



EQUAL-IST

Gender Equality in Information Sciences and Technology

Gender Equality Progress Report

GEP in the University of Turku
(Finland)



EQUAL-IST UTU First progress report

Keywords: EQUAL-IST, UTU, STEM, women in ICT, Gender Equality Plan, progress report.

The EQUAL-IST Project

Women remain a minority among academic leaders, especially in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields. The project “Gender Equality Plans for Information Sciences and Technology Research Institutions” (EQUAL-IST) is improving this situation for seven partner Universities that are active in the fields of Information Sciences and Technology (IST) fields. EQUAL-IST joins the forces of those IST Research Institutions which are committed to introducing the internal structural changes necessary for boosting gender equality and removing barriers to the career progression of women in Research and Innovation (R&I).

The EQUAL-IST project does not only boost gender equality at the involved RPOs but also seeks to influence a more significant number of IST research organisations in order to address gender bias and contribute to the achievement of ERA objectives by increasing the number of female researchers in the IST fields.

Case of UTU



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

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 are being tackled through the EQUAL-IST project. The findings on the challenges in ISS from the internal auditing and interviews are similar

to 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.

Due to the advanced state of gender equality in Finland, the approach at the ISS unit was different than in the other involved RPOs. The approach was 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 focus on promoting the ICT field and studies to all genders with emphasis on women.

The decisions to select the actions in UTU 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 women in ISS as well as to achieve gender equality in ISS.

In the GEP refinement process there were two issues that were taken into account: firstly, part of the university employees was re-organised in another department, and secondly, new approval processes were implemented as a nation-wide policy. This separation has changed the gender-balance dramatically for women.

Challenges and Key Performance Indicators

The identified challenges along with the goals are presented in the table below. A detailed presentation of the actions and activities implemented through our project follows in the next section.

Intervention Areas	Challenge Title	Goal
HR Management Practices	1. Support career-planning to avoid underrepresentation of women in senior faculty positions	Action 3.1 Gender-balanced recruiting
	3. Need for women voice for ISS	Action 2.3. Give voice to women in ISS
	1. Support career-planning to avoid underrepresentation of women in senior faculty positions	Action 1.1 Creating individual career plans Action 1.2. Encouraging for the academic career in ICT field
	2. Endorse peer support between faculty members to ensure non-discrimination and gender equality	Action 2.1. Support institutional communication about equality
	2. Endorse peer support between employees to ensure gender equality	Action 2.2 Promote both women and men in the ICT field
Teaching and Students Services & Institutional Communication	3. Need for women voice for ISS	Action 2.3. Give voice to women in ISS
	4. Female students feel lack of belonging to ISS community as they are the minority in ISS	Activity 2.4 Continue peer support program in the unit
Institutional communication	3. Need for women voice for ISS	Action 2.3. Give voice to women in ISS

First year's main results

At the UTU 9 Activities were initiated and implemented. The implementation of most activities was supported by the Head of the ISS unit, the professors, other academic staff members, and PhD students. For several other Activities, such support still needs to be obtained. In addition, one of the ISS professors is a member of the Equality Committee at the UTU, which facilitates the support and visibility of the EQUAL-IST project at the university level. During the 1st



iteration of the GEP implementation, a Career Development Form for all ISS staff members was developed. This form was used to collect feedback from the postdoctoral researchers and PhD students at the ISS. Unfortunately, the participation rate was very low despite the emails sent by the Head of the ISS unit and by the EQUAL-IST project leader at the UTU. Such low participation could be because the respondents did not perceive that the issues related to gender equality are hindering their career progress.

Involved Stakeholders:

EQUAL-IST project leader at the UTU and the internal evaluator at the WWU

Dr. Hongxiu Li - Postdoctoral Researcher at the ISS unit, UTU

Dr. Brita Somerkoski Research manager, UTU

Dr. Olli Sjöblom Senior Researcher, UTU

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Research Managers:

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Education manager in ISS unit: Dr. Eija Koskivaara

Vice Dean of Turku School of Economics and Professor in ISS unit: Dr. Hannu Salmela

Professor in ISS unit: Dr. Reima Suomi (M)

Equality Committee UTU:

Anu Mäkelä, secretary

Vice Rector Riitta Pyykkö, chair

Professor in Practice in ISS unit: Dr. Tomi Dahlberg

Assistant Professor in ISS unit: Dr. Matti Mäntymäki

External stakeholders:

Associate Professor Isabel Ramos –

Participation to a panel discussion at WIS conference

Professor Kshanika Hirimburegama –

Keynote at WIS conference

Anu Mäkelä, Chair Board of Education -

Presentation at the WIS conference

