

SABANCI UNIVERSITY

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

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## Summary

### National Context:

- Article 10 of the [Turkish Constitution](#) guarantees equality before the law: “Everyone is equal before the law without distinction as to language, race, colour, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect, or any such grounds. (Paragraph added on May 7, 2004; Act No. 5170) Men and women have equal rights. The State has the obligation to ensure that this equality exists in practice. (Sentence added on September 12, 2010; Act No. 5982) Measures taken for this purpose shall not be interpreted as contrary to the principle of equality. (Paragraph added on September 12, 2010; Act No. 5982) Measures to be taken for children, the elderly, disabled people, widows and orphans of martyrs as well as for the invalid and veterans shall not be considered as violation of the principle of equality. No privilege shall be granted to any individual, family, group or class. State organs and administrative authorities are obliged to act in compliance with the principle of equality before the law in all their proceedings.”
- In 1985, Turkey signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- In 2012, Turkey signed and ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention).
- In 2015, The Council of Higher Education (CHE) issued the Position Paper on Gender Equality in Higher Education.
- In 2019, the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK) published the Policy Guidelines for Increasing the Participation of Women Researchers in TUBITAK processes.

In January 2019, Sabancı University embarked on the Gender Equality Plan design process with a strong base in the following areas:

- Institutional Policies:
  - Strong commitment to gender equality among previous and existing Presidents, Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors, General Secretary, and other decision-makers.
  - Pioneering institutional documents and processes on [sexual harassment](#), [domestic violence](#) and [non-discrimination](#).
- Research and Social Impact:
  - Prominent social science and humanities scholars that conduct gender research
  - A vibrant gender studies research center ([SU Gender](#) - Gender and Women's Studies Center of Excellence) and an action-research center where gender diversity at corporate governance and leadership is one of the main focus areas ([Corporate Governance Forum](#))
  - High-impact educational and social programs on gender awareness and equality such as the Purple Certificate and Curious Steps.
- Teaching and Curriculum:
  - An international Gender Studies PhD Program
  - A wide range of courses that focus on or incorporate gender, particularly in the Cultural Studies (BA, MA) and Gender Studies (PhD) programs

### Co-Creation Process:

Since January 2019, Horizon 2020 SwafS GEARING-Roles project team has been undertaking a gender equality assessment of Sabancı University and facilitating a participatory process for the drafting of the university's first Gender Equality Plan.

This Gender Equality Plan has been co-designed by close to 100 members of Sabancı University based on the GEARING-Roles Institutional Assessment Report (September 2019), participatory co-creation workshops (October 2019-February 2020), Task Force Meetings (June-July 2020), and meetings between the GEARING Roles team, SU Gender, and Human Resources (June-December 2020).

This process has revealed the need to develop *gender equality policies* in seven major areas and to establish an *institutional mechanism* to implement them in a coordinated manner.

Section I of the GEP outlines the action for the establishment of the institutional mechanism and Sections II – VIII outline the actions for Recruitment; Career Progression; Work-Life Balance; Decision-Making and Leadership; Research; Curriculum and Teaching, and Sexual Harassment Mechanisms and Gender-Neutral Communication.



### Key Objectives

1. To institutionalize gender equality monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking mechanisms
2. To increase the percentage of women faculty, researchers and students in programs and ranks where their numbers are low.
3. To increase opportunities for career advancement in administrative positions.
4. To increase the number of women in all management positions.
5. To institutionalize measures for the evaluation of management and decision-making mechanisms on the basis of gender equality and inclusivity.
6. To establish work-life balance mechanisms as add ons to legal mechanisms and to make them applicable in all faculties and units.
7. To enact formal mechanisms for the integration of a gender perspective in research and curriculum in all fields.
8. To improve existing mechanisms for the prevention of sexual harassment, gender-based violence and discrimination by making existing complaint and support mechanisms more concrete and effective.



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## SECTION I

### Institutionalization and Capacity Building for Gender Equality

#### Diagnosis

Although Sabancı University has been a pioneering institution in developing gender equality policies, as well as academic and social programs, the GEARING-Roles gender equality assessment process has revealed the lack of a university mechanism for institutionalizing, coordinating and implementing gender equality policies across different units of the university.

#### Actions

1. Based on existing research and successful examples of institutionalizing gender equality in Turkish and other European universities (see Annex II), the suggested action is to appoint a **Gender Equality Officer** with the following duties and responsibilities:
  - Coordinating and facilitating the implementation of the actions in the GEP in coordination and consultation with the GEP Committee, the Gender Equality Task Force and relevant academic and administrative units in the university.
  - Undertaking systematic (privacy preserving) data collection regarding gender equality at Sabancı University.
  - Reviewing all institutional documents, procedures and decision-making mechanisms from a gender perspective and suggesting adjustments based on the GEP.
  - Publishing annual periodic reports that include benchmarking.
  - Designing a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation.
  - In consultation with the GEP Committee, conducting an assessment of the implemented actions, achievements and shortcomings at the end of the third year and to develop the new GEP to be put into action in year 4.
  - Organizing regular town hall meetings at the university open to all university members to raise awareness about the GEP and to discuss related issues to foster ownership and inclusion.
  - Coordinating and implementing the training and capacity building program.
2. **Gender Equality Officer** will work closely with the GEP Committee and the Gender Equality Task Force.
3. **GEP Committee**
  - is composed of the Gender Equality Officer and representatives from three faculties, SU Gender, Human Resources and other administrative units (from among members of the Task Force)
  - meets at least once a month throughout the year to evaluate the progress of the GEP implementation process and to decide on the priority actions of the coming month(s)
  - is co-coordinated by the GEARING Roles Project Specialist and the Gender Equality Officer (until January 2023).



#### 4. Gender Equality Task Force:

- Formed in Summer 2019 with the participation of more than 20 faculty, staff, students, and administrators, the Sabancı University Gender Equality Task Force has played a constitutive role in the bottom-up drafting of Sabancı University Gender Action Plan.
- The current Task Force members will continue to be active (with possible additions) until January 2023, during which it will be co-coordinated by the GEARING Roles Project Specialist and the Gender Equality Officer.
- The Task Force meets at least twice a year.
- Task Force members
  - act as GEP change agents in their own units and communities.
  - evaluate and report on the effectiveness and impact of the GEP actions in their contexts
  - make suggestions to the GEP Committee and the GEO for further or new actions
  - advise on the further development and sustainability of the GEP





## SECTION II

### Recruitment

#### Diagnosis

The GEARING-Roles gender equality assessment process has shown that although gender equality is valued as an abstract principle among all stakeholders, the recruitment processes at Sabancı University lack a gender-equality perspective and the institutional mechanisms to put it into action.

#### Issues to be addressed

1. There is a significant difference between faculties and within faculties in the distribution of female and male faculty, STEM, Management and Economics fields being male dominated.
2. There is no systematic gender segregated data collection regarding recruitment processes.

#### Actions

1. Institutionalize a systematic gender segregated data collection regarding recruitment.
2. Set own targets for all faculties, centers, and academic programs for raising the percentage of women faculty. Shortlist at least one applicant of underrepresented gender for all positions, before a vacant post can be filled.
3. Aim for gender balance in all recruitment committees, ensuring that there is at least 40% of underrepresented genders.
4. For all units which have more than 50% men or women employees, set own targets for employing on a more inclusive basis. Shortlist at least one applicant of underrepresented gender for all positions, before a vacant post can be filled.
5. Develop diverse strategies to enhance the visibility of women faculty and their research within the university and as a part of publicity events to serve as role models for junior faculty, current and prospective students.
6. Observe gender equality of 50% in initiatives such as the Distinguished Research Fellow Program and the Commencement Speech.
7. Put a non-discrimination clause in all job advertisements. For programs and units where there is a major gender imbalance, include a welcoming clause for applications coming from the underrepresented gender.
8. Establish a mentoring program for junior women faculty and researchers.
9. Publish a Handbook for Hiring and Search Committees (both academic and administrative) to provide guidance on search and hiring processes, covering such issues as implicit bias, gendered language, and gender-based discrimination.
10. Make the selection processes and the criteria for promotion more transparent.
11. Require a “gender-equality report” outlining their statistics and policies for ensuring gender equality from subcontracting companies and set annual gender equality targets together with the companies.
12. Require gender equality training for subcontracting companies' personnel.
13. Organize regular trainings for all faculty and staff involved in recruitment processes as well as other related trainings, such as gender-sensitive budgeting for procurement and finance department.



## SECTION III

### Career Progression

#### Diagnosis

The GEARING-Roles gender equality assessment process has shown that although gender equality is valued as an abstract principle among all stakeholders, the career progression processes at Sabancı University lack a gender-equality perspective and the institutional mechanisms to put it into action.

#### Issues to be addressed

1. The percentage of women researchers drops significantly as their ranks rise.
2. There is no systematic gender segregated data collection regarding career progression processes.
3. While the large majority of administrative staff are composed of women, there is a lack of opportunities for career advancement and a gender parity perspective in promotions to manager and directorial positions.

#### Actions

1. Institutionalize a systematic gender segregated data collection regarding career progression.
2. Set own targets for all faculties, centers, and academic programs for raising the percentage of women faculty. Shortlist at least one applicant of underrepresented gender for all positions, before a vacant post can be filled.
3. Aim for gender balance in all promotion committees, ensuring that there is at least 30% of underrepresented genders.
4. Shortlist at least one applicant of underrepresented gender for all positions, before a vacant post can be filled.
5. Publish a Handbook for Promotion and Performance Evaluation committees (both academic and administrative) to provide guidance on promotion and performance evaluation processes, covering such issues as implicit bias, gendered language, and gender-based discrimination.
6. Make the promotion processes and the criteria more transparent.
7. Analyze gender wage gap at all academic and administrative levels.
8. Establish returner schemes for faculty and staff to support a smooth transition after parental leave or other care-related career breaks (*please see the section on Work-Life Balance*).
9. Create and actively disseminate job shadowing and other related schemes for inter-departmental transfer or career advancement of administrative staff, especially for managerial positions.
10. Organize regular trainings for all faculty and staff involved in promotion and performance evaluation processes.

## SECTION IV

### Work-Life Balance

#### Diagnosis

Sabancı University strictly follows Labor Law No.4858 in its regulations concerning maternity leaves. Since 2016, labor law also provides women and men with a right to part-time work until the child reaches school age. The GEARING-Roles gender equality assessment process has revealed that the time allocated to care related needs and activities and the gendered division of labor in private life pose disproportionate challenges to women's careers, performance levels and career advancement as well as sense of accomplishment. Moreover, there is a general understanding among research and workshop participants that measures for the reconciliation of work and life would benefit all constituents regardless of gender. While certain formal and informal mechanisms for establishing such balance are identified at Sabancı University, they are not uniformly applied or institutionally mandated in all faculties and units.

#### Issues to be addressed

1. The lack of institutionalized measures to prevent any negative effects maternity leave time off might have in performance evaluations and promotions.
2. The lack of an affordable day care center and/or institutionalized mechanisms of support for childcare
3. The lack of formal and concrete work-life balance policies that are applicable in all faculties or units.
4. The need to embrace a broader definition of care related needs and responsibilities that transcend the traditional association of care with women or care responsibilities as attached to mothering.

#### Actions

1. Implement a systematic gender disaggregated data collection and evaluation mechanism for work-life balance.
2. Set up rules for distance-working and publish them.
3. Create support mechanisms for care-related needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. Do benchmarking of different kinds of care leave.
5. Institutionalize mechanisms for different kinds of care leave by including different types of care leaves in the directive taking into consideration performance indicators (i.e. parental leave, elderly care, partner sickness care).
6. Organize workshops on fatherhood and promote the effective use of paternal leaves.
7. Establish a course reduction mechanism for academic staff, and other reduced workload mechanisms for administrative staff in the six-month period following maternity leave. The mechanism shall be included in the related directive.



8. Extend the evaluation period following maternity and care leaves (Faculties). Take into consideration the leave period in performance evaluations and adjust the annual pay rise of the employee that used care leave based on the minimum pay rise of the average-performing staff.
9. Provide clear information to faculty and staff regarding all types of care leave.
10. Provide training and re-orientation opportunities and externally recruited counselling support for women after maternity leave.
11. Provide all staff optional flexible work hour options and implement ICT-based systems to enhance flexibility.
12. Conduct exit surveys including questions on work-life balance.
13. Conduct focus group discussions/ to identify and address needs and issues related to work-life balance and satisfaction.
14. Organize experience sharing workshops about work life balance.
15. Institutionalize support for childcare and make available the option to choose between the following options: affordable on-campus childcare, institutional partnership with at least two affordable off campus childcare centers and subsidies for childcare.
16. Increase the number of lactation rooms on campus to make them accessible in different locations. For the buildings where room allocation is not possible, provide small refrigerators as inventory stock and allocate to lactating personnel for the period of lactation.
17. Set a directive on working and communication hours, restraining administrative e-mailing and meetings to be set after work hours, on weekends or on short notice.
18. Set up gender-neutral toilets around the campus.
19. Legally recognize gender transition processes of staff and include coverage for gender transition in insurance policies.
20. Develop and make visible policies for same-sex partners (such as health insurance) and include an awareness of gender- and sexuality- based phobia, discrimination and implicit bias in all trainings.



## SECTION V

### Decision-Making and Leadership

#### Diagnosis

The Institutional Assessment Report and participatory workshops with university members show that in order to ensure gender equality in decision-making and leadership and benefit from diversity in order to improve decision quality, Sabancı University needs to engage in two sets of activities:

1. Increase the number of women in all management positions.
2. Raise awareness on gender bias and equality among decision-makers and ensure that all decisions are regularly evaluated on the basis of gender equality and inclusivity.

#### Issues to be addressed

1. The lack of women in upper management and decision-making positions.
2. Significant imbalance in terms of gender parity in committees and other decision-making bodies.
3. Gender bias towards women in leadership positions.
4. Gender equality and diversity not having been established as a systematic principle in decision-making processes.
5. Women's care responsibilities preventing them from assuming leadership positions.

#### Actions

1. Develop a policy and support mechanisms for acknowledging the benefits of gender diversity and increasing the number of women at all levels of management and decision-making bodies.
2. Ensure that all decision-making bodies and committees have gender parity (with at least 40% representation of underrepresented genders).
3. Identify the reasons for women not partaking in leadership positions. For example, interview women who refuse leadership positions; conduct blind, anonymous surveys with women regarding their "care" responsibilities and need for support mechanisms, etc.
4. Ensure that there is at least one woman candidate in all shortlists for leadership positions.
5. If there is more than one management position at the same level, aim for gender parity of at least 30%.
6. Develop gender-equality and gender sensitivity guidelines for decision-making processes
7. Include "promoting gender equality" as a SMART objective in the Strategic Plan and its sub-processes.
8. Include "promoting gender equality" as a SMART objective in performance evaluation of all managers.
9. Engage in awareness-raising activities regarding implicit biases and the use of gendered language in leadership definitions and communications.
10. Offer leadership training programs and other support mechanisms such as coaching for women in management positions, and periodically offer leadership training for all women faculty and staff interested in assuming leadership positions.
11. Provide annual gender bias and gender-equality training for all levels of management (including committees).

## SECTION VI

### Research

#### Diagnosis

While a number of faculty and researchers at SU produce cutting-edge, high impact research in gender studies, the integration of gender dimension and gender diverse perspectives into research remains a matter of personal discretion as there are no institutional measures for gender mainstreaming in research management and content. Data shows that men receive a significantly higher number of projects and external project funding when compared to women. Through the institutionalization of mechanisms and procedures for integrating gender in research, the university will also meet a necessary requirement of gender equality ranking systems in higher education such as Times Higher Education rankings.

#### Issues to be addressed

1. Lack of institutional policies for the integration of gender dimension and perspectives in research content and management in all research fields
2. The lower numbers of research projects and research funding received by women researchers
3. Redefine scientific excellence with sensitivity to gender including research impact and inclusiveness where applies

#### Actions

1. Form a committee with one representative from each of the following units (RGP, RPD, faculties, research centers) to serve for three years. The committee will prepare guidelines on the inclusion of gender perspective in research and scientific production including suggestions for incentive schemes.
2. Provide financial and organizational support for establishing platforms for discussion on the issue of creating incentives for research projects that incorporate specific measures for ensuring and addressing gender equality (RGP, RPD, faculties, centers). Suggestions: (a) Allocate budget (RGP) for academics/researchers who would like to organize meetings, discussions to generate policies regarding this issue; (b) Produce a discussion paper regarding the creation of incentives for research projects that incorporate gender perspective and organize a meeting where all academics are invited to discuss suggestions outlined in the paper.
3. Require all applicants to write a section on the applicability of integrating a gender perspective to their research in internal research fund application proposals, based on the example of EU Research Area applications and norms.



5. Develop gender specialization within RGP. The specialist should:
  - Review relevant external funding opportunities for gender research (e.g. international organizations, foundations as well as TUBITAK and EU funds) and match funds with relevant researchers and research groups.
  - Plan, organize and/or provide organizational and logistical support to activities such as trainings, seminars, conferences, mentoring sessions for women researchers, addressing issues such as applying to external research funding, research management, mentoring possibilities, etc.
  - Plan, organize and/or provide organizational and logistical support to activities such as trainings, seminars, conferences, mentoring sessions addressing the gender dimension of research.
6. Establish an institutional and a national award program for women scientists.
7. Disseminate and enhance the visibility of research projects that incorporate a gender perspective, e.g. by creating a pool of good practices.
8. Establish systematic data collection, analysis and benchmarking systems regarding gender in research (including projects, publications, patents and innovations) in all its aspects of research i.e. funding allocations, gender diversity in research teams, gender dimension in research and prepare annual reports for monitoring and evaluation.
9. Set targets and monitor gender diversity in research groups and labs.





## SECTION VII

### Curriculum and Teaching

#### Diagnosis

Sabancı University is a pioneering and leading institution in Gender Studies with a vibrant research center (SU Gender) that also contributes to teaching and student research, first (and still only) international Gender Studies PhD program, a BA and MA Program in Cultural Studies that offers a wide range of courses on gender, and a minor program in Gender Studies. However, beyond the Cultural Studies and Gender Studies programs, gender-focused courses rarely exist. Several exceptions are certain psychology, history and politics courses where gender differences are interrogated; and certain management courses offered mainly by faculty and researchers affiliated with the Corporate Governance Forum. Integration of gender in the STEM courses is almost-non-existent, except for a new inter-faculty course on “Gender in Science and Technology” introduced in 2018.

#### Issues to be addressed

1. The lack of institutional policies and mechanisms for gender mainstreaming in teaching and curriculum across disciplines.
2. The lack of gender-aware practices in teaching.
3. The need to review students’ program choices and career trajectories with a gender perspective.

#### Actions

1. Develop, communicate and implement standards for the incorporation of sex and gender analysis into basic and applied sciences: Apply the “gender in teaching checklist” developed by Oxford Brookes University in the scope of the GEARING-Roles project to review FDP as well as undergraduate and graduate curricula with a gender perspective and send selected questions from the checklist to all faculty members who wish to review their course curricula and syllabi based on the checklist; organize workshops on integration gender into course content.
2. Organize seminars on gender sensitive teaching and prepare a Guideline for Gender Sensitive Teaching Methods.
3. Design and include gender equality topics and other mainstreaming actions as part of the Foundation Development Program.
4. Organize an inclusive classroom workshop with TAs and include gender components in TA orientation/training.
5. Incorporate a gender perspective into counseling and peer mentoring mechanisms.
6. Increase the number of inter-faculty classes that have a gender focus.
7. Create incentive mechanisms for the integration of a gender perspective in teaching, e.g. in teaching awards, including this as a target in the performance evaluation of faculty, and making visible good examples of gender mainstreaming in teaching e.g. in GazeteSU.
8. Make available and encourage the application of the Harvard University’s Implicit Association Test to all faculty and students.
9. Integrate gender equality and sexual harassment trainings in CIP programs.





10. Monitor and evaluate mainstreaming activities, e.g. include assessment questions in FDP graduate exit surveys.

#### **Student focused actions**

1. Inform students on gender bias in teaching evaluations.
2. Establish a mechanism to make a gender disaggregated qualitative and quantitative analysis of students' program choices, including changes between the anticipated and declared majors, and prepare regular reports.
3. Establish incentive mechanisms such as the "Tenzile Erdoğan scholarship" given to a woman engineering student, with the aim of recruiting women students to programs where they are underrepresented.
4. As part of the Graduate Ambassadors Programs, promote the establishment of a scholarship program for women students who are the first women in their families to receive university education.
5. Conduct activities that address gender bias in major and career choice, e.g. in career programs targeting existing students, the Major Fest, summer school for high school students, and promotion activities in high schools.
6. Encourage the integration of a gender equality perspective to the activities and make-up of student clubs and the student union and provide incentives for gender equality related activities.



## SECTION VIII

### Sexual Harassment Mechanisms and Gender-Neutral Communication

#### Diagnosis

Sabancı University has been a leader among Turkish universities in developing pioneering mechanisms for sexual harassment and domestic violence with its Domestic Violence Prevention and Support Statement and the Sexual Harassment Policy Statement. The GEARING-Roles gender equality assessment process has shown that in order to ensure the effective implementation of these policies and to ensure gender-neutral institutional communication, Sabancı University needs to engage in the sets of activities:

1. Making the complaint and support mechanisms more concrete and effective.
2. Expanding the reach of these mechanisms to all members of the Sabancı University community, including service-providers.
3. Raising awareness on sexual harassment and gender-neutral communication among all stakeholders.

#### Issues to be addressed

1. Lack of awareness on what constitutes sexual harassment among faculty, assistants, students, staff and service providers
2. Misinformation, disinformation and lack of trust in the effective functioning of existing complaint and support mechanisms
3. The absence of coordination between related mechanisms (sexual harassment, domestic violence, bullying, discrimination, etc.)
4. Lack of a policy that is adopted by or covers service providers
5. The rising prevalence of digital violence
6. The need for LGBTI+ inclusive policies and mechanisms
7. Lack of gender sensitivity in institutional and daily communication practices
8. The absence of concrete guidelines on gender neutral and inclusive communication practices.
9. The need to integrate gender neutral and inclusive language and sexual harassment into orientation programs
10. The lack of a mechanism for training, evaluation and monitoring regarding sexual harassment and sexist / heterosexist language use
11. The gender-based allocation of all toilets (with one exception), the absence of gender-neutral toilets

## Actions

1. Prepare an internal review report on the experiences of the Sexual Harassment Committee since its establishment (SU Gender, past and present Sexual Harassment Committee members, BAGEM) and gather recommendations for improvement of relevant processes and structures.
2. Provide information on the university website on alternative complaint and support mechanisms and their relations to one another (ethics committee, sexual harassment prevention and support committee, discipline committee).
3. Make the sexual harassment and domestic violence support mechanisms and documents available and visible on all university platforms (online and physical) and include these documents in all orientation packages. Both staff and students shall sign a document indicating they have read the documents and been notified about the consequences of violations of sexual harassment and domestic violence prevention principles.
4. Employ an expert on sexual harassment (with experience as psychologist, social worker or gender-based counseling in NGOs with specialization in trauma counselling) to receive the complaints and coordinate the work of the sexual harassment committee.
5. Ensure regular coordination between related committees (sexual harassment and domestic violence and discrimination).
6. Integrate gender perspective in Ethics Committee policy and add anti-mobbing and anti-harassment clauses in the regulation. Include detailed information on the principles of ethical code of conduct on the university website.
7. Require gender training for legal counsellors of the university.
8. Work with all service-providers to either enable the creation and effective implementation of their internal sexual harassment mechanisms or include service-provider employees in the existing mechanisms at SU.
9. Integrate sexual harassment in all orientation programs (undergraduate students, graduate students, assistants, instructors, faculty, and staff).
10. Prepare a university guideline for gender-neutral and inclusive communication.
11. Include the link to the sexual harassment statement and policy in all course syllabi.
12. Work on developing other pedagogical interventions, such as a pass-fail course on gender equality and sexual harassment for first year students.
13. Assess and revise all university documents and procedures, including the ones regarding sexual harassment and communication LGBTI+ inclusive.
14. Prepare an online mandatory training program on sexual harassment for all faculty (as part of the academic orientation program), staff and workers in service providing companies.