



Gender Equality Plan

**FZU – Institute of Physics
of the Czech Academy of Sciences**



FZU's commitment to promoting gender equality

Institute of Physics of the Czech Academy of Sciences (FZU) recognises that European research in physics, despite national and EU-level strategies on gender equality, still suffers from a considerable loss and inefficient use of highly skilled women. As an employer, FZU follows the principles of the European Charter for Researchers, the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, and the Gender Equality Strategy of the European Commission. Promoting gender equality is essential to us. It is integrated into our strategic plan and objectives.

I am delighted that FZU has been a holder of the *HR Excellence in Research Award* of the European Commission since 2019. FZU is committed to fostering a culture that promotes equality and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its employees are respected. Since 2017, we have made significant progress in improving our policies and practices regarding gender equality in our institution. We are proud of what we have achieved and are determined to do more.

In the framework of the new Gender Equality Plan, which will be implemented in the next two years, we will continue with the planned gender equality actions as set in the FZU Action Plan, as well as implement new innovative strategies and actions. Our primary focus of the Gender Equality Plan is to foster gender equality at FZU and adapt our policies and practices to remove any obstacles to equality, correct any bias, address gender imbalances, and strengthen the gender dimension in research programmes. We have also worked to ensure that all employees are supported in developing their careers and maintaining a healthy work and life balance.

To achieve our objectives, we have targeted our resources to support the development and implementation of the Gender Equality Plan. The implementation of the Gender Equality Plan will be executed by the newly appointed Equality Panel and overseen by the Steering Committee. Sufficient funds have been allocated to implement the GEP and to support the responsible bodies (Steering Committee, Equality Panel and HR team). There is an annual fund to support the gender equality training and development of our employees. In early 2020, a new HR gender specialist post was created within the FZU HR team, who will serve as the Executive Secretary of the Equality Panel. We will also engage in partnerships with funding agencies, other research organisations and universities to attract additional funding and foster cultural and institutional change on gender. Information about the plans and outcomes related to gender equality will be shared with all employees and presented on the FZU website.

I enthusiastically endorse this initiative and confirm that the information presented in the document is an honest, accurate and true reflection of the institution. I affirm that FZU understands and is committed to the proposed plan and that we will be fully engaged in gender equality activities and plans. We will follow through on these commitments, regardless of changes in agency leadership, budget modifications, or other foreseeable events.

RNDr. Michael Prouza, Ph.D.
Director of FZU

17 December 2021



Current status and objectives

FZU is a public research institution focused on basic and applied research in the field of physics. As of 31st December 2020, 31% (435) of our staff were female, and 69% (959) were male (Tab. 1). Although the number of female employees is gradually increasing (Tab. 2), there is still fewer female than male staff at FZU. FZU aims to improve the gender balance by increasing the proportion of women in research, education, technical professions, and management. Ensuring equal opportunities for women and men within the institute is a prerequisite for achieving this goal.

This document outlines a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) of FZU, an overarching strategy and an active effort to foster gender balance and equal opportunities for women and men at FZU. While the broader concept of diversity and equality is important to FZU as well, this strategy focuses specifically on the gender dimension to adopt an efficient and targeted approach on five focus areas in the next two years. Since a number of the equality-related activities outlined in the GEP have already been included in the FZU Action Plan 2021-2023, the action plan indicates also fulfilled actions in 2021.

The GEP consists of a set of actions aiming at conducting impact assessment/audits of procedures and practices to identify gender bias, outlining and implementing innovative strategies to correct any discrimination, and setting targets and monitoring progress via indicators. The implementing bodies and measures required for achieving the objectives are described below. The present strategy and action plan concern all employees of FZU, women and men, including students and employees in scientific, technical, administrative, or management positions.

Tab. 1 Profile of female and male employees in the main staff groups at FZU as of December 2020.

Staff group	Total	Number of females	Number of males	% of female	% of male
Total number of staff at FZU	1394	435	959	31%	69%
Researchers	536	100	436	19%	81%
PhD students	96	23	73	24%	76%
Technical staff in research	176	49	127	28%	72%
Other professional staff	411	154	257	37%	63%
Administrative staff	93	79	14	85%	15%
Workers	82	30	52	37%	63%

Tab. 2 Length of service profile of FZU employees as of December 2020.

Length of service	Total	Number of females	Number of males	% of female	% of male
< 5 years	669	230	439	34%	66%
5-10 years	297	84	213	28%	72%
10-15 years	130	45	85	35%	65%
15-20 years	78	23	55	29%	71%
20-25 years	59	18	41	31%	69%
25-30 years	41	11	30	27%	73%
> 30 years	120	24	96	20%	80%



Organisation structure and implementing bodies

- **Director of FZU** is the official leader of FZU, who makes management decisions for the institute. The director of FZU is committed to actively promoting gender equality and the implementation of the GEP. He dedicates financial resources to the GEP implementation.
- **Steering Committee** is the Director's advisory body. It acts as strategic management and supervisory body that sets the direction and monitors the development and implementation of essential strategic management and human resource plans and processes at FZU, including actions on gender balance and equal opportunities. It is responsible for managing and coordinating activities and approving the objectives, actions, strategies, and reports of the GEP and the Action Plan of the HR Excellence in Research Award.
- **Equality Panel** is the main working group that is responsible for the development, implementation and execution of the GEP actions, annual monitoring and evaluation, including assessment of GEP targets and indicators, and communication both inside and outside the organisation. Members of the panel represent different working positions all over the institute. The Equality Panel comprises 10 members, an Executive Secretary and 9 members of the panel, who represent the individual divisions of FZU. The Executive Secretary is in charge of managing the organisation of the panel. The panel prepares regular annual reports shared with all employees and presented on the FZU website.

ACTIONS

1 Work-life balance and organisational culture

Improvement of working conditions and organisational culture is a continual and long-term process. FZU aims to gradually improve the working conditions, environment and culture to reach the highest possible standards. Maintaining a healthy work-life balance and gender equality brings benefits to both the employees and employer. Several work-life balance support schemes and benefits have been implemented at FZU over the last years, such as home office, flexible working hours, part-time work, social fund contributions, trade union support, dedicated visitation rooms for children at the workplace, and cooperation with other organisations on childcare and children's group services. The employees highly appreciate these benefits. Despite that, there is still a lack of knowledge among some employees about the possibilities in maintaining work and life balance at FZU. There is a need to better communicate these policies and benefits within the organisation.

Although most of the FZU employees do not consider gender equality an issue at FZU, the knowledge and discussion about gender-related problems are very limited. There has been a lack of seminars on gender issues and communication campaigns targeting gender equality and promoting good gender practices at FZU. Gender equality is also not well manifested through language as both Czech and English are languages referring explicitly or implicitly to only one gender. There are also gaps in gender-related data collection that allow analysis at the institutional level. There is still a significant gender gap across the physical, technology, and engineering disciplines despite a number of efforts over the past three decades to address this issue. Creating more targeted outreach activities for children,



teenagers, and young adults might increase their interest in science and technology and address unconscious biases and cultural stereotyping. The following actions will be implemented to support further gender equality in work-life balance and organisational culture at FZU.

I. Work-life balance and organisational culture					
Objectives	Actions	Indicators	Timeline		
			2021	2022	2023
1.1 Gender equality in working conditions, internal policies, documentation, and processes	1.1.1 Review all important FZU documents and policies from a gender equality perspective	Number of reviewed documents		x	x
	1.1.2 Review data collecting methods and forms	Number of reviewed documents		x	x
	1.1.3 Conduct regular employee satisfaction surveys	Number of employees participating in the survey	x	x	x
	1.1.4 Set up an internal system / rules / conditions for collecting, storing, and processing data and for providing information about the possible benefits and opportunities on the maternity / paternity / sick leave / caring for family member	Number of innovated systems in the action		x	
	1.1.5 Prepare an annual report with the remuneration benchmark analysis	Number of reports in the action		x	x
	1.1.6 Prepare an annual report about a remote work, flexible working hours, part-time jobs	Number of reports in the action		x	x
1.2 Raise awareness about gender equality among employees using seminars, workshops, networking and training events	1.2.1 Organise gender equality events and seminars on topics such as work and life balance, career development, frequent obstacles for parents with children, and FZU role models	Number of organised events and number of participants in the action		x	x
	1.2.2 Organise and run gender equality awareness-raising training to promote the GEP and other related activities	Number of trained employees in the action		x	x
	1.2.3 Organise and maintain a networking platform for employees as part of the mentoring programme	Number of networking platforms			x



1.3 Communication and gender-sensitive language	1.3.1 Organise a training seminar for the PR team on gender-sensitive language and communication	Number of trained employees		x	x
	1.3.2 Organise targeted outreach activities (e.g. fun physics) for children, teenagers and young adults to increase their interest in science and technology and address unconscious biases and cultural stereotyping	Number of organised events and number of participants in the action		x	x
	1.3.3 Create and put in place instructions / guidelines / toolkits for gender-sensitive communication on the FZU intranet	Number of guidelines / documents on gender-sensitive communication		x	x
1.4 Knowledge transfer & raising awareness of gender-related topics	1.4.1 Broaden cooperation and partnership with other institutions on gender equality and support knowledge transfer	Number of participations at meetings / conferences / seminars in the action	x	x	x

2 Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

Both women and men play an essential role in the leadership and decision-making at FZU. Nevertheless, senior leadership positions have been traditionally dominated by men. The data in 2021 (Fig. 1) show that men occupy the majority of the leading positions as well as there is a majority of males in the FZU committees involved in the decision-making. The representation of women is smaller in the committees elected by employees, such as the Institute Council and the Academy Assembly, than in the committees nominated by the director. Therefore, women are still a minority in the leadership of FZU. The following actions will be implemented in the next years to support women's motivation, career planning and development in the leadership and decision-making at FZU.

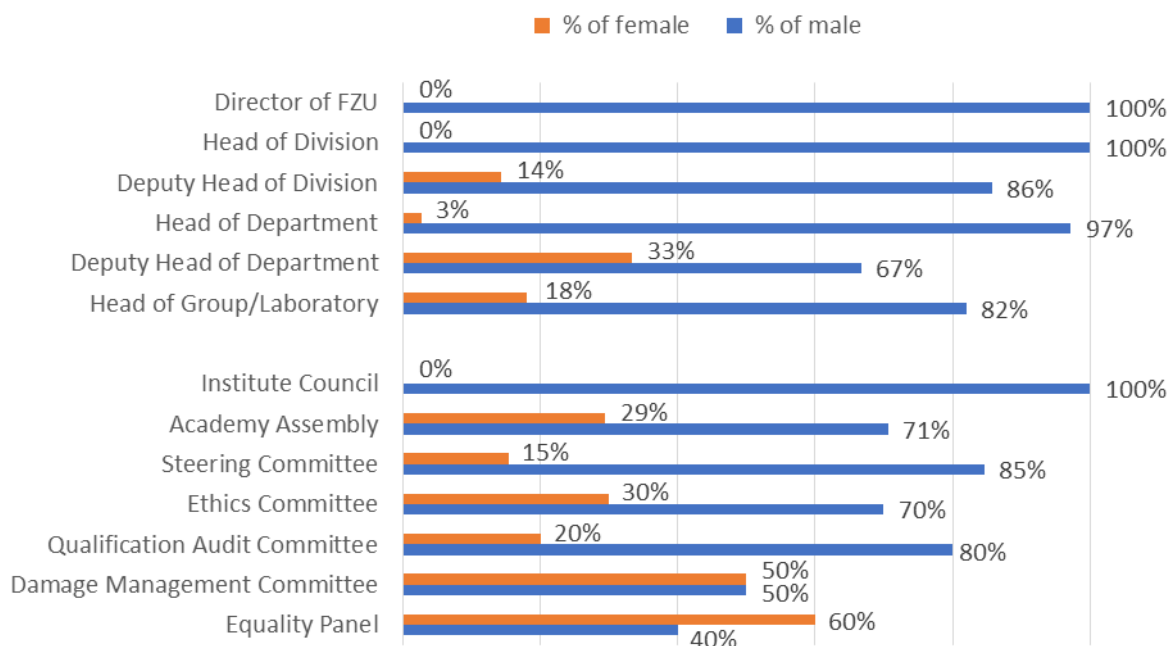


Fig. 1 Profile of female and male employees in different leading positions, committees, and boards that participate in the decision-making at FZU as of November 2021.

II. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making					
Objectives	Actions	Indicators	Timeline		
			2021	2022	2023
2.1 Talent management	2.1.1 Set up a talent development programme to discover, develop and promote hidden potential in female and male candidates	Number of trained employees in the action			x
2.2 Support gender-balance in leadership and decision-making committees and boards	2.2.1 Create motivation tools for attracting more female candidates to apply for leadership positions and stand for election to the FZU decision-making committees and boards	Number of created tools in the action		x	x

3 Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

FZU has been a holder of the European Commission’s HR Excellence in Research Award since 26 April 2019. The award is a means of public acknowledgement for research institutions that have demonstrated significant progress in implementing the principles set in the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. One of the key commitments is the implementation of rules for open, transparent and merit-based recruitment (OTM-R) and the



selection of researchers, administrative and technical positions. The process of employee recruitment and selection is regulated by the FZU Employee Recruitment and Selection Strategy and Methodology. Although a new HR system has been introduced and implemented at FZU, it is still not in full use and common practice. The new procedures of recruitment are still relatively unknown within the FZU community. The gender dimension has also not been well integrated into the new employee onboarding guidelines and procedures.

FZU strives to create conditions for expanding professional knowledge and sharing experiences, but also for the development of transferable and soft skills. In the past three years, we have significantly expanded the training and development activities at FZU thanks to the financial support from the FZU HR Award and STIMUL projects. These projects have also enabled us to hire several new members of the HR team to provide support and coordination of training and career development activities at FZU. There have been organised a significant number of training sessions that were focused on the development of different managerial skills, legislation awareness, transferable knowledge and soft skills. However, there is still a need to focus more on individual learning and development planning and develop a conceptual and systematic approach to continuous career growth both for women and men. Further activities in this area will focus on the gender-balanced support in career progression and analysis of possible gender wage gaps.

III. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression					
Objectives	Actions	Indicators	Timeline		
			2021	2022	2023
3.1 Well-trained recruitment staff capable of applying the gender equality and OTM-R principles in recruitment and selection processes	3.1.1 Promote the established OTM-R processes and methodologies in the organisation	Number of organised promotion activities in the action	x	x	x
	3.1.2 Ensure that recruiters (managers and selection committee participants) have training in the recruitment and selection processes	Number and % of trained employees in the action	x	x	x
3.2 Integrate gender dimension in welcome package and onboarding guidelines	3.2.1 Prepare welcome and onboarding process guidelines and intranet web pages with integral gender perspective for new employees and managers	Number of onboarding guidelines / welcome documents		x	x
3.3 Women and men are equally supported in career progression	3.3.1 Create and approve a methodology for career growth and development of researchers with the integral gender dimension	Number of new methodologies		x	
3.4 Mitigate gender wage gaps	3.4.1 Analyse gender gaps in wage-setting methods	Number of analyses		x	x



4 Integration of the gender dimension into research

As research in physics does not involve human subjects, the gender dimension is not always relevant for the research and development carried out at FZU. However, FZU is aware that research and innovation can significantly impact society and quality of life, and if the gender dimension in research is not well considered, it might not always bring the same benefits to women and men. Therefore, we will prepare new focused training at FZU that will explain to researchers how to identify gender issues in research and help them understand the importance of integrating the gender dimension into their research practices, methodology, and outcomes.

IV. Integration of the gender dimension into research					
Objectives	Actions	Indicators	Timeline		
			2021	2022	2023
4.1 Integration of gender dimension into research practices, methodology, outcomes and proposals	4.2.1. Design and run an online training to integrate the gender dimension into the practices, methodology, outcomes and project proposal in basic and applied research	Number and % of trained employees in the action		X	X

5 Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

FZU is strictly against any violation of human rights, including gender-based violence, sexual harassment, and discrimination. FZU has its Code of Ethics that all employees are required to follow. There are also in place practical guidelines on how to eliminate and proceed in case of inappropriate behaviour, including sexual harassment (e.g., unsolicited comments and the use of inappropriate stereotyping), conflicts, discrimination, disputes between departments or work teams, bossing, mobbing, staffing or manipulation, as well as manipulation by superiors or colleagues. The Ethics Committee is in charge to deal with ethical issues and tackling specific areas of gender-based violence, sexual harassment, and discrimination in the organisation.

FZU is aware that the relationship between gender and violence is complex, and gender inequalities in society might have a large and wide-ranging impact on the behaviour of women and men at work. Therefore, FZU will actively promote gender equality to prevent violence against women and men by challenging unconscious bias and stereotypes that, for example, give men power over women. New measures, interventions, training, and campaigns will be implemented to address gender norms, unconscious bias, and appropriate behaviour and improve the complaint mechanism at FZU.



V. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment					
Objectives	Actions	Indicators	Timeline		
			2021	2022	2023
5.1 Raising employee awareness of unconscious bias and inappropriate behaviour	5.1.1 Run an internal campaign on unconscious bias to break down gender stereotypes and mitigate inappropriate behaviour	Number of organised campaigns in the action	x	x	x
	5.1.2 Organise unconscious bias workshops and awareness programs	Number and % of trained employees in the action	x	x	x
	5.1.3 Set up regular e-learning training for employees focused on inappropriate behaviour, gender-based violence, harassment, and its prevention, with a particular focus on hidden discrimination, marginalising behaviour, and the bystander effect	Number and % of trained employees in the action		x	x
	5.1.4 Train team leaders to prevent inappropriate behaviour	Number and % of trained employees in the action		x	x
5.2 Improve the complaint mechanism	5.2.1 Set up an efficient gender equality complaint mechanism and promote it	Number of introduced systems in the action			x

Annexes

- [1. European Charter for Researchers & Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#)
- [2. FZU Action plan 2021-2023](#)
- [3. FZU HR Strategy](#)
- [4. FZU Employee Recruitment and Selection Strategy](#)
- [5. OTM-R approach](#)
- [6. FZU Code of Ethics](#)