

Contributing to a better world...



Promoting gender equality at HZ

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INTRODUCTION

Background

The European Commission makes institutional gender equality plans compulsory for funding from Horizon Europe, the framework programme for research and innovation. The condition is part of the plans drawn up by the European Commission to actively promote gender equality (Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025; Gender Equality in the European Research Area). As of 2022, every legal entity (government agency, research or higher education institution) must have a Gender Equality Plan (hereafter: GEP) in order to be eligible for funding from Horizon Europe. It is likely that this condition (of having a JEP) is a stepping stone to broader diversity conditions, in order to be eligible for funding from Horizon Europe.

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This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) of HZ University of Applied Sciences was drawn up in the context of the conditions for funding from Horizon Europe. However, its contents are in line with existing strategies, goals, ambitions and developments within HZ, which are brought together in the GEP.

This plan is a living document: not only existing but also future goals, preconditions, developments and actions with respect to gender equality, diversity and inclusion are included in the plan. This document is also meant to keep the dialogue going and to keep ourselves sharp in the actions and measures to be taken. Finally, it is meant to look at ourselves in the mirror and reflect on our own actions.

Reader's guide

In the underlying document, in part 1, the subject of gender and gender equality is introduced and the why of gender equality and the importance of promoting gender equality are discussed. Subsequently, part 2 contains the mission and ambition of HZ, which shows that HZ wants to make its contribution. What the current state of affairs is and how we will continue to work on promoting gender equality in the coming years is elaborated in parts 3 and 4

Communication about the Plan

The plan is available on the HZ website, also in English. In addition, it is available on MyHZ, the internal digital portal for employees and students. Via the line of communication, but also via the newsletter of P&OO the plan is brought to the attention and cooperation and commitment of all employees is requested.

This document has been shared with the University Council for their information.

Commitment from the Executive Boardvanuit College van Bestuur

Barbara Oomen was appointed at the BDT meeting of 5 July 2022 as the initiator and responsible for the implementation of this plan. As chairwoman of the Executive Board, Barbara has committed herself explicitly to the theme of Diversity, Inclusion and Gender Equality.

PART 1 PREFACE

What does gender mean?

We use the word gender for the socially created differences between women and men. Sex or gender is that which is biologically determined: people are usually born with female or male biological characteristics. We teach girls and boys to become women and men. This learned behaviour creates a certain identity and role: gender. People often have different places in society based on their gender. In gender equality, there is no discrimination based on biological sex or the role people play in society. People of different genders then have access to equal opportunities, resources and services (Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland -national service for entrepreneurs- (hereafter RVO), 2022).

Why it is important to stimulate gender equality

Research has shown that the global economy, and thus the realisation of organisations' ambitions, is boosted and society benefits from gender equality (see images below). It is not without reason that the European Commission (EC) has chosen to work towards promoting gender equality.



Illustration: why promoting gender equality is important (RVO, 2022)

The EC believes that specific measures are needed to close the gender gap in the labour market and sees an important role for educational and research institutes in this. HZ endorses this vision and wants to make active policies to stimulate gender equality. It sees the promotion of gender equality as part of HZ's focus area "Diversity, Inclusion and Equality". We would like to point out that, given the fact that HZ is one of the smaller universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands, the importance of the subject is certainly recognised but has not, to date, necessarily been expressed in writing extensive policy plans. For this reason, this underlying accountability document for the promotion of gender equality (GEP) should also be seen as a policy document with which HZ will give substance to this topic in the coming years but which also gives direction to a broader inclusion policy within HZ.

State of affairs regarding gender equality in the Netherlands

In 2019, the Netherlands dropped 11 places compared to 2018 to place 38 on the World Economic Forum (WEF) gender equality ranking (Trouw, 2022). Three years later, the Netherlands is back in 31st place. This increase is certainly an improvement, but the WEF warns that we still have a long way to go. The same report shows that in 2022 the Netherlands will still be at the bottom of the

rankings of the 22 Western European countries and North America. The Netherlands has even dropped from place 16 to 17 (Womeninc, 2021).

The HZ policy will not directly change the appearance of the list in the short term. At the same time, we should not underestimate what our impact could be in the long run if we pay attention to gender equality as part of our policy. Every year, hundreds of our students graduate. They end up in positions where they can make an impact. Let their influence be a positive one on this issue.

Policy on gender equality in organisations

An organisation has different ways of implementing this policy theme. A distinction can be made between being *gender blind*, *gender aware* and *gender transformative* (RVO, 2022). At the time of writing, the HZ can be characterised as "gender aware": it has the ambition to shape its policy and policy implementation in such a way that it will make a substantial contribution to the promotion of gender equality in its own organisation and in the awareness of the people it delivers to the professional field.

Gender blind

Beleid en programma's die gender totaal negeren. Hierin wordt geen rekening gehouden met: culturele, economische, sociale en politieke rollen; rechten, verantwoordelijkheden en machtsrelaties van vrouwen en mannen; de dynamiek tussen mannen en vrouwen en jongens en meisjes. Hierdoor kunnen ongelijkheid en stereotypen onbedoeld groter worden in plaats van kleiner.

Gender aware

Beleid en programma's die deze culturele aspecten analyseren en meenemen in hun plan, maar zonder de onderliggende structuren te veranderen. Mannen en vrouwen profiteren allebei van de inspanningen.

Gender transformative

Projecten en programma's waarin het doel is om gelijkheid te versterken als onderdeel van de programmadoelstellingen. Tegelijkertijd pakken ze onderliggende sociale structuren, beleid en sociale normen aan.

Figure: Three levels of being gender-aware.

How to promote gender equality

The figure below shows which factors promote gender equality (on the sub-themes of decision-making, self-confidence and capabilities).



Picture: what it takes to promote gender equality

From the perspective mentioned in the figure above, women worldwide have less access to resources, can spend less and have less time. Their self-confidence is often lower than that of men and they are given fewer opportunities to develop their abilities (RVO, 2022). In addition, we must be aware that personal characteristics, cultural factors and upbringing also lead to a greater or lesser degree of decisiveness in a person of any gender. If part of the world population is less decisive and/or less well off, this also requires something from the other part of the world population in order to accommodate these people.

SDGs and IDGs go hand in hand

The SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) were developed to settle the question of equality in the world. And from the SDGs, 5 IDGs (Inner Development Goals) were developed in early 2021. In short, the IDGs are about what skills people need to contribute to the realisation of the SDGs. The IDGs framework consists of five categories that organise 23 skills and qualities of human inner growth and development. The framework was developed by a team of international researchers after extensive outreach consultations with more than a thousand people (www.innerdevelopmentgoals.org, 2021).

- 1 **Being** — Relationship to Self
- 2 **Thinking** — Cognitive Skills
- 3 **Relating** — Caring for Others and the World
- 4 **Collaborating** — Social Skills
- 5 **Acting** — Driving Change

Image: Inner development goals (IDG, 2021)

PART II HZ MISSION

The SDGs, or the 17 sustainable development goals of the United Nations, mentioned in Part I form the moral compass of the HZ. The mission of the HZ is formulated as follows:

The HZ contributes to a better world...

... by educating higher education professionals as a personal university.

... by working with partners as a University of Applied Sciences to find solutions to problems in the fields of water, energy and vitality.

... by supporting developments in the Zeeland delta region as a regional partner.

Our mission can be translated into the following four ambitions, which are central to the coming years (2022-2027).

| Ambition 1 | Ambition 2 | Ambition 3 | Ambition 4 |
|--|--|---|---|
| We are an educator of professionals for a world in transition. | We are an esteemed institute in the field of water, energy and vitality. | We are the partner for social challenges in our region. | We are a vibrant community for all parties. |

Figure: The 4 ambitions of HZ.

Based on our mission and vision of how we will achieve this, HZ endorses the objectives of the European Union in the field of gender equality and declares its intention to make a concrete contribution to the promotion of gender equality. As an employer, HZ facilitates and promotes gender equality within its own organisation. And as a research and educational institution, HZ facilitates and promotes gender equality in society through research and education.

PART III WHERE WE ARE NOW

Introduction

As a personal university of applied sciences, HZ has always made an effort to welcome (new) employees and students and to make HZ a pleasant working environment. Attention is paid to social safety and the creation of a positive learning climate. The fact that society is ever changing, the zeitgeist changes and insights are gained, makes that HZ pays more attention to the policy subject of diversity, inclusion and equality - of which gender equality is a part. In the coming years, the HZ strives to achieve a mature policy on the aforementioned theme, elaborated in personnel policy, education policy and research policy.

Education and gender equality

An educational institution is the perfect place to pay attention to gender equality. The fact that it is important to pay attention to it does not mean that we have to and want to do it in exactly the same way in all places. It is possible to alternate between more implicit and explicit ways of drawing attention to the subject and keeping it there (depending on the curriculum of the study programmes over the years). The strength lies in the variety (part IV) with which HZ will bring the subject of gender equality to the attention of staff, students and partner organisations as part of the policy subject of diversity, inclusion and equality.

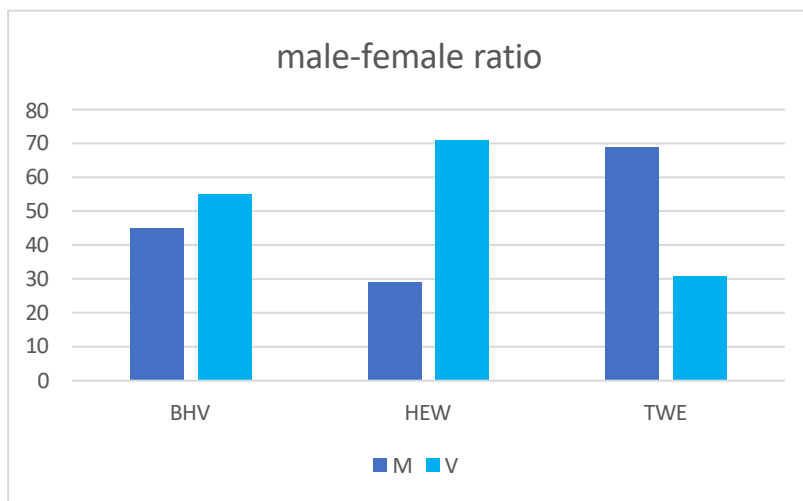
Education and the theme of diversity, inclusion and equality

HZ lecturers strive for a safe and inclusive learning environment for their students. This safe learning environment must first of all be guaranteed by lecturers. HZ believes that all lecturers must be aware of the differences that still exist in gender (within and outside the school) and of the example they set to students in order to promote gender equality.

Education and the Inner Development Goals

The IDGs mentioned in the previous section are certainly not entirely new within education. After all, there are continuous developments in education. Some IDGs have already received attention within various courses and within various curricula. However, at that time, the IDGs were not yet explicitly designated as such. The aim is to use the SDGs as moral compasses and to give the IDGs more attention within the curriculum and involve them in future educational development.

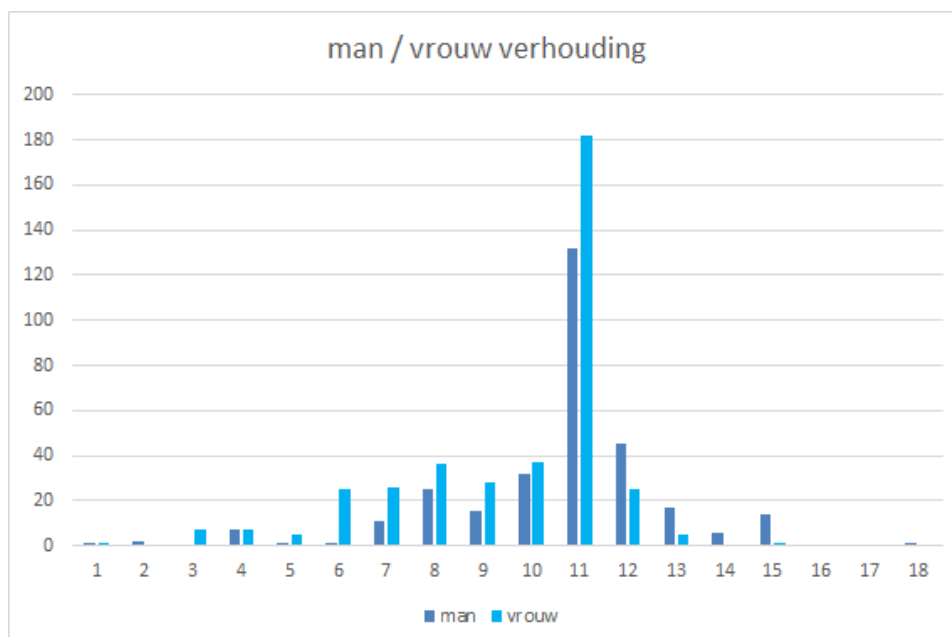
Key figures in education and research



Graph: male (M)/female (V) ratio per domain (employees) (source: sociaal jaarverslag -annual social report-2021)

The above overview shows that the male/female ratio of employees differs greatly per domain. Traditionally, there are more women than men in the social domain and the exact opposite is true in the technical domain. In the economic domain, there is a more equal gender distribution; slightly more women than men. This applies not only to HZ, but also within higher education and scientific education. That fact does not release us from the obligation to attract more women to our technical domain, both students and employees.

Employees and gender equality in function level



Graph: male/female ratio of total workforce.

If we subsequently look at the male/female ratio in the total workforce in salary scale 12 and above, the ratio can be described as rather lopsided. Women are over-represented in scales up to and including scale 11. There are almost twice as many men in scale 12. In scale 13 and above, there are only 6 women as against 38 men.

Monitoring of key figures

HZ commits to monitor the key figures by gender annually and report to the responsible portfolio holder within the BDT.

Gender designation for students and staff?

The discussion about the indication of gender, which is currently taking place more and more often in the Netherlands, cannot be left out of a GEP. Research shows that there is no unambiguous answer to the question 'How should you ask about gender? It depends on whom you ask (pro-public.nl, 2021).

From June 2022 onwards, when an employee joins the HZ, he or she is asked to indicate his or her gender: male/female/other. This is also the case when a student enrolls at HZ.

PART IV WHAT DO WE FOCUS ON IN THE COMING YEARS?

HZ wants her students and her employees to feel safe and valued, now and in the future, and wants students and employees to be able to be themselves, regardless of gender, belief and/or origin. The promotion of gender equality is part of HZ's policy that also focuses on diversity, inclusion and equality. This policy will be further developed in the coming period.

A university of applied sciences in a large city often chooses to have its staff reflect the student population. Because HZ can be considered a medium-sized school and is not located near a big city, the HZ wants to draw attention to diversity, inclusion and equality in a different approach than the mirror principle. At the same time, with a respectable number of international students, the HZ does have the ambition to highlight this issue. Not in the least because the HZ believes that Dutch society benefits from professionals and future professionals with a national and an international background being aware that we live in a democratic constitutional state in which Article 1 of our constitution is a great asset and because in solving complex global issues, involving various perspectives is of (life) importance.

What initiatives we have in mind when we want to give practical and concrete shape to the promotion of gender equality as part of diversity, inclusion and equality is shown below. We have chosen as preliminary categories: 1) human resource management, 2) education, research and curriculum enrichment and 3) stories, symbols, rituals and role models.

The following list per theme is not exhaustive; there are more and other forms imaginable which can be added later.¹

Personnel policy

Werving en selectie

- HZ vindt het belangrijk dat bij het werven van een nieuwe collega de vacaturetekst inclusief is opgesteld. Wij zullen ons hierbij laten ondersteunen door externe expertise om zo onze eigen skills op dit punt te ontwikkelen.
- Tijdens de onboarding /inwerkperiode wordt aandacht besteed aan het thema en wordt "zo doen wij het hier/ wij staan hiervoor..." en het waarom hiervan uitgebreid toegelicht.

Recruitment and selection

- I. Learning and developing
- II. - Internally, we are currently discussing our position regarding the number of teachers who have/should have a master's degree and the number of teachers with a Phd (now that the national quota has been abandoned). The ratio of men to women was not included in the discussion, but we are adding it now. In addition, when developing

¹ The actions that relate to the training component of an approach to training management and decision-makers that is obligatory under the Horizon 2020 Programme, with a view to making the possible blind spots on the subject of Gender Equality visible and increasing awareness of the need to invest in this theme, are marked with a ** in the table below. In order to offer an approach that is as tailored as possible to the breadth of all employees in our organisation, HZ chooses to name a diverse range of activities.

professionalisation policies, we include equality in development opportunities between teaching and non-teaching staff. [Open dialog: lunch lectures](#)

- HZ starts an open dialogue between staff and students, in which experiences and ideas for an inclusive HZ are shared. These 'lunch lectures' can provide input for making or implementing (new) policy. The first is scheduled for 12 July 2022.
- One or more dialogues are written down by an artist (e.g. a cartoonist) in the shape of a narrative and framed in enlarged form and hung up in a central place in the school

III. [Inviting guest speakers](#)

- Inclusion, diversity and equality is a subject that enjoys widespread attention. At the same time, it is a subject that can also cause tempers to flare. That is why it is important to invite an experienced guest speaker(s) for an inspiration session, who has mastered the subject and the inclusive language.

IV. [Masterclass diversity & inclusiveness and value-free selection **](#)

- We are committed to including a masterclass in inclusion, diversity and equality and a training course in value-free selection in the educational offerings of the HZ.

V. [Existing activities](#)

- We will continue to organise "Diversity day" and dialogue sessions

Culture

I. [Work Perception Survey / MTO](#)

- The MTO is conducted every other year. It includes 3 questions on inclusiveness and 8 questions on undesirable behaviour. We are considering whether this is sufficient. MTO wordt om het jaar afgenomen. Hierin staan 3 vragen opgenomen die gaan over inclusiviteit en 8 vragen over ongewenst gedrag. We beraden ons op de vraag of dit voldoende is.

II. [How we address each other?](#)

- By first name or surname? With or without a visible title? We will start an internal dialogue about this.

III. [Always conduct an exit interview with people who voluntarily leave the organization?](#)

- It is not to be hoped that HZ employees will leave the organisation because they consider the organisation to be insufficiently inclusive. To make sure that this is not the case, we do not only want to interview employees who leave, but also have them fill out an (anonymous) questionnaire that explicitly asks about their experiences. This collected information is input for the interdisciplinary Direction Group on Diversity, Inclusion and Equality (starting in July 2022).

Personnel key figures

I. [Proportional distribution over job levels](#)

- HZ strives for a proportionate distribution of men and women across job levels and job scales so that career prospects for men and women can be equal.

Education and curriculum enrichment

Student onboarding for study success

HZ wants to emphasise the importance of offering equal opportunities. Professionals must realise that equal opportunities sometimes require unequal treatment. Education can make the difference for those people for whom the starting point is different (think of students with debts, students with an unsafe home situation, a student who is/will be a father or mother, a student whose Dutch is not their mother tongue, a student who is a status holder, a student in transition, a student who will be in detention at night, a student who has no fixed place of residence, etc.). How should we proceed?

I. Open dialogue with professionals

- Students who are faced with problems such as those described above need to feel safe before they will come forward with their story. HZ intends to have an open dialogue with professionals of HZ (confidential counsellors, student psychologists, student counsellors, student affairs, tutors, study career coaches, programme managers, etc.) on a frequent basis (2 per year) about what guidance students need in order to experience study success. The professionals can share their experience and learn from each other.

II. Research on gender equality

- In the autumn of 2022, a meeting will be organised with the leading professors to involve the gender perspective as well as diversity in a broader sense in the development of research and to explore whether gender equality could be a more explicit theme to develop research on in the near future.

Enrichment of curricula

I. Inner development goals (IDG'S)

- Together with the education professionals (from each domain), we are investigating how the current SLC programmes, as well as other subjects that could seamlessly integrate with these IDGs, can be enriched so that our students can develop in these IDGs (as a prerequisite for achieving the intended SDGs).

Stories, symbols, rituals and role models

Promoting inclusiveness within the HZ goes hand in hand with telling stories, showing symbols, introducing rituals and letting role models do the talking.

- Buying a rainbow flag/ LHTBIQ flag and hoisting it together on Coming out day on 11 October (with a photo on MyHZ).
- Who from the staff or students wants to act as a "role model" (give interview, share experience - positive and negative etc)
- BDT discusses, refers to the topic of inclusiveness when the opportunity arises or creates this opportunity naturally on internal and external occasions.

Financial resources

In the BDT meeting of 5 July 2022, funds for the implementation of this plan were promised for the years 2022 and 2023:

| | 2022 | 2023 |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Staff deployment | 0,1 fte | 0,4 fte |
| Other funds | € 2.500 euros (awareness session/inspiration by expert) | € 10.000 euros (10) half-days of hired expertise for training |

Measures to promote diversity, inclusion and equality within HZ ²

| Personnel policy theme | What |
|--|--|
| Recruitment & Selection | Inclusive job descriptions and awareness of bias - training team P&OO + managers ** |
| | Onboarding en thema Inclusie |
| | Equal training opportunities for all employees |
| | Open dialogue: lunch lectures ** |
| | Inviting guest speakers** Masterclass diversity and inclusion** |
| Culture | Evaluate work perception survey/MTO and adjust if necessary |
| | How do we address each other within HZ? First name, visible titles, etc.? How do we report or make announcements? |
| | Develop policy on leaving exit interviews |
| Personnel key figures | Monitoring equal gender distribution across salary scales. |
| | Actions to promote equal distribution across salary scales. |
| Theme Education and curriculum enrichment | What |
| Onboarding of students to promote study success | Open dialogue with professionals from various positions |

² The actions that relate to the training component of an approach to training management and decision-makers that is obligatory under the Horizon 2020 Programme, with a view to making the possible blind spots on the subject of Gender Equality visible and increasing awareness of the need to invest in this theme, are marked with a ** in the table below. In order to offer an approach that is as tailored as possible to the breadth of all employees in our organisation, HZ chooses to name a diverse range of activities.

| | |
|--|--|
| Key figures on student numbers | Monitoring student enrolment (m/f) Monitoring the outflow of students with diplomas (m/f) |
| Recruit female students for the technical courses. | Targeted actions to attract women. Actions to promote the retention of female students in the study programme.. |
| Curriculum enrichment | Investigate whether IDGs can enrich the curriculum. |
| Research in the area of diversity, inclusion and gender equality | Start an explorative discussion with Leading Lectures |
| Theme Stories, symbols etc. | |
| Visible expressions | Targeted communication (flag, stories, role models speaking, BDT raising the issue) |

^[1] The actions that relate to the training component of an approach to training management and decision-makers that is obligatory under the Horizon 2020 Programme, with a view to making the possible blind spots on the subject of Gender Equality visible and increasing awareness of the need to invest in this theme, are marked with an ** in the table below. In order to offer an approach that is as tailored as possible to the breadth of all employees in our organisation, HZ chooses to name a diverse range of activities.

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