in next three years. The GEP will be implemented in ISS unit as a complementary one. Gender equality is one of the aims of the Equality plan. Thus, the goal of the GEP in ISS unit is consistent with the Equality Plan in UTU.

#### 5.1.1 Selection of Challenges

The selection of challenges is based on the findings from the internal auditing, crowdsourcing and interviews of the ISS staff. Gender equality in Finland has been comparatively well achieved (Rank the 2nd in the world by World economic forum<sup>45</sup>).

And still, although Finland is very advanced when it comes to gender equality, gender related challenges that are more or less important are still present to the ISS unit and they need to be tackled through the EQUAL-IST project. The findings on the challenges in ISS from the internal auditing and interviews are similar with the challenges raised in the Crowdsourcing platform, which strengthens the validity of these challenges. Thus, all the challenges raised in the crowdsourcing phase were included in the GEP.

There is one special aspect that should be noted based on our case. Finland is a society with high gender equality. Due to the advanced state of gender equality in Finland, the approach at the ISS unit was different than in the other involved RPOs to maintain an internal balance and to be in line with the Equality Plan in UTU, while the other members of the EQUAL-IST project team focuses on promoting the ICT field and studies to all genders with emphasis on women.

<sup>44</sup> This Gender equality plan is subordinate to the Equality Plan of University of Turku, which is legally mandatory and cannot be bypassed with this plan.

<sup>45</sup> <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/economies/#economy=FIN>

The decisions to select the actions in our unit were based on the findings from the internal auditing process and crowdsourcing phase. Those suitable actions for gender equality challenges were chosen and included in the GEP to promote females in ISS as well as to achieve gender equality in ISS.

## 5.2 Identified Challenges Related to Gender Equality and Diversity

Following challenges are the outcome of the internal auditing and crowdsourcing phase in ISS. Thus, the challenges are based on participatory research and on bottom up approach. The challenges are described briefly, and more details on these challenges can be found in the internal auditing document.

### 5.2.1 Challenge 1: Lack of female professor

Currently in ISS, there are three professors, and all of them are males. There is no female professor in ISS unit. The challenge is originated to the time when those professorships were open. Qualified female applicants were missing or limited when those vacancies were filled. Nowadays more female candidates are qualified when professorships are opened. However, it may take over decade to have the professor positions reopened in ISS, unless the persons who are holding those professor positions move to other duties before retirement. The recruitment process in University of Turku is controlled by the administration, and legally gender can be a reason for selection only when both female and male applicants are equally qualified and there is clear disparity in number of male and female representatives in an organization. One main option is to focus on advertising the open positions to ensure that we get good candidates – both females and males – to apply.

### 5.2.2 Challenge 2: How to endorse peer support between employees to ensure gender equality

Peer support from colleagues will be very helpful if someone has some problems, troubles, or issues and feels that he/she needs some supports from the colleagues in the unit or faculty. The open and supporting relation between colleagues, no matter male or female colleagues, helps to achieve the goal of gender equality. In our unit, though there are peer supports between employees to deal with daily challenges in work, but it is not common among all ISS staff. Hence, there is a need to find good ways to support the peer support activities between colleagues, which might help prevent gender-related issues.

### 5.2.3 Challenge 3: Need for female voice for ISS

There are only male professors in our unit. Both the ISS unit head and the department head are male. Females are under-represented in ISS unit. Such as in ISS, usually the male professors or the male heads will make presentations, representing from the perspective of males. There is a lack of female voice in ISS unit. In fact, in ISS unit there are female staff members with rich working experience. Those female staff members should be given opportunities to represent the voice of females in ISS, such as when giving presentations to students or the public audiences. Meanwhile, in ISS males take a dominating manner in communication and discussions because of the lack of female professors or head, which might override females in discussions.

The publicity in ICT/IS-units is usually represented from male perspective, as males are usually the majority in the field. This can make the voice of females to be missing, and also make ICT/IS to attract more male students than females.

## 5.2.4 Challenge 4: Female ISS students feel lack of belonging to the ISS community, as they are the minority in ISS

In ISS, female students are the minority in the subject of ISS, and they feel lack of belonging to the ISS community. This issue should be taken care of to make student to be able to easily integrate to the ISS community - if they like. There should be more official and "unofficial" events for IS students. Those events should support the community spirit by relax and supporting activities for different people and personalities. Without contact to other students there will be danger that people do not see themselves as part of ISS community. Especially for female students – as they are minority in ISS – can experience that they have difficulties to be integral part of the ISS community, which might also make IS/ICT subject not attractive to female students.

## 5.2.5 Challenge 5: Emotional labor falls to nice staff, often women

According to Wikipedia, emotional labor means "*the process of managing feelings and expressions to fulfil the emotional requirements of a job. More specifically, workers are expected to regulate their emotions during interactions with customers, co-workers and superiors.*" For example, airline stewardesses have to be nice to customers despite they might be very demanding or even intoxicated. In university teaching or thesis supervision, we as teachers should be empathetic and understanding students, although sometimes it is really hard. Some students seem not to understand simple guidelines, or meet deadlines, or fulfil the requirements for various reasons. However, not all teaching staff is willing to be empathetic, or even want to supervise students to facilitate thesis writing. Often these students then try to find an empathetic teacher to supervise them or teach them. Some students may have serious personal, learning or psychological problems, which require some specialist help. They tell their problems to empathetic teacher tutors who try to listen and perhaps start to supervise these "problem" students. The same problem pertains in administrative work. Some staff members are not willing to take different kinds of work or do required duties since they want to focus on their research or have other engagements. Instead of distributing this work evenly to all staff members, some nice persons, more often women, take these duties in expense of their own careers without complaining.

## 5.3 Action Plan to Address the Identified Challenges

The gender equality strategy in ISS is to concentrate on the area of personal career development of employees and to create ISS community that is equal and supportive for all members in ISS. The work life balance is not a focus as it is taken care by the central administration service in UTU. As shown in the recent Gender Equality Assessment Report in UTU, there is good guideline on keeping work life balance in UTU. Thus, there is no need to make other actions to keep work life balance in ISS. In addition, the administrative staff is not considered in our strategy. In ISS there is no administrative staff yet (they are working under central management in UTU).

### 5.3.1 Challenges

In the following table, we summarize the challenges ISS is facing, and propose the actions to help address the challenges with more details on the areas of intervention and goals of each action.

Challenges	Areas of intervention	Goals	Actions
1. Lack of female professor	HR & management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support individual career plans (Goal 1)</li> <li>More gender balanced staff (Goal 3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating individual career plans (see Action 1.1)</li> <li>Tutoring and encouraging all younger researchers to apply research funds (see Action 1.3)</li> <li>Possibilities for younger researchers to be leaders of projects (see Action 1.4)</li> <li>Gender balanced recruiting (see 3.1)</li> </ul>
2. How to endorse peer support between employees to ensure gender equality	HR & management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support individual career development (Goal 1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up peer support program in working unit (see Action 1.2)</li> </ul>
3. Need for female voice for ISS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HR &amp; management</li> <li>Teaching &amp; student services</li> <li>Institutional communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ISS as a gender-neutral unit (Goal 2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support Institutional communication about equality (see Action 2.1)</li> <li>Promote both women and men in ICT field (see Action 2.2)</li> <li>Give voice for females in ISS (see Action 2.4)</li> </ul>
4. Female students feel lack of belonging to ISS community as they are the minority in ISS	Teaching & student services,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ISS as a gender-neutral unit (Goal 2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote both women and men in ICT field (see Action 2.2)</li> <li>More social activities for students in ISS (see Action 2.3)</li> </ul>

5. Emotional labour falls to nice staff, often women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR &amp; management</li> <li>• Institutional communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support individual career development (Goal 1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balance (the emotional labour) work between employees in ISS unit (see Action 1.5)</li> <li>• Support Institutional communication about equality (see Action 2.1)</li> </ul>
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## 5.3.2 Goal 1: Support individual career development

### 5.3.2.1 *Action 1.1: Creating individual career plans*

**Related Challenge:** Lack of female professor (challenge 1)

**Plan:** An individual career/life plan will be discussed and documented between each employee and her/his supervisor. A template will be developed for career development plan to help articulate each individual career plan.

**Monitoring:** Check how the career plan is realized every 12 months.

**Responsible persons:** Project researcher and leader, and unit head.

### 5.3.2.2 *Action 1.2: Set up peer support program in working unit*

Peer supports from colleagues are valuable especially for those at the beginning of their career. At the beginning of career there are lots of issues that should be taken care, and people do not have experience on them yet.

**Related Challenge:** How to endorse peer support between employees to ensure gender equality (Challenge 2)

**Plan:** TISRA (Turku Information System Research Alliance) seminar will organize peer support meeting every second month for staff of ISS and Doctoral students. The idea for peer support meetings is to be able to get together and share experiences of everyday issues (not research topic). Those PhDs who recently graduated are encouraged to participate in the meeting as they can share their valuable experiences of how to become part of local and international academic communities.

Responsible person to organize the meeting should be nominated.

**Monitoring:** Number of participation and feedback after 6/12/18 months will be collected from participants.

**Responsible person:** Project researcher and doctoral student representatives.

### 5.3.2.3 *Action 1.3: Tutoring and encouraging all younger researchers to apply research funds*

Each younger researcher should get support when applying research funds.

**Related Challenge:** Lack of female professor (challenge 1)

**Plan:** The dedicated persons will organize meetings to support younger researchers in funding applications, such as to provide funding sources and share funding application experiences.

The group should not be with too many participants. Otherwise meetings in different groups will be organized.

In each group, there should be a responsible leader who has experience of successful funding application.

**Monitoring:** Feedback from participants will be collected after 6/12/18 months.

**Responsible persons:** Project researcher and dedicated group leaders.

### **5.3.2.4      *Action 1.4: Possibilities for Younger researchers to be leaders of projects***

This task is related to the previous one and should be considered in those tutoring meetings. When applying for research funding, younger researchers should be taken into consideration to work as leaders of projects instead of professors. This helps those younger researchers, especially at the beginning of academic career, to get valuable experience. In addition, it also offers the possibilities for senior researchers to focus on their research, not spending so much effort on being a leader of several projects.

More specifically, UTU participants to the workshops reflected that in practice, usually only full professors were assigned as scientific leaders of research projects, and the research tasks usually were distributed to junior research fellows. This action aims to find new ways for a shared responsibility of research leadership between more experienced researchers and junior/younger researchers. The head of our faculty is committed to assign younger researcher as head of projects when it is possible by funding instruments and rules of funding organisations.

**Related Challenge:** Lack of female professor (challenge 1)

**Plan:** In the future when applying research funding, the younger researchers can be appointed as leaders of projects if possible. Senior researchers can be assigned as advisors for those younger researcher leaders.

**Monitoring:** Follow up project management every 6 months.

**Responsible person:** Project researcher, unit head and department head.

### **5.3.2.5      *Action 1.5: Balance (the emotional labor) work between employees in ISS unit***

**Related Challenge:** Emotional labor falls to nice staff, often women (Challenge 5)

1. **Plan:** Share responsibilities more openly. Duties of staff should be visible and openly discussed, so the common responsibilities are fairly distributed in ISS.

- The shared duties in ISS unit will be listed and evaluated in a document that will be open and made available to staff.
- Duties should not be spread only for voluntary people. There should be balance in duties though the tasks differ from one person to another person. These issues will be discussed at the meetings in ISS.
- All members of ISS staff should be more active in taking some emotional labour work. At ISS subject meeting, the head of ISS will encourage the male staff to take some emotional labour work in ISS.

**Monitoring:** Follow up the situation every 6 months.

**Responsible person:** Unit head.

2. Plan: Master thesis supervision will be coordinated by dedicated persons. All these are accepted and controlled by the responsible leader of Master theses seminar with clear master thesis process and responsibility. This helps to balance the duties in master thesis supervisions amongst staff ISS - for example between males and females.

**Monitoring:** evaluation of process after 6/12/18 months.

**Responsible persons:** Master thesis seminar leaders.

### 5.3.3 Goal 2: ISS as a gender-neutral unit

#### 5.3.3.1 *Action 2.1: Support Institutional communication about equality*

**Related Challenge:** Need for female voice for ISS (challenge 3) & Emotional labor falls to nice staff, often women (Challenge 5)

**Action:** 1. Inform all ISS staff about GEP and Equality Plan of UTU by newsletter and at team meetings.

2. Distribute the information about different actions included in the GEP in ISS unit.

**Monitoring:** Questionnaires for staff and students each academic year.

**Responsible person:** Project researcher.

#### 5.3.3.2 *Action 2.2: Promote both women and men in ICT field*

Need for promotion of ISS within Turku School of Economics, conveying the idea that ISS is interesting and is a subject choice for both males and females.

**Related Challenge:** Need for female voice for ISS (challenge 3) & Female students feel lack of belonging to ISS community as they are the minority in ISS (challenge 4)

**Action:** Inviting both male and female speakers to give speeches at events in ISS, to ISS students, and to employees of ISS. These events will not focus on gender balance, but show the career of ISS graduates, which might convey the message that ISS can also be attractive to females.

First ideas for events:

- Alumni speaking about their work responsibility in work life
- The report of the alumni's work position and responsibility (those available to get their information) (how to do: make an online survey to collect these data from the alumni mail list, or check the alumni LinkedIn group information for the past 5 years graduates)
- Events should have informal atmosphere where threshold to participate is low.

**Monitoring:** Gender distribution of new ISS students will be evaluated each year. In addition, a short survey - how students see the unit of ISS as a gender-equal unit – will be conducted after each academic year.

**Responsible person:** Project researcher and unit head.

### 5.3.3.3 *Action 2.3: More social activities for students in ISS*

There is a need for social activities to ensure that all students feel that they are welcome to ISS community and have possibility to integrate to it.

**Related Challenge:** Female students feel lack of belonging to ISS community as they are the minority in ISS (challenge 4)

**Action:** Social activities for students of ISS will be coordinated and facilitated. These activities will be arranged at least twice per year. The student organisation (TuKYData) in our school will help to organize the program for these activities. The ISS staff should also involve in these social activities.

**Monitoring:** Feedback from students will be collected every year.

**Responsible person:** Project researcher and subject head.

### 5.3.3.4 *Action 2.4: Give voice for females in ISS*

When promoting ISS, usually male professors give presentations. There should be voice from the ISS community, not only males, showing the variety of people in ISS unit.

**Related Challenge:** Need for female voice for ISS (challenge 3)

**Actions:** At research seminars, public presentations or events in ISS, female will be invited to give speeches.

**Monitoring:** Every 6 months, evaluate speech or presentation numbers for male and female at the ISS unit.

**Responsible person:** Project researcher.

## 5.3.4 Goal 3: More Gender balanced staff

### 5.3.4.1 *Action 3.1: Gender balanced recruiting*

When opening positions in ISS, special consideration will be given to inviting potential female candidates to apply to those positions.

**Related Challenge:** Lack of female professor (challenge 1)

**Action:**

1. When there is open position in ISS, a special consideration will be made about who could be potential qualified female candidates, and personal invitation will be sent to those to apply for the open position, such as invite at least 3-4 female candidates to apply.
2. Disseminating open position information in ISS unit at the international IS communities and the leading international conference on IS (ECIS, PACIS, ICIS, AMCIS) in order to get more qualified female candidates.
3. Make sure that the application announcement is gender neutral and that it doesn't favor any one based on gender.
4. In our university, the central management service, such as HR office, provides guidelines on gender balance recruitment in the whole university. We will Organize focused group meeting with HR coordinators or HR office to discuss how the guideline developed by HR office in UTU works for gender balanced recruitment in ISS.

**Monitoring:** Evaluating the recruitment process.

**Responsible person:** Project researcher, unit head and department head.