

# Gender Equality Plan

## Bifröst University Gender Equality Plan 2021-2024

The Bifröst University objective in making a gender equality plan is to level the status of genders within the University, among other things with respect to salary and other terms of employment, to participation in management and to status and opportunities for learning. The Gender Equality Plan has the primary objective of preventing discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual identity, disability, age, religion, views, nationality, race or sexual orientation. The institution meets varying needs of staff and students as deemed reasonable.

Bifröst University has prepared a specific response plan on how to react to gender-based and sexual harassment and violence, which is seen as integral to the institution's Gender Equality Plan. It prescribes a specific professional committee, which discusses complaint cases, and the institution's website provides easy access for submitting complaints. There is also a plan in force for preventative measures, which deals with actions to lessen the likelihood of occurrences of gender-based and sexual harassment and violence.

Bifröst University has also implemented a specific salaries policy where the institution's salaries system is, among other things, described, which is furthermore an equal pay policy and thus part of this gender equality plan.

Bifröst University has prepared a scheduled action plan with clear objectives and has specified the responsible parties with respect to Articles 5, 6, 12, 13 and 14 of Act no. 150/2020. The Bifröst University human resources manager is responsible for implementing and monitoring the Plan. This Plan is hosted in the University's intranet.

Bifröst University has also set itself new policy, Policy Objectives 2030. The policy action plan prescribes that the following tasks be implemented during the period 2021-2024.

- All new employees will be given an introduction to the Gender Equality Plan and to Rules of procedure and response to sexual and gender-related harassment and violence and the intention is that they will confirm receipt of this introduction.
- All new students will be given an introduction to the Gender Equality Plan og Rules of procedure and response to sexual and gender-related harassment and violence.
- Bifröst University will offer training, courses and information material that relates to knowledge about gender discrimination and sexual and gender -related harassment/violence. Visual aids and pedagogic procedures will be developed for use by teachers.
- Bifröst University will develop educational material that deals with preventative measures for digital violence, which shall be introduced to employees and students in an effective manner.
- Bifröst University will review and simplify procedures for employees and students to submit complaints and comments.

## **Salaries and other terms of employment**

1. Appointments within the institution shall reflect its willingness to level gender status within each operational unit and department. Where two or more individuals are deemed equally competent to fulfil a position, the person chosen shall be of the gender which is in a minority within the employment category within the institution.
2. Job advertisements shall state that the Gender Equality Plan will be taken into account when making appointments. Advertisements shall state that the jobs are open to all, regardless of gender and sexual identity, and shall encourage those that are considered to belong to a minority within the institution to apply where appropriate.
3. Diversity with respect to gender and sexual identity of those appointed to competence committees shall be taken into account.
4. When allocating tasks or making decisions about working conditions, immediate superiors shall avoid discrimination, cf. objectives of the Gender Equality Plan.
5. When deciding salaries, care should be taken to avoid discrimination cf. objectives of the Gender Equality Plan. Equal pay and the same terms of employment shall apply without exception for jobs of equal value.
6. Employment contracts do not prescribe confidentiality about terms of employment.
7. The needs of employees for coordination of work and family life are met. Immediate superiors shall furthermore take employees' needs for flexibility through remote working and virtual meetings into account.
8. When allocating from the Education Fund for continuing education, for courses and travel to conferences, and from the Research Fund for grants to support research, the boards of the funds shall ensure that they benefit the whole spectrum of employees of the institution, regardless of their personal circumstances or status.
9. Bifröst University operates an equal pay management system according to the requirements prescribed in the standard ÍST 85:2012. The certificate for equal wage certification is valid from 28 July 2020 until 28 July 2023. Equal pay certification shall be renewed at three-year intervals and shall be maintained as prescribed in the Act on equal opportunities for men and women no.150/2020. Active equal pay certification shall ensure general compliance with this Act when deciding pay.

## **Participation in management**

1. When appointing to management boards, councils and committees within the institution, effort shall be made to maintain equal gender proportions to the extent possible.
2. When the institution is seeking nominations for management boards, councils and committees, emphasis shall be placed on diversity in nominations and the gender proportion shall be taken into account to the extent possible.
3. Annually in May, the Gender Equality Committee shall collect information on the gender proportion in management boards, committees and councils for the preceding academic year.

## **Facilities and opportunities for learning**

1. Advertising and promotion shall aim to equally attract all genders to learning at the institution.
2. Departments, under the leadership of the Head of Department shall endeavour to build a work ethic in learning and teaching that values the varying genders equally. The same applies to managers of support services and other operational units.
3. The institution's rules and their interpretation shall constitute gender-neutral flexibility in learning and taking examinations with respect to pregnancy and childbirth.
4. The institution's rules, their interpretation, structure and offer of learning shall furthermore take varying needs into account, cf. objectives of the Gender Equality Plan.
5. During cyclical review of study programmes, pursuant to the institution's quality assurance policy, heads of departments shall investigate whether there is gender discrimination in teaching material and teaching, and whether the provisions of Article 15 of Act no. 150/2020 on equal status and equal rights irrespective of gender, are complied with.

## **Implementation and responsibility**

1. A specific gender equality committee monitors progress in the Gender Equality Plan and shall annually, before the end of February, give an account of its work with a report to the Rector and to the University Council. The committee's report shall be compiled in parallel to regular scrutiny by managers for equal pay certification. The Gender Equality Committee is elected by the University Council from nominations and it comprises three members, one employees' representative, one student representative and a chair nominated by the Rector.
2. Responsibility for implementation of individual provisions of the Gender Equality Plan lies with the Rector, unless specified otherwise.
3. The Gender Equality Plan shall be reviewed by the Gender Equality Committee, subsequent to discussions in the University Council, no later than three years after coming into force.

This Gender Equality Plan is a revision of the gender equality plan that came into force on 1 August 2019.

Reviewed at a meeting of the Gender Equality Committee 14.09.2021.

Reviewed at a meeting of the University Council 11.10.2021

Valid from 1 August 2021.

Next review takes place in 2024.

Approved by the Rector, 11.10.2021.

*This document is a translation. In the event of any discrepancies between the translation and the original text, the original shall take precedence.*