



MCMXXII

VYTAUTAS MAGNUS
UNIVERSITY

VMU GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

2021–2025



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Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) aims at creating a safe, healthy, respectful, attentive and tolerant environment. This higher education institution strives to not only ensure equal opportunities for every community member and improve the quality and results of studies and research, but also, to enhance working and studying conditions for everyone. Vytautas Magnus University aims at maintaining a positive and encouraging environment for studies and academic career. VMU positions itself as the most liberal university in Lithuania which functions according to *artes liberales* principles, encouraging personal growth and multifaceted education in a broader sense, creating favourable conditions for career development, valuing individuality and free choice, and attempting to ensure respect for human rights and guarantee equal opportunities for all community members.

The Gender Equality Plan is an institutional policy instrument aimed at ensuring gender balance by implementing cultural, systemic institutional and structural changes within the organisation. VMU GEP is prepared according to EIGE recommendations for preparation of Gender Equality Plans (*Gear Tool*).¹ The European Union research community aims at tackling the challenges of gender equality by introducing certain conditions and measures for funding the highest

¹ EIGE Gear Tool: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear>.

quality research programmes. Attempting to improve gender equality in research EU has prepared a new regulation – starting from 2022, all universities participating in H2020 programme will be required to have Gender Equality Plan as their institutional measure.² The current GEP of VMU is prepared as part of the ES programme H2020 SPEAR project.³ This GEP encompasses such main aims as improving gender balance in leadership and decision making, achieving transparency in application and recruitment process, providing assistance in terms of work-family balance, enhancing organisational culture and creating favourable conditions for work and studies, raising awareness, implementing the policies of sexual and gender based harassment prevention, strengthening gender dimension in studies and research, removing the obstacles and barriers in University's community members' career paths, improving gender equality and equal opportunities, reducing horizontal and vertical segregation in the areas with visible gender imbalance, etc. This GEP is a set of measures that will help to achieve better gender equality and guarantee equal opportunities for all community members. Activities directed toward

² The European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy: https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/democracy-and-citizens-rights/gender-equality-research-and-innovation_en.

gender equality foster not only positive structural, but also cultural changes in the organisation and in a broader context – in higher education and in the society in general.

The Gender Equality Plan is prepared in accordance with the law, policy regulations and programs of the Republic of Lithuania and international institutions. **The Law on Equal Opportunities**⁴ in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania provides the principle of equality for all people and the inherent right to be treated equally. It seeks to establish the equality of all people and prohibits restricting human rights or providing certain people with privileges on the basis of gender, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, religion, beliefs or views. **The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men**⁵ of the Republic of Lithuania intends to develop and implement measures for ensuring equal opportunities and conditions for women and men when admitting to vocational training and higher education institutions, professional development courses, fostering professional skills and providing practical work experience. **Recommendations of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania on equal**

³ Programme H2020-SwafS-2018-1 project “Supporting and Implementing Plans for Gender Equality in Academia and Research” (No. 824544).

⁴ <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/TAR.0CC6CB2A9E42/asr>.

⁵ <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/TAR.746227138BCB/FLcEVzJmSQ>.

opportunities for men and women in Lithuanian institutions of education and research⁶ declares the establishment of guidelines to promote equality between women and men and to eliminate inequalities in studies and research. The recommendations also seek to propose measures for the systematic integration of the gender perspective in all the institutions' policies and activities, to improve the gender balance in various fields of science and to increase the number of women in senior scientific and administrative positions. In 2020, **the Lithuanian University Rectors' Conference** prepared the **Guidelines for the prevention and prosecution of sexual harassment**⁷, in which sexual harassment is treated as a violation of academic ethics. The document presents the particularities of sexual harassment, prevention measures, the procedures of violation investigation and decision-making process in the academic community.

The GEP of Vytautas Magnus University has prepared and implemented in synergy and complementarity through key university documents and institutional policies that emphasize the

⁶ <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/7141ebc0907011e48028e9b85331c55d?jfwid=-vs1qjia2g>.

⁷ Guidelines for the prevention and prosecution of sexual harassment (2020) (<https://lurk.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Seksualinio-priekabiavimo->

need to ensure equal opportunities for all members of the community, regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation and gender identity, cultural identity, socio-economic background, etc.

VMU Statute (clause 12) underlines the need to ensure “equal access to competitions for teaching and research positions as well as to competitions for admission to studies, regardless of candidate’s gender, race, political or religious beliefs, nationality or citizenship.” (p. 6). The **VMU Code of Academic Ethics**⁸ seeks to promote equal rights and opportunities and to endorse values of respect, anti-discrimination and ethical conduct. The Code of academic ethics condemns discrimination, insults to honour and dignity on the grounds of age, gender or sexual orientation, disability, appearance, race or ethnicity, religion or beliefs.

In 2017, VMU prepared and approved by the VMU Rector’s order **Equal opportunities policy document**,⁹ which responds to the requirement of the new **Labour Code** (2017) to implement and monitor gender equality policies in the institutions. Article 26 of the Labour Code stipulates that organisations employing more than 50

[prevencijos-ir-atvej%C5%B3-nagrin%C4%97jimo-gair%C4%97s-2020m_T.pdf](#)).

⁸ Vytautas Magnus University Code of Academic Ethics, 9 March 2011.

⁹ Order of the Rector of Vytautas Magnus University On approval of the equal opportunities policy and its implementation program, December 1, 2017, No. 499.

employees must prepare the equal opportunities policy and acquaint the employees with the measures for its implementation and supervision.

The VMU Strategic Plan for 2021-2027¹⁰ covers the measures to ensure equal opportunities and gender equality. The first clause of the Strategic Action Plan aspires “to community sustainability and synergy by respecting the community’s diversity and the personal autonomy of its members.” One of the objectives of this clause (1.1.1.) is to “ensure human rights, dignity, non-discrimination, equal opportunities, and diversity on gender, age, race, religion, language, culture, disability, and socioeconomic grounds.” The strategic plan also intends to improve and execute monitoring of the psychological, emotional and physical health of all the members of the university’s community (1.2.1.). Clause 1.2.2. envisions the provision of continuous “feedback to the community on the results of monitoring and planned measures to enhance psychological

well-being.” In order to ensure community sustainability and synergies, it is also planned to create an inclusive and motivating work environment by empowering members from under-represented groups or those, having individual needs (e.g., young researchers) and by offering more favourable, flexible working conditions, providing opportunities for virtual work. Also, the clause 4.2.3. emphasizes the need to ensure “fair and equal representation in the management bodies of the University and the academic units.”

The following measures of VMU Gender Equality Plan represent the guidelines and recommendations of national and international organisations for shaping gender equality policies produced in the institutions. These measures are in accordance with national legal regulations, as well as University’s aims and strategic documents. Specificities of University’s situation and processes are also taken into consideration.

¹⁰ Vytautas Magnus University Strategic Plan for 2021–2027 (<https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/VDU-strategic-plan-for-2021-2027.pdf>).

Gender Equality Plan (GEP) 2021-2025

Aim of activity	General description of the measures	Target group	Indicators	Persons and units responsible for implementation of GEP
<p>1. To strengthen gender equality policy by integrating gender dimension into University's strategic governance documents, establishing institutional gender equality structures and positions, conducting data monitoring.</p>	<p>The following measures are planned:</p> <p>To include gender equality dimension into strategic documents and the process of implementation.</p> <p>To ensure the implementation of equal opportunities and gender equality policies, outlined in the Strategic Plan 2021–2027.</p> <p>To encourage faculties and units to prepare and implement Gender Equality Plans.</p> <p>To revise The Code of Ethics and improve the procedures related to ethics at the university, including the measures for gender equality.</p> <p>To revise the VMU document of Equal Opportunities Policy and Plan of its Implementation by including aims and measures of Diversity Strategy.</p> <p>To establish a special coordinator's position for the coordination of ensuring equal opportunities, prevention of sexual harassment and implementation of anti-discrimination policies.</p>	<p>All employees and students</p>	<p>Prepared, revised and implemented documents.</p> <p>Continuous monitoring of the implementation of strategic documents.</p> <p>A new Equal Opportunities Coordinator's position established, aiming at better coordination of equal opportunities related questions, prevention of sexual harassment and ensuring implementation of anti-discriminatory policies.</p> <p>Regular collection and analysis of gender disaggregated data.</p> <p>Prepared and approved Gender Equality Plans of separate academic units.</p>	<p>VMU Council</p> <p>Senate</p> <p>Rector</p> <p>Vice-Rector for Communication</p> <p>Vice-Rector for Research</p> <p>Vice-Rector for Studies</p> <p>Commission of Ethics</p> <p>Administration and departments</p> <p>Faculties</p> <p>SPEAR project team</p>

	To collect gender disaggregated data about academic and non-academic staff and students, prepare regular reports and disseminate the results about various areas of activity (management, supervision, gender representation in decision making bodies, research activities and results, career dynamics of academic and non-academic employees, structure of staff, salaries, projects, etc.).			
2. To create an inclusive and equality-oriented organisational culture through university's internal and external communication as well as collaboration with social partners.	<p>The following measures are planned:</p> <p>To raise awareness within the University's community and in the society in general by communicating the importance of equal opportunities and gender equality, diversity and anti-discrimination policy (with regard to gender, race, age, ethnic group, religion and/or faith, (dis)ability, sexual orientation and gender identity, beliefs). To promote gender balanced decision making and leadership within the University's community and in the society in general. To prevent gender stereotyping and create better conditions for visibility and representation of underrepresented groups.</p> <p>Aiming for gender balance, to strengthen the representation of women's leadership in mass media, internal and external communication by highlighting women's roles as leaders</p>	All employees and students General society	<p>Increased number of publications, events and campaigns in internal and external communication.</p> <p>Increased number of trainings how to enhance communication.</p> <p>Prepared and presented to the University's community the Guidelines for gender-balanced and gender sensitive communication, based on the principles of gender equality and diversity.</p> <p>Improved gender balance in communication (e.g., increased visibility of experts and researchers of underrepresented gender within specific areas of science).</p> <p>Prepared and presented to the University's community the Guidelines for gender-balanced</p>	<p>Marketing and Communication Department</p> <p>SPEAR project team</p> <p>Persons responsible for communication</p> <p>Researchers and pedagogical personnel</p> <p>Students</p> <p>Non-academic personnel</p>

<p>in management, decision-making, research and innovation.</p> <p>To implement gender-sensitive language policy at the institution.</p> <p>To strengthen the representation of women and men by shaping new role models in areas where the number and representation of women and men is low (e.g., STEM fields, social sciences, humanities, arts).</p> <p>Aiming for gender equality, to promote women's participation in public communication.</p> <p>To aim at integrating principles of gender-balanced organization of academic, scientific and other events.</p> <p>To reinforce cooperation with national and international stakeholders and social partners in the areas of human rights, equal opportunities, diversity and gender equality.</p>		<p>events, based on the principles of gender equality.</p> <p>Improved indicators of gender balance at the events.</p> <p>Ongoing collaboration and development of joined initiatives, projects and events with social partners and stakeholders.</p>	
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<p>3. To create an organizational culture that ensures the socio-psychological well-being of community members, facilitates the combination of work, studies and family, prevents harassment and discrimination.</p>	<p>The following measures are planned:</p> <p>To conduct regular surveys for all students and employees about their socio-psychological well-being, career opportunities, organizational climate and hold public discussion about the results</p> <p>To enhance the socio-psychological support for the employees and students by organising events, consultations and training to the community. To reduce the tensions that arise from combining work, studies and family responsibilities, to provide support related to career challenges as well as cases of discrimination.</p> <p>To create favourable conditions for combining work, studies and family by expanding the possibilities of flexible and online work (teleworking, flexible working hours, working remotely, setting a convenient time for the meetings, etc.).</p> <p>To support and improve the activities of “Parents academy”, including the questions of career, studies and family balance. To help mothers and fathers deal with the challenges of parenthood.</p> <p>To strengthen the activities of Psychology Clinic.</p>	<p>All employees and students</p>	<p>Ensured regularity of surveys, analysis and dissemination of results on the socio-psychological well-being of the university’s community.</p> <p>Increased availability and number of psychological, career related, family and work-related counselling, training and events. Increased number of participants to such events and training.</p> <p>Positive feedback from the University’s community.</p> <p>Improved evaluation of employees’ working conditions.</p> <p>Increased number of educational events and participants, including those organized by the “Parents Academy”.</p> <p>Renewed documents and regulations related to working conditions.</p> <p>Organized trainings, where employees and heads of departments are informed about flexible working conditions.</p> <p>Sexual Harassment Prevention document prepared and disseminated.</p>	<p>Rector</p> <p>Vice-Rector for Communication</p> <p>Vice-Rector for Research</p> <p>Human Resources Department</p> <p>Psychology Clinic</p> <p>International Cooperation Department</p> <p>Faculty of Social Sciences</p> <p>Research and Innovation Department</p> <p>Student Affairs Department</p> <p>Student Representative Council</p> <p>PhD Student Club</p>
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	<p>To encourage and support the participation of employees' children in summer educational events and camps organized by VMU.</p> <p>To prepare Sexual Harassment Prevention strategy and implement its measures.</p> <p>To organise training and awareness raising campaigns for the leaders, managers and administrative employees, focusing on reducing precarious working conditions, ensuring career and family balance, creating favourable environment for career growth.</p>		<p>A special position for the work with sexual harassment prevention established within the selected responsible unit.</p> <p>A trust line founded and special procedures for submitting complaints, solving the conflicts, providing psychological and legal help developed.</p> <p>Increased amount of informational material on mobbing and harassment prevention, increased number of educational and communicational campaigns and trainings on these subjects.</p>	
<p>4. To implement anti-discrimination and equal opportunities policies fostering gender balance-based decision-making and leadership, supporting career</p>	<p>The following measures are planned:</p> <p>Ensuring gender balance in decision-making processes to seek balanced gender inclusion in making the list of candidates, electing persons to management and decision-making positions (committees, councils, commissions, etc.), nominating candidates for awards, delegating representatives to external organizations and positions, etc.</p> <p>To aim for ensuring gender balance in leadership and senior academic and research career positions (professors, senior researchers).</p>	<p>All employees</p> <p>Potential employees</p> <p>Potential students and school pupils</p>	<p>Reviewed and improved measures and procedures of transparent recruitment process.</p> <p>Reviewed and improved measures and procedures of transparent candidate selection for the studies.</p> <p>Prepared guidelines-recommendations for candidate selection and recruitment procedures.</p> <p>Increased number of trainings about gender equality and anti-discriminatory policies as well as</p>	<p>Rector</p> <p>Vice-Rector for Communication</p> <p>Vice-Rector for Research</p> <p>Vice-Rector for Studies</p> <p>Human Resources Department</p> <p>Research and Innovation Department</p>

<p>advancement and ensuring transparency in the procedures of recruitment and candidate selection for studies.</p>	<p>To raise awareness and enhance anti-discriminatory principles (with regard to gender, race, age, ethnic group, religion and/or faith, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, beliefs).</p> <p>To strengthen sensitivity and awareness to gender equality and equal opportunities' perspective in the university' community by organizing staff trainings, communication campaigns and dissemination of information.</p> <p>To increase transparency in the process of employment and candidate selection by observing the anti-discriminatory principles.</p>		<p>measures about ensuring gender balance in the organization.</p>	<p>Marketing and Communication Department</p> <p>Study Department</p> <p>Department of Laws</p>
<p>5. To reduce horizontal segregation and gender disbalance in specific fields of science and faculties.</p>	<p>The following measures are planned:</p> <p>To carry out a detailed analysis of the priorities of candidates applying to the domains of study dominated by one gender (STEM sciences, pedagogy, social work, etc.).</p> <p>To improve marketing and communication strategies, aiming at encouraging young women and men to choose fields of study in which their gender is less represented.</p> <p>To develop initiatives and projects in the fields of formal and informal education, teacher training in order to reduce gender imbalance in STEM fields.</p> <p>To carry out the analysis of needs, introducing formal and informal measures of support and</p>	<p>All students</p> <p>Academic staff</p> <p>Prospect students (final grade school pupils)</p> <p>Teachers</p>	<p>Ensured regular data analysis with regard to gender about the priorities of the applying candidates.</p> <p>Implemented marketing and communication campaigns to encourage students to choose majors and specialties with visible gender imbalance.</p> <p>Introduced support and mentoring measures for current students.</p> <p>Increased number of new initiatives and collaborations with schools, formal and informal educational institutions and partners to promote young women's motivation and achievements in STEM, young men –</p>	<p>Vice-Rector for Studies</p> <p>Chancellor of the Education Academy</p> <p>Deans of STEM faculties</p> <p>Study Department</p> <p>Marketing and Communication Department</p> <p>International Cooperation Department</p>

	<p>assistance for women studying STEM disciplines as well as for men studying disciplines where the number of men is significantly lower than that of women (humanities, social sciences, pedagogy, arts).</p>		<p>in social sciences, humanities and arts. Increased number of applicants to non-conventional programs for particular gender.</p>	<p>Research and Innovation Department SPEAR project team Administrative and academic personnel at STEM faculties, Education Academy and other faculties with expressed horizontal segregation</p>
<p>6. To integrate the gender dimension into studies and research, promote gender equality in research, improve career opportunities for women researchers.</p>	<p>The following measures are planned:</p> <p>To regularly conduct content analysis in all the levels of studies (programs, subjects, topics of final theses). To discern possibilities for a better integration of gender dimension into the study content.</p> <p>To encourage teachers and researchers to integrate gender dimension in study programs and subjects, research, knowledge and technology transfer.</p> <p>To conduct trainings and provide consultations to teachers and heads of study programs on integration of gender dimension in the study content.</p>	<p>All students All teachers Researchers Researchers who face challenges in combining work/studies and family responsibilities</p>	<p>Renewed and/or developed new study subjects with integrated gender dimension.</p> <p>Increased number of trainings, consultations and meetings with academic staff to promote gender mainstreaming in teaching, ongoing projects and research.</p> <p>Increased number of researchers' meetings, collaborative and networking events, common projects.</p> <p>Increased number of trainings and consultations on project preparation.</p> <p>Increased number of project leaders of underrepresented gender.</p>	<p>Rector Vice-Rector for Research Vice-Rector for Studies Research and Innovation Department Study Department VMU institutional body responsible for competencies and improvement of qualification of</p>

<p>To promote cooperation and networking between teachers and researchers working in the fields related to gender studies.</p> <p>Aiming for gender balance, to encourage researchers to engage in research projects, prepare high-level scientific publications.</p> <p>Aiming for gender balance, to develop measures of support for career advancement.</p> <p>To implement the principles and tools of gender-sensitive supervision for doctoral students.</p>		<p>Regularly performed analysis of gender-disaggregated data on scientific publications.</p> <p>Increased number of high-quality publications.</p> <p>Created career development measures for researchers of underrepresented gender (e.g., trainings for researchers, heads of departments, career monitoring, mentoring).</p> <p>Improved quality of dissertation supervision (improved psycho-social well-being, enhanced conditions for combining research activities, studies and family).</p>	<p>pedagogical personnel</p> <p>Education Academy</p> <p>SPEAR project team</p> <p>Pedagogical staff of various faculties</p> <p>Communication and Technology Transfer Center</p> <p>Research institutes and research clusters</p> <p>Representatives of all the Committees of Doctoral Studies</p>
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