



GENDER BALANCE STANDARDS FOR PARTICIPATION IN CITIZEN SCIENCE HUB AT VILNIUS TECH



**VILNIUS
TECH**

Vilnius Gediminas
Technical University

CONTEXT

Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (VILNIUS TECH) is an autonomous, innovative and open higher education institution committed to equality, economic progress and prosperity through the highest level of studies and research.

The mission of VILNIUS TECH is to develop a socially responsible, creative and competitive personality that is receptive to science, the latest technologies and cultural values, to promote scientific progress, social and economic prosperity, and to create value for the development of Lithuania and the region in the world, while respecting the individual beliefs, rights and aspirations of all members of the University community.

VILNIUS TECH promotes equality and diversity without tolerating discrimination in all its activities. "Vilnius Gediminas Technical University Gender Equality Plan 2022-2027" was created to draw the attention of the entire VILNIUS TECH community to the importance of gender equality and to promote change in this area.



The main goal of the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is to help ensure equal opportunities for all current and future members of the VILNIUS TECH community, regardless of their gender, and to systematically address gender issues. The aim of the GEP is to create structural and cultural changes in the field of equal opportunities at the University. The plan is expected to facilitate the creation of a safe and equal climate at the University, reduce prevailing stereotypes in the choice of profession and ensure the prevention of discrimination.

The GEP has been prepared in accordance with the directives and provisions of the European Union, the European Commission's Horizon Europe Guidelines and Recommendations for GEP and the laws and regulations of the Republic of Lithuania. To comply with the Horizon Europe GEP eligibility criterion, the Vilnius Tech GEP includes the following dimensions:



Public document: The GEP is a formal document published on the institution's website, signed by the top management and actively communicated within the institution.



Dedicated resources: a GEP has dedicated resources and expertise in gender equality to implement the plan.



Data collection & monitoring: organisation collects sex/gender-disaggregated data on personnel (and students, for the establishments concerned) with annual reporting based on indicators.



Training: The GEP includes information on awareness-raising and training actions on gender equality.

PURPOSE OF THE STANDARDS

The following document builds upon the requirements outlined in Vilnius Tech Gender Equality plan 2022-2027 and provides guidelines for the community of the Citizen Science Hub on the following dimensions minimising gender inequality within its governance framework and research activities:

- Work-life balance and organizational culture
- Gender balance in leadership and decision-making
- Gender equality in recruitment and career progression
- Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content
- Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment



WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

A key component of the transformation of an organization's culture for advancing gender equality is work-life balance. Work-life balance is relevant for all members of staff and involves ensuring that everybody is properly supported to advance their career alongside personal responsibilities that they may hold outside the workplace, including caring responsibilities (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2022). It is important to highlight that the whole institution benefits from a more open and respectful organizational culture and that it is not 'a women's issue'. Improving organisational cultures also contributes to becoming an attractive employer, and therefore to attracting and retaining the best talent (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2022).

The activities of Citizen Science Hub adhere to the following principles encouraging work-life balance:

Flexible working time arrangements and workload management. The tasks are allocated with consideration of the impact on staff with caring responsibilities or part-time workers.

GENDER BALANCE IN DECISION MAKING AND LEADERSHIP

According to the European Institute for Gender Equality (2022), efforts to promote gender balance in leadership and decision-making have been undertaken in numerous countries. However, despite the policies and measures taken, data shows that women remain under-represented in academic and administrative leadership and decision-making positions in universities and research institutions across Europe. For example, in 2019, women accounted for 31% of parliament members in EU countries (European Commission, 2022).

The activities of Citizen Science Hub adhere to the following principles encouraging gender balance in leadership and decision-making:

Adapted processes and procedures for the selection and appointment of staff on committees and other bodies. Gender balance is considered when appointing members of the board and other governance bodies of the Hub.

The Hub ensures that **leadership and decision-making roles are properly recognised** in evaluations of staff work.

The Hub ensures that all decision-makers have access to **gender equality training** provided by Vilnius Tech.

Establishment of a **mentorship programme** for young researchers willing to explore topics of open and citizen science. Mentor programs entail the exchange of advice, perspective and guidance between mentor and mentee.

INTEGRATION OF THE GENDER DIMENSION INTO RESEARCH AND TEACHING CONTENT

Integrating the gender dimension in research content involves mainstreaming sex and gender analysis throughout all stages of the research process, from research questions and design, carrying out research, to its dissemination (Palmén et al., 2020). Our knowledge is the basis on which future generations will build their societies. It is therefore crucial that the knowledge that is created through research and transferred through education is free of gender bias (European Gender Equality Institute, 2022).

The activities of Citizen Science Hub strive to focus on particular research strengths and priorities to foster gender-sensitive research:

Asking research applications to address how sex and gender analysis is taken into account in the Citizen Science project's content.

Raising gender awareness and competence for applicants, reviewers or evaluation panels, providing specific guidance and training.

Integration of the sex/gender dimension into the monitoring of research output and other activities.

MEASURES AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

According to European Institute for Gender Equality (2022), R&I is not immune to sexual and gender-based violence, but this issue tends to be underestimated in research organisations and research funding bodies. Hence, measures are needed in this area, such as providing information regarding sexual and gender-based harassment and offering attention and support to victims and witnesses of misconduct, with a commitment to putting an end to such behaviour.

The activities of Citizen Science Hub adhere to the following principles discouraging gender-based violence:

Citizen Science Hub Code of conduct clarifies whether relationships are (or are not) considered harassment and ensures that potential victims or witnesses of harassment are not deterred from reporting incidents.

REFERENCES

1. European Institute for Gender Equality (2022) Gender Equality in Academia and Research. Accessed via: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/work-life-balance-and-organisational-culture>
2. European Commission (2022) Gender balance in decision-making. Accessed via https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-balance-decision-making-positions_en
3. Palmén, R., Arroyo, L., Müller, J., Reidl, S., Caprile, M., & Unger, M. (2020). Integrating the gender dimension in teaching, research content & knowledge and technology transfer: Validating the EFFORTI evaluation framework through three case studies in Europe. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 79, 101751.