

Equality and Diversity Plan at the University of Silesia in Katowice for 2026–2030

1. Preamble

The University of Silesia in Katowice consistently pursues a path towards securing equality and honouring the diversity of all the individuals who make up its academic community. So that the adopted *Declaration of the University of Silesia – A Community of Equals and of Diversity* should not remain merely an eye-catching banner, in 2021 the Senate of the University issued a favourable opinion and the Rector, by regulation, established the *Gender Equality Plan at the University of Silesia in Katowice* for 2022–2024 (hereinafter: the GEP), the implementation of which has been extended to June 2026. This document was designed by a team of experts as one of the strategic instruments of the University's sustainable development and, at the same time, as an indicator of that development. The draft was the subject of wide-ranging consultation with the University community. The dynamic character of the programme of actions adopted at that time has made it possible to broaden the range of activities pursuing the strategic and operational objectives that had been set.

On 29 December 2022, the Rector of the University of Silesia in Katowice, Professor Ryszard Koziołek, appointed the Committee for Equality and Diversity (hereinafter: the Committee), whose membership ensures broad representation of our academic community. On 3 April 2024, the Equality and Diversity Observatory (hereinafter: the Observatory) was established as a specialised research unit, while on 1 September 2024 the Rector entrusted the area of GEP implementation to the Rector's Plenipotentiary for the Protection of Minors and for Equality, Professor Ewa Jarosz. Working in close collaboration, these bodies undertook the evaluation of the existing Gender Equality Plan and continued its implementation; and, in the following term of office from 2025, the Committee and the Observatory also began work on a diagnostic assessment and on the preparation of the next Equality and Diversity Plan at the University of Silesia for 2026–2030 (hereinafter: the EDP or the Plan). In parallel, the Committee took part in the consultation process for the Development Strategy of the University of Silesia in Katowice for 2026–2029, taking care to ensure that the Plan being drafted was aligned with the assumptions adopted therein.

Drawing on its experience to date and on the basis of a comprehensive diagnostic assessment carried out by the Observatory, the Committee has developed new objectives for advancing the equality and diversity policy at the University of Silesia in Katowice across five key areas:

- **research and education;**
- **recruitment and career progression;**
- **organisational culture and the life-work-learning balance;**
- **leadership and decision-making;**

- **safety and security.**

Without losing sight of the need to refine the mechanisms that ensure gender equality across the various areas of the University's operation, the present Plan also highlights the diversity of the academic community in other respects, such as length of service, physical ability, family roles, and nationality, and it approaches the prevention of discrimination in an intersectional way. This shift in emphasis is reflected in the change to the document's title. The *Equality and Diversity Plan* regards diversity as a value that enhances innovation, which is highly important for the functioning of a modern University. In keeping with the perspective adopted here, diversity, whilst being an undeniable value, is at the same time a challenge. In the philosophy of the new Plan it is, above all, an opportunity to enrich the University community and each of the individuals who make it up. Recognising and acknowledging diversity is a precondition for the effective introduction of equal opportunities and a safe environment for development. The wise protection and support of diversity foster individual freedom in research and artistic work, and above all personal freedom. Nor is it insignificant that the chosen direction of action aligns with European standards, adherence to which strengthens the University of Silesia's presence in international academic discourse.

The Plan is based on a tried-and-tested model premised on its developmental and participatory character. This means that the entire University community is involved in the shaping and implementation of the EDP, and that this process requires constant monitoring and refinement. The monitoring and evaluation of the Plan constitutes a fundamental task of the Committee and the Observatory. In accordance with the adopted strategic programme, in 2026–2027 the process of needs assessment will be developed and the system for the continuous collection and analysis of data will be refined, enabling an internal evaluation of the EDP at the end of the current term of office of the Committee and the Observatory (2028). Drawing on the reports prepared by the current Committee and Observatory in accordance with the relevant statutes, the incoming Committee will be able to update the Plan and then set about drafting a new document to meet future needs.

Timetable for the Equality and Diversity Plan:

- **2026-2027:**
 - completing the diagnostic assessment process and finalising the system for monitoring how equality is ensured and diversity respected;
 - working out, together with the community, a full agenda of activities under the operational objectives adopted;
 - delivering the planned activities.
- **2028:**
 - delivering the planned activities and continually adding to them in response to the community's needs;
 - internal evaluation of the activities delivered and those planned.
- **2029-2030:**
 - delivering the planned activities;
 - evaluation and verification of the EDP.

2. Legal basis

The Plan is built around two fundamental values – equality and diversity – each of which is grounded in national, European, and international law. The Polish Constitution recognises and protects selected aspects of equality and diversity. The principle of equality before the law and non-discrimination, broadly understood, is set out in Article 32(1) and (2) of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, under which "All persons shall be equal before the law. All persons shall have the right to equal treatment by public authorities. No one shall be discriminated against in political, social or economic life for any reason whatsoever."

A further significant expression of diversity is the freedom of thought, conscience, and religion guaranteed by law. This freedom is protected, among other provisions, by Article 53 of the Constitution. An extension of it that is of key importance to the academic community is the freedom of artistic creation, scientific research, and the dissemination of its findings, together with the freedom to teach, guaranteed by Article 73 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland. The protection of certain aspects of diversity is also reflected in Article 47 of the Constitution, which covers, among other things, the right to the legal protection of private and family life and the right to make decisions about one's personal life – that is, the right to shape the various aspects of one's life in accordance with one's own wishes and free from the control of others.

An important aspect of both equality and diversity is the question of gender. Under Article 33, women and men in the Republic of Poland have equal rights in family, political, social and economic life and, in particular, equal rights to education, employment and promotion, to equal remuneration for work of equal value, to social security, and to hold offices, discharge functions and receive public honours and decorations. Diversity is also strongly marked in the national and ethnic sphere. Article 37 of the Constitution establishes the principle that the constitutional rights and freedoms are enjoyed by everyone under the authority of the Republic of Poland, while Article 35 provides that "The Republic of Poland shall ensure Polish citizens belonging to national or ethnic minorities the freedom to maintain and develop their own language, to maintain customs and traditions, and to develop their own culture." Age and physical ability likewise feature among the dimensions of diversity. An important guarantee of equality for the youngest, for those weakened by advanced age or with reduced capacity for other reasons, is the duty imposed on public authorities by Article 68(3) of the Constitution to ensure special health care for children, pregnant women, persons with disabilities, and older people. Persons with disabilities may also rely on the State for help in securing their livelihood, in preparation for work and in social communication (Article 69 of the Constitution).

The foundations for a discrimination-free university environment are also laid by the instruments of international law binding upon Poland (among them Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Articles 2 and 26 of the International Covenants on Human Rights, and Article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women), as well as by European Union law (Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty on European Union, Articles 10, 18, and 19 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and Articles 20–26 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union).

Equal treatment of women and men in research and academic careers is reflected in the provisions of the Act of 3 December 2010 on the Implementation of Certain Provisions of the European Union in the Field of Equal Treatment (consolidated text: Journal of Laws 2025, item 1452, as amended). Under Article 4(4d), that Act applies to access to, and the conditions for using,

education and higher education. It is also indirectly secured by the 2018 Law on Higher Education and Science (consolidated text: Journal of Laws 2024, item 1571, as amended) if one has regard to the mission of higher education (Article 2 – fostering civic attitudes and participation in social development) and to the operation of the higher education system in a manner that respects international standards, ethical principles, and good practice in education and research activity, and that takes into account the particular importance of the social responsibility of science (Article 3(2)). The Labour Code (consolidated text: Journal of Laws 2025, item 277, as amended), for its part, recognises as fundamental principles of labour law the duty to respect the dignity and other personal rights of the employee (Article 11¹), the principle of equal treatment of employees, particularly of women and men in employment (Article 11²), and the principle of non-discrimination (Article 11³). It also places the employer under a duty to counteract discrimination in employment, in particular on grounds of sex (Article 94(2b) and Articles 18^{3a}–18^{3e}).

The concept underlying the Equality and Diversity Plan at the University of Silesia in Katowice for 2026–2030 also draws explicitly on the priorities of strategic international instruments, in particular: the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Goal 4 – Quality Education; Goal 5 – Gender Equality); the Roadmap for Women's Rights adopted by the European Commission on 7 March 2025; the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R); the EU framework programme Horizon Europe 2021–2027 (which places considerable emphasis on gender equality and inclusiveness in research and innovation); and the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2026–2030 – together with recommendations formulated at the national level (the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights and the National Science Centre).

Respect for the freedom, dignity, and equal opportunities of all those who make up the University community, as fundamental academic values, finds its normative expression in Section 4 of the Statute of the University of Silesia adopted in 2023. Any forms of unequal treatment and of direct or indirect discrimination are thereby deemed impermissible, in particular on grounds of sex, age, disability, race, religion, nationality, political opinion, trade-union membership, ethnic origin, denomination, or sexual orientation. To protect the rights and interests of the University's staff, together with the ethical standards in force within the University community, the office of Ombudsperson for Academic Rights and Values has been established (Section 39 of the Statute), while protection of the rights of those studying at the University is, under the Statute, to be guaranteed by the Student and PhD Student Ombudsperson (Section 162). *The University of Silesia's Development Strategy 2026–2029* likewise lists among its pillars the diversity of research and teaching, fairness and equal treatment, wellbeing and health, and academic freedom – all of which reinforce the equality and diversity of the academic community. The objectives set out in the Strategy and in the Plan complement and mutually reinforce one another, working in synergy.

3. Assessment

Introduction. Scope and approach

Assessment is not an adjunct to a gender equality plan but, rather, its starting point and a precondition of its effectiveness¹. It is one of the foundations of any well-designed plan, for it allows action to be grounded not in anecdotal observation or impression, but in evidence about the actual

¹ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/what-gender-equality-plan-gep>

situation within a given organisation. As the European Commission conceives it, a gender equality plan is not a mere declaration of values but a set of commitments and measures aimed at structural change and at a shift in organisational culture – commitments that should follow from a rigorous appraisal of the baseline situation, from the identification of problems, biases and barriers, and from the setting of objectives and indicators of progress. The Commission's recommendations² have long made clear that gender equality plans should, as one category of action, encompass audits of procedures and practices designed to establish where the organisation stands on equality, and should draw on those audits to implement corrective strategies, alongside the monitoring of progress through appropriate indicators.

In practice, these requirements were spelled out in greater detail in the *Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans*, published by the European Commission in 2021, which serves as a guide to the eligibility condition under the Horizon Europe programme. Under that document, organisations applying for funding must have in place a gender equality plan or an equivalent strategy.

Such a plan should be **grounded in robust data**, so as to define actions in at least several key areas: work-life balance and organisational culture; gender balance in leadership and decision-making; gender equality in recruitment and career progression; the integration of the sex/gender dimension into the research and teaching content; and measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment. The plan should, moreover, include monitoring arrangements built on well-chosen indicators. The assessment should therefore precede the design of the action plan and should encompass both the analysis of data already held by the institution and the purposeful gathering of relevant data in the course of setting strategic and operational objectives. The choice of indicators for analysis matters greatly in this respect, serving as the systematic foundation for monitoring and evaluation³. It is stated in plain terms that, in drawing up an institution's gender equality action plan, one must build on the findings of an assessment carried out across the five areas identified. The assessment is meant not only to describe problems but also to point to priorities for intervention. In this sense, the research undertaken as part of the assessment serves to identify areas of inequality, the groups most exposed to it, and the organisational, procedural, and cultural barriers that ought to be taken up as objectives for action in gender equality plans. The assessment should bring to light not only differences between women and men, but also gaps in the data and the mechanisms that produce them. As standard, it comprises above all the analysis of sex-disaggregated data, the identification of inequalities and their causes, a review of organisational practices, an analysis of gaps in the data collected, and the establishment of baselines for subsequent monitoring⁴.

The scope of the assessment carried out at the University of Silesia in Katowice

The assessment takes the form of an audit and an analysis of the state of gender equality at the University on the basis of a range of data, rather than merely a formal review of the organisation's existing regulations. In practice, an assessment serving to construct an equality plan should, in line with European standards, cover at least five areas, as indicated above: work-life balance and organisational culture; gender balance in leadership and decision-making; gender equality in

² A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth (COM 2012)

³ A training session run by the National Contact Point for EU Research Programmes at the NCBR The Guide to Gender Equality Plans issued by the National Contact Point (KPK) and the National Centre for Research and Development (NCBR).

⁴ *Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans* [<https://rownowazni.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/sites/105/2022/11/GEP-in-Horizon-Europe.pdf>]

recruitment and career progression; the integration of the sex/gender dimension into the research and teaching content; and measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.

For the purposes of the assessment conducted for the Equality and Diversity Plan for 2026–2030, the following research activities were carried out in relation to the standard thematic areas⁵:

- the analysis of quantitative, gender-disaggregated data: HR and institutional data on employment and personnel processes, including promotions, participation in projects, mobility, take-up of support, and so on;
- an equality audit in the form of a review of the organisation's procedures and regulations [an audit of documents and procedures];
- an evaluation of the organisation from the perspective of its staff [a staff survey]⁶.

The next step along this path will be the qualitative research recommended in the standards⁷, that is, an in-depth assessment of the situation through individual interviews, focus groups, participatory workshops, in-depth document analysis, and participant observation.

The assessment drew on the following complementary sources of data:

- an audit of internal regulations, examined against the equality standards and recommendations set out in external and internal regulations, including the Gender Equality Plan;
- an analysis of institutional data for 2020–2025, which provided a quantitative picture of the employment structure, promotions, participation in projects, mobility, the composition of management, and selected forms of support;
- a survey of those working at the University, making it possible to capture staff members' experiences, assessments and proposals regarding equality, diversity, working conditions, response procedures, and organisational culture.

I. AUDIT OF INTERNAL REGULATIONS⁸

1. Key findings from the analysis of internal rules

The aim of the legal analysis was to establish the extent to which the premises of the Gender Equality Plan, adopted at the University of Silesia in Katowice in 2021, were reflected in the content of the internal rules in force, with particular regard to the question of gender equality in the academic environment. The starting point was the premise that the effectiveness of a plan as an instrument of equality policy should be judged not only through the prism of activities such as training, campaigns

⁵ EIGE, *Data collection and monitoring*; EIGE, *Analysing and assessing the status quo in your organisation* and *Step 5: Monitoring progress and evaluating a Gender Equality Plan* <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/what-gender-equality-plan-gep>

⁶ Target [<http://www.gendertarget.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/D4.1-Monitoring-tool.pdf>]

⁷ EIGE, *Analysing and assessing the status quo in your organisation* and *Step 5: Monitoring progress and evaluating a Gender Equality Plan* [[eige.europa](https://eige.europa.eu)]

⁸ The full report on the legal research is contained in Annexes Nos 1 and 2 to the Equality and Diversity Plan at the University of Silesia in Katowice for 2026–2030.

or statistical assessments, but also through the normative changes that govern the institution's internal life and the processes taking place within it. The research was conducted using a comparative methodology, consisting in a comparison of the content of selected items of the University of Silesia's internal rules at two points in time: before the adoption of the GEP (2019–2021) and after its adoption (2023–2026). The dividing line between the two periods compared was set at Regulation No. 212 of the Rector of the University of Silesia of 7 December 2021 on the establishment of the Gender Equality Plan at the University of Silesia in Katowice.

List of internal rules subjected to analysis

GEP area	Legal act	Legal act – version before 7 December 2021	Legal act – version after 7 December 2021
Leadership and decision-making	The Statute of the University of Silesia	The Statute of the University of Silesia – consolidated text of 1 July 2021 (as amended by Senate Resolutions Nos 474/2020, 496/2020, 513/2020, 557/2020, 68/2021, and 141/2021)	The Statute of the University of Silesia – consolidated text of 28 June 2023
Leadership and decision-making	The Organisational Rules of the University of Silesia	The Organisational Rules of the University of Silesia – consolidated text (2021)	The Organisational Rules of the University of Silesia – consolidated text (2026)
Recruitment and career progression	Work Regulations	Work Regulations of the University of Silesia Regulation No. 117 of the Rector of the University of Silesia of 13 September 2019	Work Regulations of the University of Silesia Regulation No. 47 of the Rector of the University of Silesia of 10 April 2025
Organisational culture and work-life-learning balance	Rules and regulations of the periodic evaluation of academic teachers	Rules and regulations of the periodic evaluation of academic teachers employed at the University of Silesia (2021)	Rules and regulations of the periodic evaluation of academic teachers employed at the University of Silesia for 2023–2027 version of 19 September 2023
	The rules and regulations on the promotion of non-academic employees	The rules and regulations on the promotion of non-academic employees Regulation No. 107 of the Rector of the University of Silesia of 9 June 2021	The rules and regulations on the promotion of non-academic employees Regulation No. 174 of the Rector of the University of Silesia of 29 September 2025

	Rules and regulations of studies	Rules and regulations of studies at the University of Silesia Resolution No. 108 of the Senate of the University of Silesia in Katowice of 27 April 2021	Rules and regulations of studies at the University of Silesia – consolidated text Resolution No. 525 of the Senate of the University of Silesia in Katowice of 23 April 2024
	Rules and regulations of postgraduate studies	Rules and regulations of postgraduate studies at the University of Silesia Resolution No. 492 of the Senate of the University of Silesia in Katowice of 28 January 2020	Rules and regulations of postgraduate studies at the University of Silesia Resolution No. 464 of the Senate of the University of Silesia in Katowice of 19 September 2023
	Rules and regulations of the doctoral school	Rules and regulations of the doctoral school at the University of Silesia – consolidated text Resolution No. 409 of the Senate of the University of Silesia in Katowice of 25 June 2019 (as amended by Resolution No. 430 of 24 September 2019)	Rules and regulations of the doctoral school at the University of Silesia Resolution No. 502 of the Senate of the University of Silesia in Katowice of 19 March 2024

Conclusions

The principal conclusion to emerge from the research is a discernible **gap between the scope of the GEP's strategic and operational objectives and the degree to which they are reflected** in the internal rules in force. As an instrument of equality policy, the GEP set the direction for change, yet **that change was not fully implemented in the internal rules.**

This phenomenon forms part of a wider problem of divergence between the rhetoric and the practice of gender mainstreaming in public organisations, whereby the declaratory adoption of an equality policy does not automatically translate into changes to the structures that govern these institutions' day-to-day functioning. The findings of the analysis indicate that delivering the Plan requires **reinforcement through a more systemic linkage of its strategic objectives to specific normative and organisational arrangements** within the University.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the law governing the institution's life, the following recommendations can be formulated:

- **Reference to the Equality and Diversity Plan in the internal rules**

Following the model introduced in the Work Regulations of 2025, it would be desirable to indicate formally, in the text of the Statute and the Organisational Rules, that the EDP is a binding strategic document of the University. Both instruments should contain a provision obliging the relevant bodies and units to take the Plan's objectives into account in the performance of their tasks.

- **Systematic introduction of inclusive language in documents**

The internal rules should reflect gender-neutral language. At present, the majority of the instruments analysed do not apply gender-sensitive language systematically. A positive exception is the Rules and regulations of postgraduate studies of 2023, which consistently uses the form "Participant" in both its masculine and feminine grammatical forms in Polish, as well as the Rules of Studies of 2024, where linguistic changes appear in selected provisions, particularly those concerning parental entitlements.

- **Monitoring and evaluating how the Plan is reflected in the University's internal rules**

Consideration should be given to introducing a requirement to carry out an assessment of the impact of proposed internal rules on gender equality. Amended and newly created rules could be subject to analysis as to their potential effects on the various groups making up the University community, in particular as regards access to resources, opportunities for professional development, and working and study conditions. Introducing such a mechanism would make it possible to identify risks of unequal treatment at the stage when rules are being drafted, and would enhance the coherence of the equality policy.

2. Key findings from the analysis of the procedure for reporting personal-safety incidents

The aim of the analysis was to establish the scale of personal-safety incidents based on reports directed to the bodies/units that could potentially have come into contact with the problem of undesirable phenomena at the University, namely the Anti-mobbing Committee, Rector's Plenipotentiary for Preventing Sexual Harassment, Office for Servicing the Disciplinary Committees and Disciplinary Officers, Student and PhD Student Ombudsperson, Ombudsperson for Academic Rights and Values, Polish Teachers' Association at the University of Silesia, NSZZ "Solidarność", Student Service Centre, Social Labour Inspector.

This research was carried out using the method of analysing institutional documents, namely the reports submitted to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in 2022–2025. This was supplemented by elements of an empirical method, consisting in the gathering of information from the relevant bodies and organisational units of the University that, within the scope of their competences, might have come into contact with the problem of undesirable conduct.

Conclusions

Among the activities aimed at achieving the strategic objective in the "Safety" area of the GEP were, among others, the development of a uniform, step-by-step procedure, grounded in the principles of confidentiality and discretion, for cases where instances of gender-based discrimination are reported, and the establishment of a professional system of legal and psychological assistance for those experiencing gender-based discrimination or violence.

The above activities were subject to monitoring in the form of:

- the posting of information about the support pathway on the University's website

As part of the pursuit of the strategic objective in the area of safety, a University of Silesia's⁹ website has been created that clearly sets out which bodies can be approached for help or support in situations involving unequal treatment, conflicts, breaches of ethical principles or of dignity, bullying, or harassment. An official¹⁰ portal for reporting incidents has also been created, hosting the University of Silesia's incident-report form, i.e., an online form enabling a report to be submitted to the person coordinating the receipt of reports (a member of staff of the Office for Servicing the Disciplinary Committees and Disciplinary Officers).

It should be emphasised that both websites **describe the reporting procedure in an accessible way**, thereby contributing to the achievement of the strategic objective in the area of safety.

- annual reports on support activities, covering the number and outcomes of the interventions undertaken, and the posting of information about the support pathway on the University's website.

Since 2022, these annual reports have been submitted to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

The data analysis indicates that:

- the largest number of reports concern bullying and harassment, followed by discrimination;
- there is a visible increase in the number of reports in 2023–2024, particularly among students;
- students constitute the largest group reporting bullying, harassment and discrimination (including on grounds of sex, psychosexual orientation, and identity);
- staff in the NA (academic teachers) and NNA (academic administration and support) groups report incidents less frequently, but such cases more often end in a finding that the complaint was justified and concern primarily harassment, bullying, and unequal treatment in professional development.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis conducted, the following recommendations can be formulated:

▪ **Strengthening cooperation between the bodies**

As is apparent from the reports submitted to the Ministry and from conversations conducted with the relevant parties, the incoming individual cases registered by particular bodies may relate to the same events and the persons connected with them, which results in institutional fragmentation. It would therefore be advisable to develop solutions aimed at increasing cooperation between the bodies and eliminating the duplication of cases, for example, by maintaining a single, unified case register.

⁹ <https://us.edu.pl/uczelnia/rowne-traktowanie/gdzie-szukac-wsparcia/>

¹⁰ <https://naruszenia.us.edu.pl/>

- **Collection of sex-disaggregated data**

At present, data on incident reports are neither collected nor analysed by sex/gender. This limits the ability to gain a full picture of the scale, nature and determinants of inequalities, and makes it harder to identify the groups most exposed to them. The absence of sex-disaggregated data may constrain the pursuit of an evidence-based equality policy and the monitoring of the effectiveness of the measures undertaken.

II. DATA ON SEX/GENDER HELD IN THE SYSTEM¹¹

Data for monitoring implementation of the GEP were obtained by analysing information available in the University's existing IT systems, in particular USOS, SAP, and the Employee Portal. As a result of the measures taken, a dataset covering the years 2020, 2022 and 2024 was compiled. The analysis was confined to those categories which are actually collected by the units, can be reported by sex/gender, and are available in a structured form allowing further comparative analysis.

University staff

Over the last few years, the proportion of women and men among the staff at the University of Silesia **has remained unchanged**. The percentage share of women and men differs depending on whether we take into account membership of a professional group, the holding of managerial positions, or participation in projects and promotions. The ratio of women to men changes when **age** is taken into account. Above 60 years, there are proportionally more men than women.

Gender proportions vary according to the professional group. Women represent 56% of the academic employees at the University of Silesia in Katowice. Women predominate in the majority of positions. However, in the case of the position of professor, one can already clearly observe a higher number of men than women. Given the overall predominance of women, this appears to be an important indicator for drawing conclusions about professional opportunities. The highest proportion of women on the academic staff is found in the Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, and Faculty of Arts and Educational Science. Among the faculties where men predominate on the academic staff are the Faculty of Theology and Krzysztof Kieślowski Film School.

An even greater disproportion between women and men occurs in the case of non-academic employees. On average, women account for 68% of all other employees. In the case of managerial positions, too, we are dealing with a higher number of women than men, although **a higher proportion of men** than of women hold such posts.

With regard to the running of the University, the pattern has persisted whereby **men hold various managerial roles more often than women**. Although women account for 59 per cent of all management posts, men still dominate at the highest levels of management (among deans and institute directors).

¹¹ The full report, together with a presentation of the institutional data in charts, is contained in Annex No. 3 to the Equality and Diversity Plan at the University of Silesia in Katowice for 2026–2030

Analysis of the data on the **promotions and research activity** of academic employees, with the sex/gender variable taken into account, revealed that in those variables where differences appear between the number of women and men, **we are dealing with a slight predominance of men**, e.g., among research teams leaders, those receiving a promotion in post, or obtaining an academic degree or title.

The data on the participation of women and men in activities related to applying for and conducting projects indicate **similar proportions** of women and men. Across all the variables analysed for 2020, 2022, and 2024, the differences between the number of women and men involved in projects are small, both in absolute numbers and in percentage distribution.

An important element of universities' activity is international cooperation and the pursuit of international mobility in various forms. Data collected in 2020, 2022, and 2024 are difficult to compare because of the 2020 pandemic. Nevertheless, the data for these years show that the **outgoing international mobility by women is rising**. This applies both to visits made by female academic and non-academic employees. In the case of international mobility, an important indicator for comparing the sexes appears to be the duration of such a visit; however, the necessary data for that factor are not available in the system.

To sum up, the analysis of the institutional data shows that the University is a feminised organisation at the general level, but that this structure changes according to area and position in the hierarchy. Women constitute the majority of the entire workforce, and of both academic and non-academic employees; the share of men, however, rises with the level of management, and in some managerial areas a male predominance persists. In the pattern of promotions and research activity, relatively small but noticeable differences are apparent in access to selected resources (e.g., the quality-related salary supplement, team leadership, and certain forms of project activity). The data also suggest that, across the University as a whole, the inequalities between traditionally feminised and masculinised areas are stable, which corresponds to broader patterns of horizontal segregation.

Students

Analysis of the institutional data on students indicates a marked feminisation of this part of the academic community. Women make up, on average, roughly 66–67% of all students. It is worth emphasising here the systematic decline observed in student numbers, particularly evident in the first years of study, which is in keeping with nationwide demographic trends.

The gender differentiation of the student body is structural and programme-specific in character. Some humanities, social-science, education and language programmes show extreme feminisation (above 80–90%), whereas some STEM programmes, particularly Computer and information sciences, Mechatronics, and Micro and Nanotechnology, remain strongly masculinised. This configuration is stable over the 2020–2024 period and shows no tendency towards convergence of the sex proportions.

Attention should also be drawn to the **significant attrition of students** between the first and third years, which reduces the cohort by roughly half. At the same time, in the later years, especially the

fifth, the share of women rises, suggesting that women are more likely to continue their studies. The most balanced sex proportions are observed in the fourth year, which is connected, among other things, with the particular character of the engineering programmes.

The data on students' use of support measures show mixed trends. The use of individual adaptation of studies is rising, while the number of students receiving social allowance and financial aid is falling. **Women predominate** here across all categories of benefits, which is unsurprising given that they form the majority of the student body.

Doctoral candidates in doctoral schools

Analysis of the doctoral schools reveals a dynamic different from that of the wider student body. The Doctoral School, which spans a broad spectrum of disciplines, shows a relatively **even sex balance in recruitment and admissions**. The International Environmental Doctoral School, focused on STEM disciplines, remains distinctly masculinised.

Conclusions

The conclusions from the analysis of the institutional data should be considered in the context of the availability and quality of the data used to monitor the Gender Equality Plan.

The process of carrying out the analysis revealed **significant limitations in the availability and quality of the data**.

Some key information is **not currently collected** systematically, requires manual searching of records, or exists only in incomplete form. This applies in particular to data significant from the point of view of the policy of equal opportunities and professional development in a gender perspective, namely: data on absences, remote working, the duration of outgoing visits (including international ones), and the termination of roles held (up-to-date end dates are often missing). These limitations are not only organisational but also systemic in nature: **the IT systems in use do not compel the entry of the complete data set**, do not always contain mandatory fields relating to sex, and are not based on standardised terminologies, such as job titles or types of role. These problems translate directly into the quality of the data available for analysing the sex/gender situation at the University. Numerous instances of **incomplete information** were identified, resulting from the absence of any obligation to complete it, delays in updating data, and significant differences in the reporting practices applied by individual units.

A further limitation remains the **way in which the category of sex/gender is captured**: the current systems allow reporting only on a binary basis (women/men), with no possibility of accounting for non-binary persons, which at present falls short of standards of inclusiveness and of a full and reliable analysis of the state of equality.

The conclusions emerging from the process of analysing the system data indicate that, for the purposes of the assessment, the original data catalogue (envisaged for the analysis of the indicators) required substantial revision so as to correspond to the real possibilities of obtaining information at

the institutional level. It proved necessary to refine the definitions and categories of data and to adjust, i.e., narrow, the scope of monitoring to the current systemic conditions.

To sum up, the process of drawing up the data catalogue for monitoring the Gender Equality Plan revealed **significant differences in the availability and quality of data and limitations in the system infrastructure**.

Recommendations

Effective monitoring of the Gender Equality Plan should be **cyclical** and based on a **stable set of indicators** that are comparable over time. The quality of the data depends largely on **harmonised standards and procedures for their collection**.

It is necessary to establish a **durable catalogue of indicators** for monitoring implementation of the Equality and Diversity Plan and to introduce annual monitoring based on the calendar year (consistent with general reporting cycles), along with procedures ensuring the completeness and currency of the data across as many areas of the University's operations as possible. It is also recommended that the functionality of the key IT systems be extended, through **mandatory fields relating to gender**, data-validation mechanisms and standardised controlled vocabularies, and that the updating of data be improved, for example by automating the processes associated with the ending of roles.

In the course of the assessment, a **realistic set of indicators** suitable for systematic monitoring was developed, and the organisational and technological changes needed to underpin the further development of monitoring based on reliable, comparable data were identified.

In its basic form, this set comprises:

1. Number of academic employees in managerial positions, broken down by gender
2. Number of academic employees sitting on decision-making bodies, broken down by gender
3. Number of academic employees leading research teams, broken down by gender
4. Number of academic employees leading research grant teams, broken down by gender
5. Number of research grant applications submitted, broken down by the applicant's gender
6. Number of research grants awarded, broken down by the applicant's gender
7. Number of academic employees leading teaching grant teams, broken down by gender
8. Number of teaching grant applications submitted, broken down by the applicant's gender
9. Number of teaching grants awarded, broken down by the applicant's gender
10. Number of academic employees leading investment grant teams, broken down by gender
11. Number of investment grant applications submitted, broken down by the applicant's gender
12. Number of investment grants awarded, broken down by the applicant's gender
13. Number of academic employees who obtained an academic degree or title (doctor, habilitated doctor, professor) during the year, broken down by gender
14. Number of academic employees who received a promotion to each position, broken down by gender

15. Average number of publications per person, broken down by gender of author
16. Number of academic employees participating in various forms of international mobility, broken down by gender
17. Number of academic staff who received the quality-related salary supplement during the year, broken down by gender
18. Number of non-academic employees employed at the University of Silesia, broken down by age and gender
19. Number of non-academic employees in managerial positions, broken down by gender
20. Number of non-academic employees who received a promotion, broken down by gender
21. Number of non-academic employees participating in various forms of international mobility, broken down by gender

The data analysis also clearly indicates that presenting the differing situation of women and men in selected areas of the University's activity requires not only statistical data, produced within the units of the University of Silesia, but also **further, in-depth analyses**, so as to supplement this quantitative picture with information on the social context of particular areas, particularly such areas as projects, international cooperation, and research activity.

There is also a need to make it **possible to broaden the gender categories** recorded in the systems, so as to accommodate non-binary persons.

III. KEY FINDINGS FROM THE STAFF SURVEY¹²

The study involved a total of **420** people employed at the University of Silesia in Katowice, most of whom were women (**56.9%**), one-third of the respondents (**32.4%**) were men, and **11.0%** refused to provide information on their gender.

1. The level of knowledge among employees at the University of Silesia in Katowice regarding the entities and collegial bodies supporting equality initiatives at the University

The survey reveals a **two-track awareness of the structures. Whereas the traditional bodies (trade unions, disciplinary committees) are widely recognised, the newer units building a culture of ethics and equality remain largely unknown to employees more generally.**

The key problem is not the mere lack of awareness that these bodies exist, but the low level of familiarity with the specific remit and powers of the individual bodies (often below 40%), which may lead to people seeking support ineffectively. The analysis showed that knowledge of the structures is an 'elite' form of capital, concentrated among senior managers and employees with more than sixteen years' service; combined with the low awareness among those with shorter service and those

¹² The full report on the survey research is contained in Annexe No. 4 to the Equality and Diversity Plan at the University of Silesia in Katowice for 2026–2030.

not holding managerial positions, this points to a failure in the cascade of information and the existence of a generational communication gap.

It is recommended that:

- communication efforts be stepped up through direct information campaigns targeting staff in junior roles and those with less than 15 years' service;
- practical guides (e.g., in the form of decision trees or infographics) be developed and disseminated which, rather than simply stating the name of the unit, promote its specific areas of expertise and scope of intervention;
- internal communication be improved by strengthening the role of team leaders in providing information about the support options available, so that their knowledge effectively contributes to the safety and awareness of the entire team;
- the induction process be strengthened so that new employees can benefit from the university's full support system and ethical framework from the outset.

2. The level of knowledge among employees at the University of Silesia in Katowice regarding the entities and collegial bodies supporting equality initiatives at the University

Research has revealed that **the Gender Equality Plan is only superficially recognised.**

Although most of the community have heard of the document, actual knowledge of its provisions is minimal (15.7%). The data suggest that the GEP is perceived as a management document rather than a tool that directly concerns the community as a whole. Particularly worrying is the **lack of knowledge among the youngest age groups** and those with the least seniority, which points to the need for systematic education right from the start of one's career at the University.

It is recommended that:

- communication efforts be stepped up through direct information campaigns targeting younger people (under 25) and those with the longest service (over 30);
- internal communication be improved by strengthening the role of team leaders in providing information about the Gender Equality Plan;
- the induction process be strengthened so that new employees can learn about the University's equality standards.

A significant barrier was revealed in access to the key document, the Gender Equality Plan.

As many as **75%** of respondents **have no information about where it is published**, which directly bears on the low level of familiarity with its content. The document remains 'digitally hidden,' and the difficulty of locating it is systemic in nature, as evidenced by the absence of significant differences in the level of unawareness between employee groups. Worryingly, nearly half of senior managers do

not know where to find the Plan, which makes any cascade of information impossible. Although the younger generations navigate digital resources more adeptly, their knowledge remains superficial; and among women, despite a general awareness that the document exists, a lower level of practical familiarity was recorded than among men. This suggests that the Plan is treated as a symbolic gesture rather than a practical working tool.

It is recommended that:

- the process of accessing the document be simplified and communication efforts be stepped up;
- digital skills among employees aged 45 and over be supported;
- team leaders receive training on how to use digital repositories for strategic documents to strengthen their role as leaders within their teams.

The survey reveals a **critical information gap in the area of organisational safety**.

As many as **79%** of the academic community **do not know where to find the incident-reporting procedure**. Such a high level of unawareness, almost identical across employee groups, points to a systemic barrier in access to key protective mechanisms. Although familiarity with the document's location increases with age and length of service (reaching its peak among those with more than thirty years' service), in the youngest group of staff (aged 18–25) it stands at a mere 11%, which indicates the ineffectiveness of the induction process for new employees. Particularly alarming is the fact that **over half of senior managers (58%) do not know where the procedures are published**, which in practice makes it impossible for them to signpost staff in a crisis and blocks the cascade of information to the staff reporting to them, among whom the rate of unawareness reaches as high as **83%**.

It is recommended that:

- the process of accessing the document be simplified and communication efforts be stepped up;
- training be provided for managers at all levels, focusing on the formal whistleblowing procedure, to eliminate the information gap at management level;
- the induction process be strengthened so that new employees have the tools to report incidents from their very first days at work.

A **systemic failure** was also revealed in **disseminating knowledge of the formal pathways for responding to irregularities**.

As many as 86% of the academic community are unfamiliar with the incident-reporting procedure, which in practice renders these mechanisms inactive for the majority of employees. Particularly alarming is the state of knowledge among senior managers: unfamiliarity with the procedures on the part of nearly **74% of leaders** means that those responsible for receiving reports lack the tools to process them formally. Although the youngest group of staff (aged 18–25) shows relatively the highest awareness, possibly the effect of recent induction training, the drastic drop in knowledge

among mid-service groups, and the complete lack of familiarity with the procedures among those over the age of 65, point to a lack of educational continuity within the organisation.

It is recommended that:

- communication efforts be intensified by simplifying the procedure into a clear, step-by-step flowchart;
- training be introduced for managerial staff at all levels;
- the induction process be strengthened so that new employees can learn about the University's equality standards.

In the opinion of employees, the **document containing the incident-reporting procedure is properly prepared in terms of both substance and language; its protective function, however, remains 'dormant.'**

The reason is the lack of general awareness that the mechanism itself exists (as demonstrated by the earlier stages of the survey). This means that the **organisation's key problem is no longer substantive but one of communication and navigation.**

Therefore, **it is recommended that:**

- communication efforts be intensified by increasing the number of occasions on which employees come into contact with this information;
- the views of "ambassadors" be drawn on, by engaging those who regard the procedure as clear (particularly in managerial groups) to promote it as a tool that is user-friendly and comprehensible to every member of the academic community.

3. Anti-discrimination and equality measures at the University of Silesia in Katowice identified by employees as requiring improvement

When pointing to potential actions to counteract discrimination and achieve equality that need improvement at the University of Silesia in Katowice, those taking part in the survey spoke above all of the **need to apply effective sanctions** against those who engage in discrimination or the unequal treatment of people working within the University's structures. Next, they pointed to the **need to respond to reported cases** bearing the hallmarks of discrimination or unequal treatment, and to the **need for proper protection both of those experiencing violations and of the witnesses** to such situations. In the views of the University of Silesia's employees taking part in the survey, **providing information** on how to obtain help within the University was also of significant importance.

These results suggest **a deficit of trust** in the effectiveness of the institutional mechanisms in force, and the **existence of concerns** about the safety of those who report irregularities. Although formal

regulations are in place, their **practical effectiveness** is regarded by some members of the academic community as **inadequate**.

It is recommended that:

- sanctions be enforced against those who commit violations; an audit of the existing disciplinary rules may be called for, and sanctions, where violations are proven, be certain and proportionate to the offences;
- clear and transparent timeframes be introduced for the handling of reports; every report of unequal treatment must, without exception, receive a prompt and substantive response from the University's bodies;
- the mechanisms for protecting those who report violations, and witnesses, be strengthened, e.g., through the development and implementation of a whistleblower-protection policy;
- an information campaign be conducted on the support mechanisms available to those who believe they are experiencing discrimination.

**4. Employees' assessment of working conditions
at the University of Silesia in Katowice**

The University is decidedly perceived as a **workplace that provides a strong sense of job security**.

Additionally, the majority of survey participants spoke positively about the **opportunities for career development and promotion** regardless of sex/gender, age, ethnic origin, or sexual orientation.

Respondents also share the view that **standards of equal treatment on grounds of sex/gender are respected** at the University of Silesia in Katowice.

At the same time, the results reveal certain **areas requiring further strengthening**, in particular as regards:

- raising awareness of the support available to those who feel unfairly treated in any aspect of academic life;
- increasing the transparency of the procedures for responding to discrimination;
- intensifying communication about the University's equality and diversity work;
- improving conditions for a healthy work-life balance.

It is recommended that:

- a campaign be conducted to explain the role of all the bodies at the University that employees can turn to when experiencing discrimination or unequal treatment; those starting work at the University of Silesia in Katowice should be made familiar with these as part of their induction;
- transparent intervention procedures for cases of discrimination be implemented – the reporting employee should have access to information on the stage their case has reached and the timeframe for taking the relevant decisions;

-
- a culture of "safe reporting" of workplace violations be built;
 - the DEI (*Diversity, Equity, Inclusion*) policy be promoted – communication about the University's successes and its concrete action on equality should be intensified, and reports published regularly on how equality at work affects the quality of research, teaching and administration;
 - work-life balance (WLB) standards be implemented and, where possible, more flexible working introduced (e.g., hybrid working, flexitime, "email-free hours"), particularly for employees with caring responsibilities for children or elderly relatives.

5. Assessment of well-being at work

The analysis of the wellbeing of the University of Silesia's employees shows a **generally positive picture of satisfaction and a sense of meaning in work**, but it also reveals **several areas of risk**. The great majority of those surveyed believe that their employer allows them a **flexible approach to organising their working time** where this is possible. A clear majority report having at least one **trusted person** in the workplace to whom they can turn with a problem. Most of those surveyed also find their **work meaningful** and feel satisfied with it. Such job satisfaction indicates that staff expectations of the University of Silesia in Katowice as an organisation are being adequately met. One implication is that the great majority of those surveyed do not plan to change jobs in the coming year.

In the context of the University being seen **as a good place to work**, it is concerning that a strikingly large group (**over 20%**) **would not recommend it as such**. Other significant challenges are also apparent.

The weakest element of wellbeing is access to constructive feedback on one's work:

one in three of those surveyed feels that they do not receive it. This may point to a deficit of communication skills on the part of some managers. The data also point to variation in wellbeing according to age, employee group, and the holding of managerial positions. **Younger** employees more often report a lack of meaning in their work, a sense of not developing, lower satisfaction, and a greater readiness to leave the University.

It is recommended that:

- managerial staff be trained and their management skills developed, including in: giving constructive feedback, management by objectives and expectations, planning and monitoring work, preventing overload and supporting work-life balance;
- management standards be improved through the introduction of regular one-to-one development conversations and the standardisation of feedback across the entire organisation;
- measures be introduced to improve professional development, in particular, an audit of the training on offer and its alignment with employees' real needs, the introduction of clear career paths in both employee groups, the implementation of internal mentoring and reciprocal mentoring between employees, and improvement of the induction procedure to provide support during the first months of employment;

-
- programmes be introduced to prevent burnout in the groups most at risk (aged 26–55), comprising psychological-resilience workshops and coaching/mentoring programmes for high-risk groups;
 - social support be strengthened, for example through mentoring clubs, a buddy scheme for new employees, and autonomous working/project groups;
 - the sense of belonging and social capital be strengthened through regular team-building and cross-departmental events, an audit of communication barriers and the improvement of internal communication, and qualitative research into the reasons for a lack of identification with the University;
 - an information campaign be introduced on improving the organisation of working time and safeguarding the right to rest, comprising, e.g., training for those holding managerial positions on working-time norms and workload monitoring, the development of clear rules on staff availability outside working hours (the "right to disconnect"), and the introduction of "red flags" for units with a high level of overload;
 - employer-branding efforts be intensified to improve the University's image as a good place to work, particularly strengthening recognition and reward schemes, and making HR policy more coherent and more visible within the organisation.

6. Personal experience of, and being a witness to, problematic situations in the workplace among the University of Silesia's employees.

Personal experiences of negative behaviour, as well as observing such behaviour, are particularly important indicators for monitoring equality within the university, from the perspective of a sense of safety in the workplace. Therefore, any response confirming the occurrence of such behaviour deserves attention, even if it relates to only a few, or indeed isolated, cases.

Based on the statements of those taking part in the survey, **it cannot be concluded that the University environment is free from negative behaviours**. Violations that affect the sense of personal safety occur in professional relationships, including conduct of a sexual nature. A small number of responses confirming personal experience of such behaviours, together with a larger number of people reporting having witnessed them, point to the existence of these behaviours among employees.

Among the negative behaviours, those that **adversely affect professional relationships** predominate. Behaviours involving intrusions into personal space appeared less frequently, and those of a sexual nature less frequently still, experienced by only a small group of those who took part in the survey. Even isolated cases, however, should be taken into account in the context of maintaining a safe working environment

It is recommended that:

- conducting in-depth research into negative behaviours, especially in the context of intrusions into personal space, including those of a sexual nature;

- conducting regular research aimed at gauging the scale of the phenomenon of behaviours that intrude into personal space and cause discomfort in the sphere of professional relationships, especially with a view to examining the direction of these behaviours (relationships arising from position within the structure, or membership of a particular employee group) and identifying the needs, in this respect, of those who experience them;
- giving particular attention to young employees who, although they took part in the survey only in small numbers, report personal experiences of negative behaviours, including those relating to the sexual sphere;
- disseminating knowledge of the possible courses of action in the event of any violations, which will also make it possible to monitor the existence of the phenomenon reliably.

CROSS-CUTTING CONCLUSIONS

- There is a gap between the formal existence of equality instruments (the University's internal law) and their actual accessibility to the academic community. The University has documents, committees, and procedures, but their recognisability and the comprehensibility of their activities are limited, which weakens their effectiveness and their real accessibility.
- Inequalities of an organisational nature occur, especially as regards workload, access to promotion, participation in decision-making and recognition of the work performed by different employee groups.
- There is a need to improve the culture of work and communication: the surveys repeatedly produced signals of a need for greater respect, better feedback, less discretionality, and improved relationships between the levels of the hierarchy, as well as more intensive promotion of equality principles and measures.
- Equality at the University cannot be treated solely as a matter of gender understood narrowly. Alongside problems relating to gender, questions also arose of age, position, forms of employment, length of service, caring responsibilities, disability, doctoral-candidate status, and relationships between employees and students. This means that the Equality and Diversity Plan should be inclusive in a deep sense and should take account of the intersections of different inequalities (intersectionality), even if its organising axis remains connected with gender.
- The University community expects not only declarations but, above all, visible mechanisms of response, protection and accountability in matters of equality and safety, including responses to violations.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

➔ Strengthening the communication and visibility of the equality policy

The most urgent recommendation is to simplify and disseminate information about all the equality instruments, procedures, and support bodies. It would be advisable to prepare short, clear materials, such as guides, infographics, a map of the procedural pathway, and unambiguous answers to the question 'where do I report a problem?'. This information should be directed not only to senior managers but to the whole community, especially newly recruited employees and those with shorter service. Communication should be recurring and linked to induction and to regular information campaigns.

→ **Compulsory training**

The priority should be to implement regular training for the whole academic community, with a compulsory component for those in managerial roles. The training should cover counteracting discrimination, bullying, harassment, and microaggressions, inclusive communication the duties of managers as regards supporting the University's equality policy, and giving effect to the principle of safe response to violations. For senior managers, the training should be practical, based on case studies and linked to accountability for implementing standards within their units. It would also be worth developing short educational modules for students and those studying in doctoral schools, particularly on mutual respect and functioning in the academic environment.

→ **Transparency of decisions and pay**

There is a visible need within the community for greater transparency in the area of pay, promotions, allowances, bonuses and the allocation of tasks. The absence of open rules reinforces a sense of inequality and arbitrariness. The University should therefore establish and publish clear criteria, reasons for its decisions, and more transparent rules on promotion and bonuses. It would also be worth monitoring whether pay and allowances show differences that are difficult to justify on the basis of merit-related variables.

→ **The effectiveness of the response procedure**

The existing procedures are neither sufficiently well known nor sufficiently trusted, and so it is necessary to strengthen not only their content but also how they work in practice. The reporting pathway should be simplified, anonymity ensured wherever possible, confidentiality guaranteed, and expected response times specified. Equally important is providing those who report and witnesses with protection against retaliation, and a clear system of consequences for those who commit violations. The mechanism for reporting violations should be systematically monitored and analysed.

→ **Monitoring of the equality and diversity policy**

Principles should be developed for the ongoing monitoring of equality indicators disaggregated by sex/gender, position, age, type of unit, and area of activity. Particular attention should be paid to promotions, participation in projects, mobility, team leadership, the holding of managerial positions, and the use of forms of support. The survey also produced calls for monitoring of workloads and of differences between organisational units. Such data should be analysed regularly and used to identify areas of risk quickly.

As part of the monitoring of the equality and diversity policy, it is necessary to conduct in-depth qualitative research exploring the situation and the equality-related needs of different employee groups in view of the specific nature of their circumstances, e.g., those returning after an extended absence, those caring for dependent family members, and others in particular situations. Such research, conducted through the lens of intersectional analysis, could significantly improve the working lives of these groups and their occupational and general wellbeing. It is also recommended, as regards monitoring, that surveys be carried out on satisfaction with the University's equality policy and on needs in this respect among students; and, ultimately, qualitative exploration of specific groups within that population would also be advisable.

4. Strategic areas and objectives

The Equality and Diversity Plan is based on strategic objectives formulated within five areas:

- research and education;
- recruitment and career progression;
- organisational culture and the life-work-learning balance;
- management and decision making;
- safety.

Research and education

Strategic objective: Raising awareness and changing attitudes on gender equality and respect for diversity in the context of education and conducted research.

Rationale: Measures to promote gender equality at the University can only be implemented if the entire academic community comes to know, understand, and embrace this fundamental humanistic value. Regulations of a prescriptive or prohibitive nature can only play a supporting role; what is of key importance, however, is widespread awareness of the need for equal treatment and for ensuring equal opportunities for people of all genders, including equal opportunities for academic development, learning, and work, regardless of gender or social roles. For this reason, it is essential to take measures that include enriching the educational curriculum with content on gender equality and respect for diversity, promoting a gender perspective in scientific research, and fostering a culture of communication sensitive to issues of equality and diversity.

Recruitment and career progression

Strategic objective: Ensuring equal opportunities in recruitment and development processes at every stage of the career path at the University of Silesia in Katowice.

Rationale: The Recruitment and Development area covers activities relating to the introduction of those employed at the University into the academic community, support for their work and development, and evaluation and promotion. The new Equality and Diversity Plan places emphasis on ensuring equal opportunities at every stage of the career path, which represents a development of the earlier approach, based primarily on providing mechanisms to support the diversity of staff. This change stems both from experience in delivering the Gender Equality Plan (including the need for greater transparency of procedures and their standardisation) and from new obligations arising from European regulation, including Directive 2023/970, the European Charter for Researchers and the Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R) guidelines, the standards of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA), and the University's new Strategy. The operational objectives set out in the Equality and Diversity Plan, concerning recruitment, induction, periodic evaluation, professional development, and promotion, respond to the needs identified and serve to build a working environment based on integrity, transparency, and respect for the principles of equal treatment.

Organisational culture and the life-work-learning balance;

Strategic objective: Deepening measures and policies on wellbeing (including mental health) and the principles of work–life balance for members of the academic community, building an organisational culture that supports equality and diversity, and strengthening the transparency and evaluation of the measures undertaken at the University.

Rationale: The Equality and Diversity Plan should provide even more strongly for the development of policies and measures supporting a balance between private life, work and learning, and should also include evaluation elements for these policies. These measures should be strengthened, especially in relation to those who at the same time have caring responsibilities, and the transparency and open availability of the solutions introduced in this area at the University should be ensured. Developing this axis, through concrete caring-support instruments, represents a logical continuation of the earlier assumptions set out in the previous GEP. In addition, given that the previous plan does not explicitly formulate objectives relating to mental health, and in the context of new challenges, such as digital overload and rising stress, the inclusion of an explicit objective on mental health is a natural extension of the existing scope of the concept of “wellbeing”.

Leadership and decision making

Strategic objective: Ensuring gender equality and diversity in the decision-making processes and entities.

Rationale: Ensuring gender equality and diversity in the decision-making processes and entities. Despite the measures undertaken, a state of imbalance persists in some spheres. This is a phenomenon that is not confined to the University of Silesia in Katowice. It occurs in many areas of social, economic, and political life. Higher education institutions, however, have the potential and the legal instruments to counteract this undesirable phenomenon effectively. It is nevertheless necessary to create a mechanism that will be more effective than the one used to date. This applies both to the state of knowledge and to the ways of counteracting inequality. We therefore propose to concentrate on three key areas: assessing the current situation; raising awareness of the causes of inequality and its scale; and measures to reduce the gap in access to positions and decision-making.

Safety

Strategic objective: Counteracting discrimination and violence on grounds of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, age and disability, including in particular sexual violence.

Rationale: Counteracting discrimination and violence on grounds of sex and gender constitutes one of the key challenges for universities today. Measures in this area are directly connected with the protection of the personal rights and dignity of all those who make up the academic community.

The problem of discrimination on grounds of sex and gender, and of the violence associated with it, concerns women, men and non-binary persons alike. The most severe violations of equality relate to the sphere of personal safety and sexual freedom, encompassing behaviours ranging from sexual assault and abuse to verbal forms of violating dignity. Research indicates that cases of sexual harassment and sexual violence often go unreported, and that their occurrence is fostered by relationships of dependency and subordination, which are also typical of the academic environment. It is therefore essential to ensure transparent, safe, and accessible support procedures, in which confidentiality, discretion, and comprehensive psychological and legal assistance play a key role. The

new version of the Plan strengthens the existing mechanisms and, at the same time, places emphasis on building a culture of response and shared responsibility throughout the academic community. The measures being implemented are intended to be both preventive and interventional in nature: on the one hand, they strengthen the awareness and competences of the community; on the other, they guarantee real support to those affected by discrimination or violence. In this way, the University strives to create an environment free from violence and inequality, based on respect, safety and equal opportunities for all.

5. Operational objectives and examples of activities

Research and education

Strategic objective: Raising awareness and changing attitudes on gender equality and respect for diversity in the context of education and conducted research.

Operational objective 1: Enriching the educational offer aimed at students with content on equality and respect for diversity.

Target group: students, doctoral candidates, prospective students

Rationale for the course of actions: The University as a public institution and community shaping the future society is obliged to develop competencies promoting equality, inclusiveness, and respect for diversity. Introducing general-academic modules and thesis seminars on gender equality and diversity enhances the quality of education, fulfils the University's social mission, and meets European standards (including the equality-policy requirements attached to research projects). Those actions prepare students to work in diverse teams, develop social competencies, and foster building a safe and open academic community.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Introducing and improving the offer of general-academic modules to build knowledge and shape attitudes towards gender equality and respect for diversity.
 - Means of verification: monitoring the teaching provision
 - Responsible party: College of General University Education
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing
- 2) Designing and improving the offer of thesis seminars on gender equality and respect for diversity within various disciplines.
 - Means of verification: monitoring the teaching provision
 - Responsible party: Deputy deans for student affairs and education, Education and Student Affairs Committee
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing

Rationale for the course of actions: Promoting extracurricular activities that shape attitudes based on respect for equality and diversity

Examples of actions:

- 1) Support for organising scientific conferences on the issues of gender equality and respect for diversity
 - Means of verification: monitoring conference programmes, review of the US newsletter's content
 - Responsible party: deans or competent deputy deans
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing
- 2) Organising artistic, literary, and academic competitions addressing issues of gender equality and respect for diversity.
 - Means of verification: monitoring the rules of the competitions, review of the US newsletter's content
 - Responsible party: Committee for Equality and Diversity
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing
- 3) Delivering classes for learners that address issues of gender equality and respect for diversity.
 - Means of verification: monitoring the teaching provision for the external community
 - Responsible party: Open University at the University of Silesia in Katowice, Rector's Plenipotentiary for Cooperation with Schools, Candidates and Alumni Office
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing

Operational objective 2: Promoting gender issues in research.

Target group: researchers and students

Rationale for the course of actions: Promoting and supporting research on gender equality and diversity across various disciplines. Promoting and popularising organisational initiatives that facilitate the integration of a gender-equality and diversity perspective into research across various disciplines.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Developing and supporting a University research-grant scheme
 - Means of verification: monitoring the grant scheme
 - Responsible party: Committee for Equality and Diversity, Science Department, Project Department
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing
- 2) Promoting and disseminating the findings of research that addresses equality issues
 - Means of verification: monitoring US web pages, newsletter, and social media
 - Responsible party: Committee for Equality and Diversity, Media Communication Centre
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing
- 3) Facilitating networking among researchers working on gender equality and diversity across various disciplines.

- Means of verification: monitoring US web pages, newsletter, and social media
- Responsible party: Equality and Diversity Observatory
- Proposed timeframe: ongoing

Operational objective 3: Strengthening a culture of gender- and diversity-sensitive communication.

Target group: entire academic community

Rationale for the course of actions: Training on equality and diversity in communication, and the organisation of courses relating to inclusion, strengthen a culture of respect, enhance the competences of those who make up the academic community, and support the fulfilment of the University's mission. They prevent conflicts, improve the quality of cooperation and build a modern, inclusive academic environment.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Organising training aimed at employees and students on respecting equality and diversity in communication.
 - Means of verification: monitoring the number of training sessions and participants
 - Responsible party: Rector's Plenipotentiary for Preventing Harassment, Rector's Plenipotentiary for the Protection of Minors and Equality, Committee for Equality and Diversity, Centre for Employee Affairs
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing
- 2) Preparing e-learning courses and creating publicly available online educational materials on equality (e.g., on inclusive language).
 - Means of verification: monitoring the number of courses and participants
 - Responsible party: Rector's Plenipotentiary for Preventing Harassment, Rector's Plenipotentiary for Equality, Committee for Equality and Diversity, Centre for Employee Affairs
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing
- 3) Strengthening information campaigns on the importance of respecting gender equality and diversity in information and promotional materials.
 - Means of verification: number of items in the newsletter, web pages, and PDF brochures/publications.
 - Responsible party: Committee for Equality and Diversity, Media Communication Centre
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing
- 4) Analysing the announcements on the University's media in respect of gender equality and diversity
 - Means of verification: monitoring US web pages, newsletter, and social media
 - Responsible party: Equality and Diversity Observatory Media Communication Centre
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing

Recruitment and career progression

Strategic objective: Ensuring equal opportunities in recruitment and development processes at every stage of the career path at the University of Silesia in Katowice.

Operational objective 1: Improving the policy of open, transparent and merit-based recruitment to vacant posts at the University of Silesia (the OTM-R policy) in line with the guidelines of the European Charter for Researchers.

Target group: employees of the University of Silesia and job applicants

Rationale for the course of actions: Achieving the objective will help ensure that the recruitment process is consistent with the requirements of the European Charter for Researchers and that it is transparent and objective.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Aligning the content of job advertisements for vacant posts at the University of Silesia with the pay-transparency standards and the principles of equal treatment set out in Directive (EU) 2023/970 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023.
 - Means of verification: regulation (updated procedure)
 - Responsible party: Centre for Employee Affairs
 - Proposed timeframe: Q2 2026
- 2) Increasing the diversity of the composition of recruitment and selection panels in terms of gender, the post/role held, professional experience, cultural background, and other relevant characteristics, so as to ensure a well-rounded assessment of candidates and to reduce the risk of unconscious bias.
 - Means of verification: the analysis of the composition of competition and recruitment committees
 - Responsible party: Centre for Employee Affairs
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing
- 3) Reviewing and modifying the tools used to assess applications for vacant posts at the University of Silesia, in particular as regards their consistency with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers.
 - Means of verification: functionality analysis of the tools
 - Responsible party: Centre for Employee Affairs
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing
- 4) Modernising the tools used to survey the experiences of those applying in recruitment processes, so as to enable the identification of systemic barriers.
 - Means of verification: functionality analysis of the tools
 - Responsible party: Centre for Employee Affairs
 - Proposed timeframe: Q3 2027

- 5) Delivering training/instruction on identifying and reducing the influence of unconscious bias in application-assessment processes, for those involved in the work of competition/recruitment committees.
 - Means of verification: monitoring the number of training sessions and participants
 - Responsible party: Centre for Employee Affairs
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing

Operational objective 2: Improving periodic evaluation procedures in line with the standards of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) on the responsible assessment of research.

Target group: US employees (academic employees)

Rationale for the course of actions: Achieving the objective will contribute to ensuring the consistency of the periodic evaluation process with the European reform of research assessment (CoARA)

Examples of actions:

- 1) Conducting a review and developing recommendations on the consistency of the periodic evaluation rules for academic employees with the requirements of CoARA.
 - Means of verification: report
 - Responsible party: Science Department, Centre for Employee Affairs
 - Proposed timeframe: Q4 2026
- 2) Developing new rules and regulations of the periodic evaluation of academic teachers, according to the Strategy of the University of Silesia.
 - Means of verification: regulation (updated procedure)
 - Responsible party: Academic Staff Committee, Centre for Employee Affairs, Science Department, Quality and Strategic Analysis Department
 - Proposed timeframe: Q2 2027
- 3) Delivering training on identifying and reducing the influence of unconscious bias in the process of periodic evaluation of academic employees.
 - Means of verification: monitoring the number of training sessions and participants
 - Responsible party: Centre for Employee Affairs
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing

Operational objective 3: Improving the institutional system of support and induction, aimed at ensuring equal opportunities and an inclusive working environment.

Target group: employees of the University of Silesia (newly recruited employees and those returning to work after extended absences)

Rationale for the course of actions: Achieving the objective will contribute to faster induction and will strengthen a workplace culture at the University based on the principles of cooperation, equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Identifying the needs and expectations of newly recruited employees
 - Means of verification: the satisfaction level of newly recruited employees – survey results
 - Responsible party: Centre for Employee Affairs, trade unions
 - Proposed timeframe: Q4 2026
- 2) Updating the procedures that support newly recruited employees in adapting to their new workplace and in taking part in the life of the academic community at the University of Silesia.
 - Means of verification: regulation (updated procedure)
 - Responsible party: Centre for Employee Affairs, trade unions
 - Proposed timeframe: Q3 2027
- 3) Developing a support standard for employees in the reinduction process at the University of Silesia.
 - Means of verification: standard for the reinduction of employees
 - Responsible party: Centre for Employee Affairs, trade unions
 - Proposed timeframe: Q4 2028

Operational objective 4: Developing the University staff's competencies in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) through training programmes, educational activities, and the promotion of good practice.

Target group: US employees

Rationale for the course of actions: Achieving the objective will contribute to building a culture based on DEI values through an increase in the awareness of staff. The training will make it possible to understand the mechanisms of exclusion better, which will translate into a fairer and more open working environment.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Preparing a programme of DEI training for the staff of the University of Silesia (for example, on managing diversity in research projects).
 - Means of verification: monitoring the number of training sessions and participants
 - Responsible party: Committee for Equality and Diversity, Centre for Employee Affairs
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing

Operational objective 5: Enhancing the institutional framework for career progression support, with a focus on ensuring equal opportunities and transparent routes to promotion.

Target group: US employees (academic employees)

Rationale for the course of actions: Achieving this objective will help to eliminate systemic barriers and promote equal opportunities in academic career progression.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Reviewing existing research career development support programmes for compliance with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers.
 - Means of verification: analysis of programmes
 - Responsible party: Centre for Employee Affairs, Science Department, Doctoral Schools
 - Proposed timeframe: Q2 2027
- 2) Evaluation of existing mentoring programmes in terms of their compliance with the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion.
 - Means of verification: analysis of programmes
 - Responsible party: Centre for Employee Affairs, Science Department, Doctoral Schools
 - Proposed timeframe: Q2 2027
- 3) Analysis of access to mobility programmes from a diversity perspective (e.g., gender, nationality, family circumstances), together with the identification of barriers to participation.
 - Means of verification: analysis of programmes
 - Responsible party: Equality and Diversity Observatory International Mobility Department
 - Proposed timeframe: Q3 2027
- 4) Reviewing the criteria applied in promotion procedures to ensure that requirements are transparent, unambiguous, and consistent with the principles of open, merit-based academic career progression.
 - Means of verification: report
 - Responsible party: Chancellor, Centre for Employee Affairs, Science Department, Quality and Strategic Analysis Department, Academic Staff Committee
 - Proposed timeframe: Q2 2027

Organisational culture and the life-work-learning balance;

Strategic objective: Deepening measures and policies on wellbeing (including mental health) and the principles of work–life balance for members of the academic community, building an organisational culture that supports equality and diversity, and strengthening the transparency and evaluation of the measures undertaken at the University.

Operational objective 1: Increasing the flexibility of working arrangements to make it easier to balance professional and private life.

Rationale for the course of actions: The previous GEP highlighted the need to support work–life balance but did not provide specific organisational measures. Hybrid working makes employment more accessible to employees with caring responsibilities, while also improving performance and wellbeing.

Target group: University employees

Examples of actions:

- 1) Expanding flexible working arrangement, putting a clear policy framework in place, and equipping managers to manage hybrid teams effectively.
 - Means of verification: annual reports and recommendations, evaluation activities
 - Responsible party: Chancellor, Rector, trade unions, Centre for Employee Affairs
 - Proposed timeframe: Q4 2027
- 2) The 'Dads at the US' ("Tata na US") campaign: information sessions organised with representatives of trade unions, promoting the take-up of paternity leave.
 - Means of verification: number of campaigns and information activities, number of participants in meetings and training sessions, development of a communication code or set of recommendations, number of workload analyses conducted, monitoring report; number of recommendations submitted or solutions implemented.
 - Responsible party: trade unions
 - Proposed timeframe: Q3 2026–Q4 2027

Operational objective 2: Reducing organisational sources of time pressure in work and internal communication

Target group: University employees

Rationale for the course of actions: The previous GEP noted that staff were overburdened with teaching and administrative duties. Promoting good communication practices and 'quiet hours' will help counteract stress and digital fatigue.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Promoting 'quiet hours' free of online and in-person meetings.
 - Means of verification: annual reports and recommendations, evaluation activities
 - Responsible party: trade unions, Committee for Equality and Diversity
 - Proposed timeframe: Q4 2027
- 2) Developing a *Code of Good Practice in Electronic Communication*.
 - Means of verification: number of campaigns and information activities, number of participants in meetings and training sessions, development of a communication code or set of recommendations, number of workload analyses conducted, monitoring report; number of recommendations submitted or solutions implemented.
 - Responsible party: Committee for Equality and Diversity, trade unions
 - Proposed timeframe: Q3 2026–Q4 2027
- 3) An information campaign on good communication practice.
 - Means of verification: annual reports and recommendations, evaluation activities
 - Responsible party: Committee for Equality and Diversity, trade unions, Media Communication Centre

- Proposed timeframe: Q4 2027

Operational objective 3: Better adapting the organisation of teaching and professional duties to the diverse needs of students and employees, including those with caring responsibilities

Target group: University employees and students

Rationale for the course of actions: The previous GEP recommended adapting working and learning conditions to individual needs, particularly those of employees and students caring for children. Flexible timetabling makes it easier to combine family and professional roles.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Flexible timetabling of classes, taking family and health circumstances into account when drawing up timetables
 - Means of verification: annual reports and recommendations, evaluation activities
 - Responsible party: Rector, deans or competent deputy deans, heads of other units, trade unions
 - Proposed timeframe: Q4 2027

Operational objective 4: Strengthening the support system for those with caring responsibilities.

Target group: University employees and students

Rationale for the course of actions: Expanding family-friendly infrastructure. The previous GEP pointed to a lack of adequate facilities supporting parents (family rooms). Expanding these facilities makes it easier for people with children to take part in academic life.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Increasing the availability of facilities that help employees and students combine work, study and caring roles, in the form of additional family rooms in University buildings and a 'map of family-friendly places' on the University website
 - Means of verification: annual reports and recommendations, evaluation activities
 - Responsible party: Chancellor, Committee for Equality and Diversity, trade unions
 - Proposed timeframe: Q4 2027

Operational objective 5: Making it easier for newcomers to join and integrate into the community

Target group: University employees and students

Rationale for the course of actions: Joining the University community should be a welcoming and accessible process, both for students and for those taking up employment at the University. Activities supporting the induction and reintegration of employees are provided for in the 'Recruitment and Career Progression' area.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Improving the welcome and integration arrangements for students and doctoral candidates (induction meetings).
 - Means of verification: annual reports and recommendations, evaluation activities
 - Responsible party: Student Service Centre, Student Government, Doctoral Student Government, Student and PhD Student Ombudsperson
 - Proposed timeframe: Q4 2027

Operational objective 6: Strengthening the focus on mental health and wellbeing across the University community.

Target group: University employees and students

Rationale for the course of actions: In today's academic environment, information overload and stress are significant risk factors. Access to psychological support helps maintain balance and mental health. Emphasis should be placed on the wellbeing of all members of the University community through counselling services and training programmes on coping with stress, time management, and wellbeing more broadly.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Continued collaboration with the University Psychological Support Centre, offering online consultations for students and employees.
 - Means of verification: annual reports and recommendations, evaluation activities
 - Responsible party: Student and PhD Student Ombudsperson, Student Service Centre, trade unions
 - Proposed timeframe: Q4 2027
- 2) Building the University community's skills in stress and burnout prevention and digital wellbeing through training programmes (e.g. 'UŚ w Równowadze' ['US in Balance'], workshops on relaxation techniques, time management, etc.).
 - Means of verification: annual reports and recommendations, evaluation activities
 - Responsible party: Committee for Equality and Diversity, trade unions, Centre for Employee Affairs
 - Proposed timeframe: Q4 2027
- 3) Promoting and embedding an organisational culture that respects mental wellbeing, the right to rest and healthy boundaries (leaflets, visual materials, information sessions).
 - Means of verification: annual reports and recommendations, evaluation activities
 - Responsible party: Committee for Equality and Diversity, trade unions
 - Proposed timeframe: Q4 2027
- 4) Annual satisfaction survey of employees, students, and doctoral candidates; preparation of online questionnaires; reporting of results.
 - Means of verification: number of surveys conducted, number of completed questionnaires, number of reports and summaries produced, number of published

results and recommendations, number of meetings held to present findings, corrective measures or new actions implemented as a result of evaluation

- Responsible party: Equality and Diversity Observatory Committee for Equality and Diversity, Student Service Centre, Wellbeing Team
- Proposed timeframe: ongoing

Leadership and decision making

Strategic objective: Ensuring gender equality and diversity in the decision-making processes and entities.

Operational objective 1: Analysis of the decision-making process and identification of the decision-making bodies and processes involved.

Target group: employees, students, doctoral candidates

Rationale for the course of actions: A full identification is needed of the areas critical to the University's operation that may be affected by underrepresentation.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Identifying the decision-making bodies and processes that have a significant bearing on members of the University community.
 - Means of verification: analysis of documents
 - Responsible party: Committee for Equality and Diversity, Equality and Diversity Observatory
 - Proposed timeframe: Q4 2026
- 2) Identifying areas in which employees of one gender are underrepresented.
 - Means of verification: monitoring the gender composition of selected units and collegial bodies
 - Responsible party: Committee for Equality and Diversity, Equality and Diversity Observatory, plenipotentiaries
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing
- 3) Regular progress reviews with key decision-makers to monitor the implementation of the Equality and Diversity Plan, with the aim of strengthening ownership of the Plan, building its capacity, and increasing its impact.
 - Means of verification: Annual schedules of monitoring meetings, meeting minutes
 - Responsible party: Committee for Equality and Diversity, Equality and Diversity Observatory, plenipotentiaries for equality and diversity
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing

Operational objective 2: Promoting gender equality and diversity in the operations of the University

Target group: employees, students, doctoral candidates

Rationale for the course of actions: Inequality stems from a lack of awareness of the phenomenon itself and its scale, as well as from unfounded beliefs and stereotypes about the potential and roles of the genders. The first step is to make the University community aware that the phenomenon exists and how widespread it is. It must be made clear that disparities on this scale cannot be explained by objective criteria, but rather by prejudice, stereotypes, and a particular model of how the organisation operates. The promotion of equality and diversity should be supported by plenipotentiaries for equality and diversity appointed by the deans.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Appointing deans' plenipotentiaries for equality and diversity, who will sit on the Equality and Diversity Committee
 - Means of verification: regulation, number of appointed plenipotentiaries
 - Responsible party: Committee for Equality and Diversity, Rector, Dean
 - Proposed timeframe: Q1 2027
- 2) Supporting measures to ensure appropriate representation of women and men in University leadership and in the bodies involved in decision-making on research, teaching and University organisation.
 - Means of verification: monitoring data on the participation of women and men in decision-making bodies and processes
 - Responsible party: Rector's Plenipotentiary for the Protection of Minors and Equality, plenipotentiaries for equality and diversity, Committee for Equality and Diversity
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing
- 3) Communicating these recommendations to all University units.
 - Means of verification: monitoring of activities
 - Responsible party: Rector's Plenipotentiary for the Protection of Minors and Equality, plenipotentiaries for equality and diversity, Committee for Equality and Diversity
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing
- 4) Promoting balanced gender representation and diversity at all events organised by the University, including, separately, the scientific and organising committees of conferences, as well as in teams and expert panels, and in the chairing of academic and public-engagement events, etc.
 - Means of verification: monitoring data on the participation of different groups in decision-making bodies and processes
 - Responsible party: Rector's Plenipotentiary for the Protection of Minors and Equality, plenipotentiaries for equality and diversity, Committee for Equality and Diversity
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing
- 5) Preparing good practice guidance on gender balance and diversity in decision-making bodies and processes.
 - Means of verification: publication of best practices
 - Responsible party: Committee for Equality and Diversity, Rector's Plenipotentiary for the Protection of Minors and Equality

- Proposed timeframe: Q2 2027

Operational objective 3: Balancing the representation of women and men in decision-making bodies and processes.

Target group: employees, students, doctoral candidates

Rationale for the course of actions: First and foremost, more efficient and effective measures must be taken to narrow the existing gap. Taken together, these can be described as systematic positive action within the University. Another important step is developing the skills that support diversity management, such as interpersonal communication and intercultural competence.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Formulating guidelines on balanced representation of women and men in decision-making bodies and processes, including the principle of alternating appointments to leadership roles.
 - Means of verification: regulation
 - Responsible party: Rector, Rector's Plenipotentiary for the Protection of Minors and Equality, Committee for Equality and Diversity
 - Proposed timeframe: Q4 2027

Operational objective 4: Strengthening competences in the area of gender balance.

Target group: employees, students, doctoral candidates

Rationale for the course of actions: Awareness needs to be built among those who influence appointments and leadership processes at the University of Silesia in at the University of Silesia in Katowice.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Formulating recommendations and guidelines on the active promotion of equality by managerial staff.
 - Means of verification: regulation
 - Responsible party: Rector, Rector's Plenipotentiary for the Protection of Minors and Equality, Committee for Equality and Diversity
 - Proposed timeframe: Q4 2027
- 2) Building competences in possible measures to support and promote gender equality, including through meetings and training.
 - Means of verification: monitoring the number of training sessions and participants
 - Responsible party: Committee for Equality and Diversity, Rector's Plenipotentiary for the Protection of Minors and Equality, Centre for Employee Affairs
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing

Operational objective 5: Increasing the potential of underrepresented groups in the decision-making process.

Target group: employees, students, doctoral candidates

Rationale for the course of actions: Awareness should be raised and competences built among members of underrepresented groups.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Supporting the development of the personal competences of those involved in decision-making.
 - Means of verification: monitoring the number of training sessions and participants
 - Responsible party: Rector, Chancellor, Committee for Equality and Diversity, Centre for Employee Affairs
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing
- 2) Offering mentoring and empowerment courses to improve visibility, self-confidence, and negotiation and leadership skills, with particular attention to the needs of underrepresented groups.
 - Means of verification: monitoring the number of training sessions and participants
 - Responsible party: Rector, Chancellor, Committee for Equality and Diversity, Centre for Employee Affairs
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing

Operational objective 6: Language inclusivity

Target group: employees, students, doctoral candidates, prospective students, external community

Rationale for the course of actions: Inclusive language is an important tool for building awareness and ensuring access to positions and decision-making processes, as it does not a priori exclude underrepresented groups.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Broader use and promotion of inclusive language in formal communication at the University.
 - Means of verification: monitoring documents, internal and external communication, and the University of Silesia websites
 - Responsible party: Rector, Chancellor, Committee for Equality and Diversity, Media Communication Centre
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing
- 2) Formulating recommendations on the use of inclusive language in other areas, and updating the “Toolkit of Names of Posts, Roles, and Professions at the University of Silesia in Katowice”.
 - Means of verification: monitoring documents, internal and external communication, and the University of Silesia websites
 - Responsible party: Committee for Equality and Diversity
 - Proposed timeframe: Q3 2027

- 3) Promoting inclusive language in relations with the University's external community
 - Means of verification: monitoring documents, internal and external communication, and the University of Silesia websites
 - Responsible party: Media Communication Centre
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing

Safety

Strategic objective: Preventing and combating gender-based discrimination and violence, including sexual violence.

Operational objective 1: Raising awareness and developing the ability to respond to sexual harassment and discrimination, and strengthening a culture of active response within the University community.

Target group: employees, students, doctoral candidates

Rationale for the course of actions: Improving knowledge and developing the skills to respond to sexual harassment and discrimination supports their early recognition and effective prevention. Educational activities help build a culture of active response, grounded in responsibility and readiness to act when violations occur. In doing so, they strengthen the sense of safety and help create a working and learning environment based on respect and shared responsibility.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Developing and launching an e-learning module on sexual harassment (definitions, forms, and legal and social consequences) for University employees.
 - Means of verification: monitoring the number of training sessions and participants
 - Responsible party: Rector's Plenipotentiary for Preventing Harassment,
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing
- 2) Workshops on preventing sexual harassment and other forms of unequal treatment for students and employees.
 - Means of verification: monitoring the number of training sessions and participants
 - Responsible party: Rector's Plenipotentiary for Preventing Harassment,
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing
- 3) Promoting the publication *A Collection of Good Practice in Equality and Diversity, with Examples of Breaches*.
 - Means of verification: recording promotional activities, analysing changes in reporting rates (an increase in reports reflecting greater awareness and confidence to come forward)
 - Responsible party: Rector's Plenipotentiary for Preventing Harassment, Committee for Equality and Diversity, Media Communication Centre
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing

- 4) Distributing an information leaflet on how to respond when experiencing or witnessing sexual harassment or other forms of discrimination.
 - Means of verification: recording promotional activities, analysing changes in reporting rates (an increase in reports reflecting greater awareness and confidence to come forward)
 - Responsible party: Rector's Plenipotentiary for Preventing Harassment, Committee for Equality and Diversity, Media Communication Centre
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing

Operational objective 2: Developing and maintaining the support system for those experiencing gender-based discrimination and violence, and raising awareness of the available sources of help.

Target group: employees, students, doctoral candidates

Rationale for the course of actions: Providing easily accessible and clearly described forms of support increases the sense of safety of students and staff and makes it easier for them to report difficult experiences.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Updating and disseminating the procedures for reporting cases of violence and harassment through the adopted communication channels operating within the University
 - Means of verification: reporting on the number and type of complaints received, while maintaining confidentiality; annual reports on support activities
 - Responsible party: Rector's Plenipotentiary for Preventing Harassment,
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing
- 2) Expanding the provision of psychological and legal advice.
 - Means of verification: reporting on the number and type of complaints received, while maintaining confidentiality; annual reports on support activities
 - Responsible party: Ombudsperson for Academic Rights and Values, Student and PhD Student Ombudsperson, Rector's Plenipotentiary for Preventing Harassment, Student Service Centre, trade unions
 - Proposed timeframe: Q4 2027
- 3) Preparing and distributing an information leaflet on the procedures for reporting sexual harassment.
 - Means of verification: reporting on the number and type of complaints received, while maintaining confidentiality; annual reports on support activities
 - Responsible party: Rector's Plenipotentiary for Preventing Harassment, Media Communication Centre
 - Proposed timeframe: by Q4 2027

Operational objective 3: Developing materials to support responses to challenging situations occurring on University premises.

Target group: employees, students, doctoral candidates

Rationale for the course of actions: Developing materials to support responses to difficult situations on University premises makes it possible to increase staff readiness to take appropriate action in unclear situations requiring intervention. Access to clear and practical guidance helps reduce uncertainty and strengthens the sense of competence in responding. As a result, this contributes to building a safer, more predictable and more supportive working and studying environment.

Examples of actions:

- 1) Developing the 'Safety' section of the University website and publishing guidance on responding to challenging situations.
 - Means of verification: recording information materials
 - Responsible party: Chancellor, Security and Defence Department
 - Proposed timeframe: Q1 2028
- 2) Organising training for employees on responding to challenging situations
 - Means of verification: monitoring the number of training sessions and participants
 - Responsible party: Chancellor, Security and Defence Department, Centre for Employee Affairs
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing
- 3) Holding meetings and workshops on safety on University premises.
 - Means of verification: monitoring the number of training sessions and participants
 - Responsible party: Chancellor, Security and Defence Department
 - Proposed timeframe: ongoing

6. Implementation of the Equality and Diversity Plan

The adoption of the Plan marks a further stage in strengthening the strategic pillars of the University of Silesia in Katowice. It fosters diversity in research and education, the fair and equal treatment of all members of the academic community, and their safety and wellbeing. The University's stance should not be without influence on its social environment, contributing to the reinforcement of the values underlying the Plan. A tangible result of the Plan's implementation will be the perception of the University as a place that ensures harmonious academic, professional, and personal development. This may increase the University's visibility both nationally and internationally. That, in turn, may translate into a further rise in interest in studying, pursuing doctoral studies or taking up employment at the University among people of high potential and diverse experience.

The implementation of the Plan is, in many respects, a continuation and refinement of the mechanisms already developed during the period in which the Gender Equality Plan of the University of Silesia in Katowice was in force. The effective functioning of the Equality and Diversity Committee and of the Equality and Diversity Observatory, in close cooperation with the Rector's authorities and with all the bodies responsible for delivering the individual operational objectives, is a necessary condition for the Plan's success. Research carried out to date has shown that the adopted directions of action require further education and awareness-building within the community. Achieving the intended objectives will not be possible without the involvement of all members of the University community. Individual activities must be carried out and evaluated in constant dialogue with the academic community. In implementing the Plan, the University must make maximum use of the

resources available to it, human and financial resources in particular, in order to achieve, step by step, the full realisation of the adopted objectives. The table below illustrates the resources committed and the conditions enabling the delivery of the individual activities covered by the Plan.

Area	Directions of actions	Responsible party	Implementation using internal resources	Minimum implementation using internal resources; full implementation conditional on securing external funding	Implementation conditional on securing external funding
Research and education	Introducing and improving the offer of general-academic modules to build knowledge and shape attitudes towards gender equality and respect for diversity.	College of General University Education	X		
	Designing and improving the offer of thesis seminars on gender equality and respect for diversity within various disciplines.	deputy deans for student affairs and education,	X		
		Education and Student Affairs Committee			
	Support for organising scientific conferences on the issues of gender equality and respect for diversity	deans or competent deputy deans	X		
	Organising artistic, literary, and academic competitions addressing issues of gender equality and respect for diversity.	Committee for Equality and Diversity		X	
	Delivering classes for learners that address issues of gender equality and respect for diversity.	Open University at the University of Silesia in Katowice,		X	
		Rector's Plenipotentiary for Cooperation with Schools, Candidates and Alumni Office			
	Developing and supporting a University research-grant scheme	Committee for Equality and Diversity,			X
		Science Department			
		Project Department			

	Promoting and disseminating the findings of research addressing equality issues	Committee for Equality and Diversity,	X		
		Media Communication Centre			
	Facilitating networking among researchers working on gender equality and diversity across various disciplines.	Equality and Diversity Observatory	X		
	Organising training aimed at employees and students on respecting equality and diversity in communication.	Rector's Plenipotentiary for Preventing Harassment,		X	
		Rector's Plenipotentiary for the Protection of Minors and Equality,			
		Committee for Equality and Diversity,			
		Centre for Employee Affairs			
	Preparation of e-learning courses.	Rector's Plenipotentiary for Preventing Harassment,		X	
		Rector's Plenipotentiary for Equality,			
		Committee for Equality and Diversity,			
		Centre for Employee Affairs			
	Strengthening information campaigns on the importance of respecting gender equality and diversity in information and promotional materials.	Committee for Equality and Diversity,	X		
		Media Communication Centre			
	Analysing the announcements on the University's media in respect of gender equality and diversity.	Equality and Diversity Observatory			X
		Media Communication Centre			

Recruitment and career progression	Aligning the content of job advertisements for vacant posts at the University of Silesia with the pay-transparency standards and the principles of equal treatment set out in Directive (EU) 2023/970 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023.	Centre for Employee Affairs	X		
	Increasing the diversity of the composition of recruitment and selection panels in terms of gender, the post/role held, professional experience, cultural background, and other relevant characteristics, so as to ensure a well-rounded assessment of candidates and to reduce the risk of unconscious bias.	Centre for Employee Affairs	X		
	Reviewing and modifying the tools used to assess applications for vacant posts at the University of Silesia, in particular as regards their consistency with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers.	Centre for Employee Affairs	X		
	Modernising the tools used to survey the experiences of those applying in recruitment processes, so as to enable the identification of systemic barriers.	Centre for Employee Affairs	X		
	Delivering training/instruction on identifying and reducing the influence of unconscious bias in application-assessment processes, for those involved in the work of competition/recruitment committees.	Centre for Employee Affairs		X	
	Conducting a review and developing recommendations on the consistency of the periodic evaluation rules for academic employees	Science Department, Centre for Employee Affairs	X		

	with the requirements of CoARA.				
	Developing new rules and regulations of the periodic evaluation of academic teachers, according to the Strategy of the University of Silesia.	Academic Staff Committee, Centre for Employee Affairs, Science Department, Quality and Strategic Analysis Department	X		
	Delivering training on identifying and reducing the influence of unconscious bias in the process of periodic evaluation of academic employees.	Centre for Employee Affairs		X	
	Identifying the needs and expectations of newly recruited employees	Centre for Employee Affairs, trade unions	X		
	Updating the procedures that support newly recruited employees in adapting to their new workplace and in taking part in the life of the academic community at the University of Silesia.	Centre for Employee Affairs, trade unions	X		
	Developing a support standard for employees in the reinduction process at the University of Silesia.	Centre for Employee Affairs, trade unions	X		
	Developing a DEI training offer for employees of the University of Silesia	Committee for Equality and Diversity, Centre for Employee Affairs		X	
	Reviewing existing research career development support programmes for compliance with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers.	Centre for Employee Affairs, Science Department, Doctoral Schools	X		
	Evaluation of existing mentoring programmes in terms of their compliance with the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion.	Centre for Employee Affairs, Science Department, Doctoral Schools	X		

Organisational culture and work-life balance	Analysis of access to mobility programmes from a diversity perspective, together with the identification of barriers to participation.	Equality and Diversity Observatory	X		
		International Mobility Department			
	Reviewing the criteria applied in promotion procedures to ensure that requirements are transparent, unambiguous, and consistent with the principles of open, merit-based academic career progression.	Chancellor,	X		
		Centre for Employee Affairs,			
		Science Department,			
		Quality and Strategic Analysis Department			
		Academic Staff Committee,			
	Development of flexible forms of work organisation, their regulation, and training for staff managing hybrid teams.	Chancellor,	X		
		Rector,			
		trade unions,			
		Centre for Employee Affairs			
	The 'Dads at the US' ("Tata na UŚ") campaign, information sessions organised with representatives of trade unions, promoting the take-up of paternity leave.	trade unions	X		
	Promoting 'quiet hours' free of online and in-person meetings.	trade unions,	X		
		Committee for Equality and Diversity			
	Developing a <i>Code of Good Practice in Electronic Communication</i> and an information campaign.	Committee for Equality and Diversity,	X		
		trade unions			
	An information campaign on good communication practice.	Committee for Equality and Diversity,		X	
		trade unions,			
		Media Communication Centre			
	Flexible timetabling of classes, taking family and health circumstances into account when drawing up timetables	Rector,	X		
		deans or competent deputy deans,			
		heads of other units,			
		trade unions			

	Increasing the availability of facilities that help employees and students combine work, study and caring roles, in the form of additional family rooms in University buildings and a 'map of family-friendly places' on the University website	Chancellor,			X
		Committee for Equality and Diversity			
		trade unions			
	Improving the welcome and integration arrangements for students and doctoral candidates.	Student Service Centre,	X		
		Student Government,			
		Doctoral Student Government,			
		Student and PhD Student Ombudsperson			
	Continued collaboration with the University Psychological Support Centre, offering online consultations for students and employees.	Student and PhD Student Ombudsperson,		X	
		Student Service Centre,			
		trade unions			
	Building the University community's skills in stress and burnout prevention and digital wellbeing through training programmes.	Committee for Equality and Diversity			X
		trade unions,			
		Centre for Employee Affairs			
	Promoting and embedding an organisational culture that respects mental wellbeing, the right to rest and healthy boundaries	Committee for Equality and Diversity		X	
		trade unions			
	Annual satisfaction survey of employees, students, and doctoral candidates; preparation of online questionnaires; reporting of results.	Equality and Diversity Observatory		X	
		Committee for Equality and Diversity			
		Student Service Centre,			
		Wellbeing Team			
	Identifying the decision-making bodies and processes that have	Committee for Equality and Diversity	X		

Leadership and decision making	a significant bearing on members of the University community.	Equality and Diversity Observatory			
	Identifying areas in which employees of one gender are underrepresented.	Committee for Equality and Diversity	X		
		Equality and Diversity Observatory,			
		plenipotentiaries			
	Regular progress reviews with key decision-makers to monitor the implementation of the Equality and Diversity Plan, with the aim of strengthening ownership of the Plan, building its capacity, and increasing its impact.	Committee for Equality and Diversity,	X		
		Equality and Diversity Observatory			
		plenipotentiaries			
	Appointing deans' plenipotentiaries for equality and diversity, who will sit on the Equality and Diversity Committee.	Committee for Equality and Diversity,	X		
		Rector,			
		Deans			
	Supporting measures to ensure appropriate representation of women and men in University leadership and in the bodies involved in decision-making on research, teaching and University organisation.	Rector's Plenipotentiary for the Protection of Minors and Equality,	X		
		plenipotentiaries for equality and diversity			
		Committee for Equality and Diversity			
	Communicating these recommendations to all University units.	Rector's Plenipotentiary for the Protection of Minors and Equality,	X		
		plenipotentiaries for equality and diversity,			
		Committee for Equality and Diversity			
	Promoting balanced gender representation and diversity at all events organised by the	Rector's Plenipotentiary for the Protection of Minors and Equality,	X		

	University, in teams and committees	plenipotentiaries for equality and diversity,			
		Committee for Equality and Diversity			
	Preparing good practice guidance on gender balance and diversity in decision-making bodies and processes.	Committee for Equality and Diversity,	X		
		Rector's Plenipotentiary for the Protection of Minors and Equality,			
	Formulating guidelines on balanced representation of women and men in decision-making bodies and processes, including the principle of alternating appointments to leadership roles.	Rector,	X		
		Rector's Plenipotentiary for the Protection of Minors and Equality,			
		Committee for Equality and Diversity			
	Formulating recommendations and guidelines on the active promotion of equality by managerial staff.	Rector,	X		
		Rector's Plenipotentiary for the Protection of Minors and Equality,			
		Committee for Equality and Diversity			
	Building competences in possible measures to support and promote gender equality, including through meetings and training.	Committee for Equality and Diversity,			X
		Rector's Plenipotentiary for the Protection of Minors and Equality,			
		Centre for Employee Affairs			
	Supporting the development of personal competences among decision-makers.	Rector,			X
		Chancellor,			
		Committee for Equality and Diversity,			
		Centre for Employee Affairs			
	Offering mentoring and empowerment courses	Rector,			X

	to improve visibility, self-confidence, and negotiation and leadership skills, with particular attention to the needs of underrepresented groups.	Chancellor, Committee for Equality and Diversity, Centre for Employee Affairs			
	Broader use and promotion of inclusive language in formal communication at the University.	Rector, Chancellor, Committee for Equality and Diversity, Media Communication Centre	X		
	Formulating recommendations on the use of inclusive language in other areas, and updating the "Toolkit of Names of Posts, Roles, and Professions at the University of Silesia in Katowice".	Committee for Equality and Diversity		X	
	Promoting inclusive language in relations with the University's external community	Media Communication Centre	X		
Safety	Developing and launching an e-learning module on sexual harassment for University employees.	Rector's Plenipotentiary for Preventing Harassment,	X		
	Workshops on preventing sexual harassment and other forms of unequal treatment for students and employees.	Rector's Plenipotentiary for Preventing Harassment,		X	
	Promoting the publication <i>A Collection of Good Practice in Equality and Diversity, with Examples of Breaches.</i>	Rector's Plenipotentiary for Preventing Harassment, Committee for Equality and Diversity, Media Communication Centre	X		
	Distributing an information leaflet on how to respond when	Rector's Plenipotentiary for		X	

	experiencing or witnessing sexual harassment or other forms of discrimination.	Preventing Harassment,			
		Committee for Equality and Diversity,			
		Media Communication Centre			
	Reviewing and updating the procedures for reporting cases of violence and harassment, and raising awareness of them via the University's official communication channels.	Rector's Plenipotentiary for Preventing Harassment,	X		
	Expanding the provision of psychological and legal advice.	Ombudsperson for Academic Rights and Values,			X
		Student and PhD Student Ombudsperson,			
		Rector's Plenipotentiary for Preventing Harassment,			
		Student Service Centre,			
		trade unions			
	Preparing and distributing an information leaflet on the procedures for reporting sexual harassment.	Rector's Plenipotentiary for Preventing Harassment,		X	
		Media Communication Centre			
	Developing the 'Safety' section of the University website and publishing guidance on responding to challenging situations.	Chancellor,	X		
		Security and Defence Department,			
	Organising staff training on responding to challenging situations	Chancellor,			X
		Security and Defence Department,			
		Centre for Employee Affairs			
		Chancellor,			X

	Holding meetings and workshops on safety on University premises.	Security and Defence Department, Centre for Employee Affairs			
--	--	---	--	--	--

The full delivery of the objectives of the Plan depends, among other things, on securing external funding in the areas indicated. This means not only that the planned measures can be flexibly expanded, but also that ongoing internal evaluation is needed, with current and planned activities reviewed in the light of the University's evolving needs and financial capacity.

Achieving the objectives set out in the Plan will also require legislative initiatives on the part of the governing bodies of the University of Silesia in Katowice. The Equality and Diversity Plan should be designated in the University's Statute and Organisational Regulations as a binding strategic document. Collecting, analysing, and reporting data, as well as preparing and delivering training, will place considerable demands on the employees responsible for the relevant areas and will significantly expand their duties. Effective communication with the University's individual units will require the appointment of equality and diversity officers within those units, who would be able to monitor the implementation of the Plan there on an ongoing basis. As a strategic document, the Plan sets the direction of travel; the measures it envisages, however, should be given a firm legal basis in the University's internal regulations.