



UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES
VELIKA GORICA
GENDER EQUALITY PLAN
2022.-2027.



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Introduction

Achieving Gender Equality in all areas, including academia and research, is a basic pre-requisite towards a more tolerant, sustainable and prosperous society. According to Gender Equality in Academia and Research (GEAR tool), institutional change is crucial in order to “(...) enhance women’s representation and retention at all levels of their scientific careers and to promote the integration of the gender dimension in research and innovation content” (pg. 7). Gender Equality in research, innovation and academia is an especially challenging topic when it comes to STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics). Eurostat in 2020 has shown encouraging data that 51% of persons employed in science and technology in the EU were women. The same statistics state that in most EU Member States there are at least as many women as men in university-level education (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20210511-1>). Although there are more and more female researchers in STEM fields, gender gaps are visible in various phenomena pertinent to women in STEM areas such as leaky pipeline (women leave jobs in STEM fields and become underrepresented minorities) and glass ceiling (an invisible barrier that prevents women to reach leadership positions). Given that the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica provides study programs in the STEM area, it is UASVG’s responsibility to contribute to tackling this important issue. Therefore, the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica (UASVG) has established a Gender Equality Plan at the institutional level for the period 2022 to 2027.

Based on the initial analysis of the gender equality state at UASVG, this Gender Equality Plan envisages a framework for fostering and nurturing gender equality in various areas of our university community: students, teaching staff and non-teaching staff. The framework includes strategic guidelines which led to defining objectives and measures based on the SMART principle: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-related objectives and measures. They are also in line with the legal practices of UASVG, which are in turn consistent with the national legislation. It is important to note that the Plan is subject to revision if new protocols and findings require such updates. The institution will provide internal capacities for ensuring the visibility and implementation of this Gender Equality Plan.

Establishing Gender Equality Plan at UASVG

The initial phase in analysing key barriers and aspects for improvement regarding gender equality at UASVG was based on reviewing relevant legislation and policies at the national and EU levels.

When it comes to Croatian legislation, gender equality is proclaimed in the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia. Several other important legislative acts regarding gender equality were a strong basis for our GEP: Anti-Discrimination Act and Gender Equality Act. In order to ensure equal opportunities for women and men, there are a number of policies, strategies and protocols, all available through the Gender Equality Office within the Government of the Republic of Croatia. Complete eradication of gender inequalities in terms of pay and taking management positions, as well as participation in the labor market, is listed as one of the goals within the 2030 National Development Strategy for the Republic of Croatia.

Regarding gender equality in research and innovation policy, European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 lists three objectives: fostering equality in scientific careers, ensuring gender balance in decision-making processes and bodies and integrating the gender dimension in research and innovation context. The fact that gender equality and women's empowerment are among the main objectives of the EU's external action is visible in the incentives by the institutions for the EU member states to encourage developing institutional strategies regarding gender equality. One of the incentives is the introduction of the GEP eligibility criterion under Horizon Europe. It is a step towards achieving the European research area without barriers in recruitment, gender imbalance in decision-making and gender inequality in scientific careers. The preparation of the UASVG Gender Equality Plan was in line with the Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans by the European Commission – DG for Research and Innovation and Gender Equality in Academia and Research (GEAR tool) by the European Institute for Gender Equality.

Further analysis included reviewing legal documents and acts, as well as ethical codex at the institutional level. Faculty Statute, Staff Regulations, Procedure Regulations as well as other faculty legal acts, state whenever gender-specific terms are used, they should be understood as applying equally to men and women. UASVG Development Strategy 2022-2026 and UASVG International Strategy 2022-2026 state that gendered terms apply equally to all genders, regardless of the gender in which they are expressed. The Development Strategy explicitly says that “Promotion of equal opportunities, non-discrimination, and equality are the fundamental principles in all fields of higher education activity at the University.” However, UASVG is dedicated to taking concrete steps toward gender equality.

The development and implementation of the Gender Equality Plan is a path to combat gender inequality in university communities. All changes that are going to be implemented through this GEP are expected to have a long-term impact.

The Analysis of Gender Equality at UASVG

The University of Applied Sciences has since its beginnings strived to achieve a balanced, equal and inclusive work environment in its everyday activities. The Office for Human Rights of the Government of the Republic of Croatia has recognized these efforts in 2013 when they awarded UASVG with the Key Difference Award, the award for promoting equality and diversity of human resources in 2012. However, this Gender Equality Plan is the first strategic document that will systematically address gender equality in all parts of our university community. The first step in setting out valid goals with visible impact is to analyse the existing situation of gender equality at UASVG.

Leadership and decision-making positions

To evaluate the current state of gender equality at the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica, it is important to understand its organizational structure. UASVG is organized into two interconnected subsystems: the academic subsystem, which is structured through teaching, professional and scientific organizational units (studies, academic departments and centres) and the business subsystem, which is structured through the business, legal and administrative organizational units (deanery, departments, offices and student office). Leadership positions in the academic subsystem are taken by Heads of Study Programmes, Heads of Departments and Heads of Centres, whereas the highest authority in the business subsystem is the Governing Council.

The Governing Council consists of 5 members. Currently, there are 3 female and 2 male employees in the Council. The second highest authority at UASVG is the Dean's Office. It consists of the Dean, Vice-Deans, Assistant Dean, General Secretary and Communications Department. The Dean, Assistant to the Dean and the Vice-Dean for teaching activities are male, whereas the Vice-dean for Science and Quality Assurance, the General Secretary and the Head of the Communication Department are female. Table 1 and Table 2 below depict the gender distribution of the two bodies with the highest authority.

Table 2 Governing Council

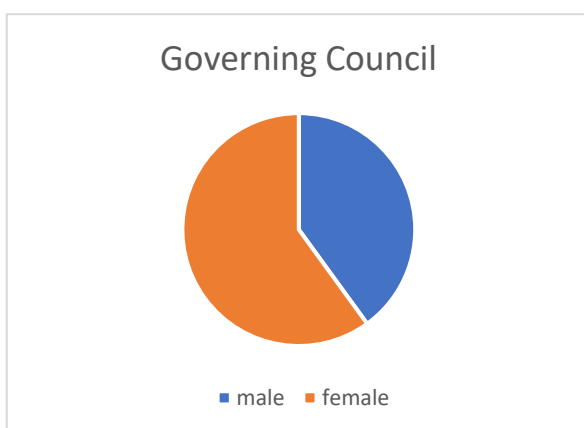
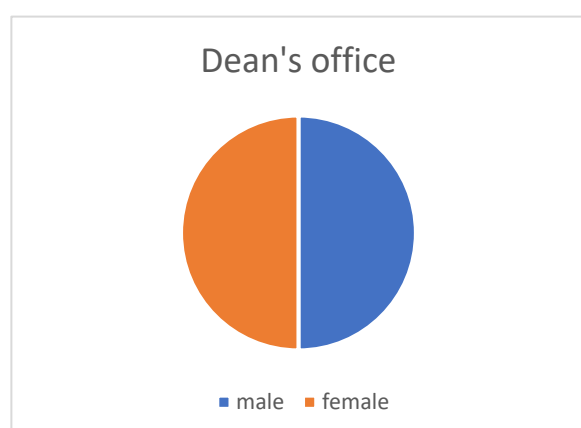


Table 1 Dean's office

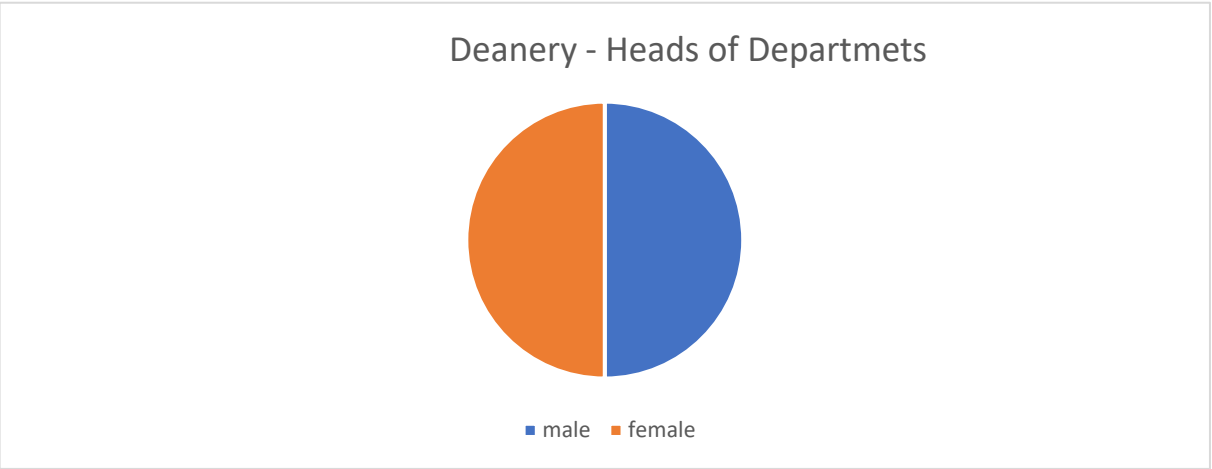


The next body in the hierarchical system is the Deanery. The Deanery performs professional, administrative, statistical, financial, technical and other tasks that enable the successful functioning of the University. Apart from the Dean's Office, it consists of Human Resources, International Cooperation and Projects Department, Teaching Activities and Student Affairs Department, Finance,

Accounting and Procurement Department, IT Support Department, Maintenance and Security Department.

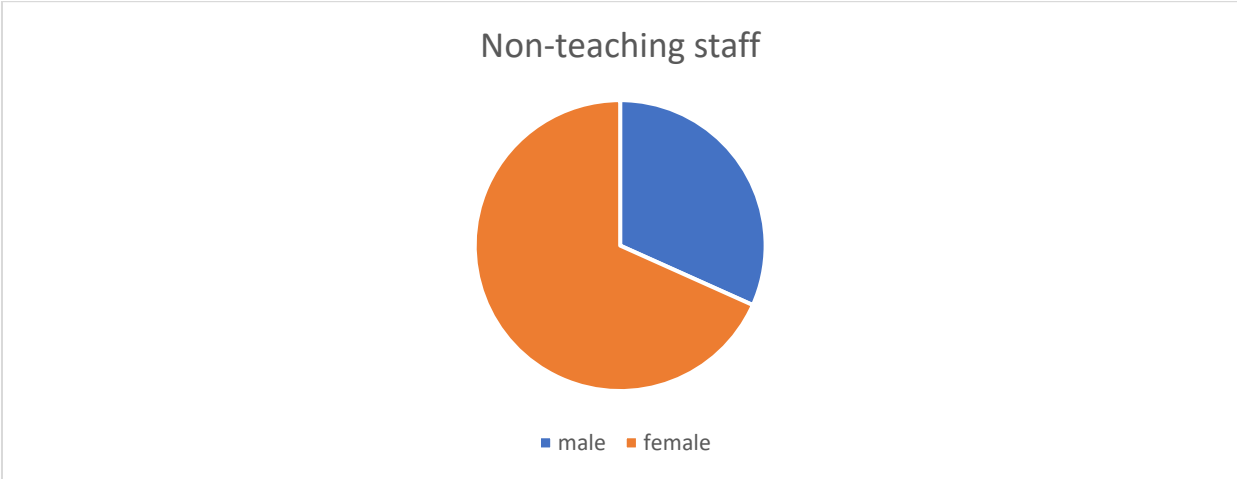
There is equal gender distribution among positions of Head of the Departments, as there are 3 female and 3 male Heads of the Department. Human Resources, Teaching Activities and Student Affairs Department and Finances and Accounting and Procurement Department are led by female Heads, whereas male Heads are in charge of the International Cooperation and Projects Department, the IT Support Department and the Maintenance and Security Department. The distribution is depicted in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Deanery - Heads of Departments



To conclude the analysis of the business and administrative part of UASVG, the overall non-teaching staff includes heads of departments, advisors, expert associates and service workers. As Table 4 below shows, there are 32% of men and 68% of female employees in the non-teaching staff.

Table 4 Non-teaching staff



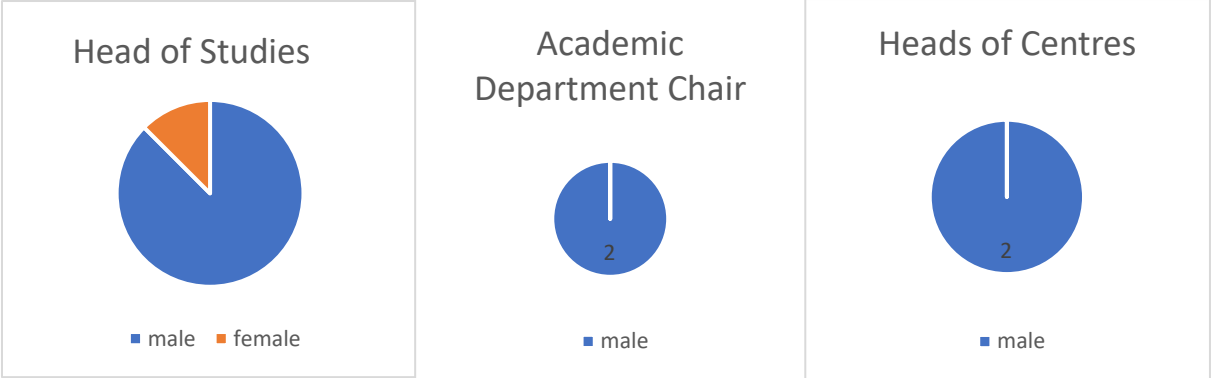
All four charts show a favourable ratio of women in the highest decision-making bodies, as well as non-teaching staff. Such good practices shall continue to be enforced at UASVG.

There are also special roles assigned at the university level: Personal data protection Officer, Information Commissioner, Commissioner for the Protection of Employees Dignity and Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner for Irregularities. These four important roles in the area of data privacy and work transparency are all assigned to women.

Teaching, training and research

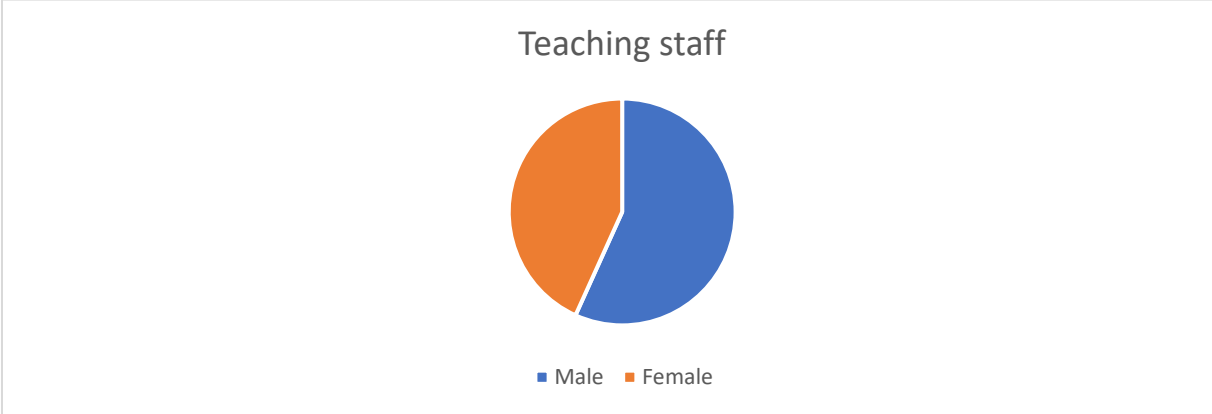
When it comes to teaching, training and research activities at UASVG, it is important to note that UASVG offers 5 undergraduate and 3 graduate study programmes. Out of 7 Heads of Studies, there is only one female. There are 2 Academic Department Chairs and 2 Heads of Centres at UASVG and all positions are held by men. This gender distribution is depicted in Table 5 below.

Table 5 Head of Studies, Academic Departments Chairs and Heads of Centres



Given that the majority of Heads of Studies, Academic Department Chairs and Heads of Centres are male, leadership positions in the academic part of UASVG should be more balanced when it comes to gender. According to table 6 below, there are also more male than female teaching staff at UASVG.

Table 6 Teaching staff



According to the 2021 UASVG report, gender distribution at the study level is as follows:

- The undergraduate programme of Crisis management had 42 professors, teaching assistants and associates participating in teaching activities. Within this number, there are 57% male professors and 43% female professors.
- The undergraduate and graduate study programme of Computer systems management had 44 professors participating in the teaching activities. 41% of them are external collaborators, out of which 17% were female professors and 83% were male professors.
- In the Aircraft maintenance undergraduate study programme there are 34 professors participating in teaching activities. When it comes to external collaborators there were only 2 female professors and 17 male professors.
- In the study programme of Optometry, there are 22 professors working full time and 13 external collaborators (37% of all professors). The percentage of male and female external collaborators is similar; 54% male professors and 46% female professors.
- The undergraduate study programme of Motor vehicles and graduate study programme of Logistics management have 48 professors (46% are external collaborators). These programmes are mostly run by male employees, as 91% of external collaborators are male and 9% female.
- The graduate study programme of Crisis management has 20 professors; 12 are employed full time and 8 of them are external collaborators. The percentage of female external collaborators is 25%, whereas 75% of them are male.

The analysis at the study level confirms that study programmes in the technical fields are mostly taught by male employees while humanities and social sciences are mostly taught by female employees. It is apparent that women should be encouraged to participate in STEM fields as teachers and researchers, as well as male teachers should be encouraged to participate in the field of humanities and social sciences.

To conclude, statistics show that women make a larger number of employees at the university level, as there are 54% of women employed at the University. Decision-making and leading positions in the business and administrative part of the university are gender-balanced, whereas improvements could be made in teaching and research.

Strategic areas

As the analysis of gender equality at UASVG has laid out the grounds for improvement, several strategic areas were identified within this Gender Equality Plan:

- 1) Institutional culture of gender equality
- 2) Gender equality in research, teaching and training
- 3) Harmony between personal and professional life

Regarding the Institutional culture of gender equality, one of the main goals is to introduce a Commissioner for Gender Equality. Given that there are already Personal data protection Officer, Information Commissioner, Commissioner for the Protection of Employees Dignity and Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner for Irregularities, there is no obstacle in introducing a special Commissioner in charge of gender equality at UASVG. The Commissioner for Gender equality would be in charge of monitoring the status of gender equality, disseminating and revising the Gender Equality Plan, collecting relevant data for preparing annual reports on gender equality, organizing gender equality trainings and promoting equal treatment of all members of the university community regardless of their gender.

Gender equality in teaching and training is an important aspect of improving gender equality at the university, as raising awareness of gender equality in the classroom can have an impact on a very large scale. Raising gender equality issues can have a positive impact on research, as well as result in a more inclusive and tolerant society. Tackling this important aspect at UASVG will require a joint effort by professors, non-teaching staff and students.

To achieve a healthy and gender-balanced working and studying environment, it is important to systematically approach the issue of work-life balance, as well as study-life balance. This GEP will analyse and recommend measures for improving the balance between academic and private life, as well as strive to inform every member of the university community of the available support.

Each strategic area is interconnected, as they all contribute to the improvement of gender equality at UASVG. Each strategic area was assigned with a specific goal, within which there are very specific goals and respective set of measures to be implemented.

Strategic goals and measures

1. Build institutional culture of gender equality at UASVG

Goal: 1.1. Development of the gender equality protocol at UASVG	
MEASURE	1.1.1. Introduce the Commissioner for Gender Equality
RESPONSIBLE BODY	Dean
INDICATOR	Decision on the appointment of the Commissioner for gender equality
IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE	September 2022
MEASURE	1.1.2. Establish protocol for gender equality analysis
RESPONSIBLE BODY	Commissioner for gender equality
INDICATOR	Established parameters for collecting data required for gender equality analysis
IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE	December 2022
MEASURE	1.1.3. Collect annual information on gender equality
RESPONSIBLE BODY	Commissioner for gender equality
INDICATOR	Annual report on gender equality
IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE	Continuously

Goal: 1.2. Promotion of the established gender equality system	
MEASURE	1.2.1. Publish the Gender Equality Plan in Croatian and English on the UASVG website
RESPONSIBLE BODY	Commissioner for gender equality
INDICATOR	Gender Equality Plan published in Croatian and English on the UASVG website
IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE	September 2022
MEASURE	1.2.2. Present the UASVG Gender Equality Plan
RESPONSIBLE BODY	Commissioner for gender equality
INDICATOR	Presentation on the UASVG Gender Equality Plan held
IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE	November 2022
MEASURE	1.2.3. Publish annual reports on gender equality
RESPONSIBLE BODY	Commissioner for gender equality
INDICATOR	Annual report on gender equality published
IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE	Continuously

Goal: 1.3. Monitoring gender balance in leadership and decision-making positions	
MEASURE	1.3.1. Monitor gender balance in leadership and decision-making positions
RESPONSIBLE BODY	Human resources
INDICATOR	Annual report on gender equality
IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE	Continuously

Goal: 1.4. Prevention of gender-based violence and sexism: Creating an organizational climate that nurtures gender equality	
MEASURE	1.4.1. Hold awareness-raising training on gender equality for employees
RESPONSIBLE BODY	Commissioner for gender equality, Center for Career and Psychological Support
INDICATOR	Number of trainings held for staff
IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE	Continuously
MEASURE	1.4.2. Hold awareness-raising trainings on gender equality for upper management
RESPONSIBLE BODY	Commissioner for gender equality
INDICATOR	Number of trainings held for upper management
IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE	Continuously

2. Support the balance between professional and private life in UASVG community

Goal: 2.1. Establishment of a support system for improving the quality of balance between work/study and private/family life	
MEASURE	2.1.1. Analyse the current state of institutional role in supporting work/study life and private life
RESPONSIBLE BODY	Commissioner for gender equality
INDICATOR	Annual report (containing existing UASVG policies and activities that contribute to the improved balance between professional and private life)
IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE	December 2022

MEASURE	2.1.2. Recommend measures for improving the balance between academic and private life
RESPONSIBLE BODY	Commissioner for gender equality
INDICATOR	Annual report (containing UASVG policies and activities that can further improve the balance between academic and private life)
IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE	December 2022
MEASURE	2.1.3. Hold workshops for students to facilitate support in achieving balance between their private life and studies
RESPONSIBLE BODY	Center for Career and Psychological Assistance
INDICATOR	Number of educational activities held (stress management, time management) for students
IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE	Continuously

Goal: 2.2. Promotion of the established system of support in balancing between professional and private life	
MEASURE	2.2.1. Increase the visibility of available policies in maintaining a balance between professional and private life for employees
RESPONSIBLE BODY	Human Resources
INDICATOR	Annual report (containing information on policies and services published on the intranet (Employee corner))
IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE	Continuously
MEASURE	2.2.2. Increase the visibility of available policies in maintaining a balance between professional and private life for students
RESPONSIBLE BODY	Commissioner for gender equality
INDICATOR	Annual report (containing information on policies and service published on the website)
IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE	Continuously

3. Integrate the gender dimension in teaching, training and research

Goal: 3.1. Gender equality trainings and promoting the need to maintain gender equality	
MEASURE	3.1.1. Hold trainings on gender-sensitive language for teaching and non-teaching staff
RESPONSIBLE BODY	Commissioner for gender equality
INDICATOR	Number of trainings held for teaching and non-teaching staff
IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE	Continuously

MEASURE	3.1.2. Hold trainings on gender equality for students
RESPONSIBLE BODY	Commissioner for gender equality, Center for Career and Psychological Assistance
INDICATOR	Number of trainings held for students
IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE	Continuously

Goal: 3.2. Promotion of the usage of gender-sensitive language in academic communication	
MEASURE	3.2.1. Establish an ethics committee
RESPONSIBLE BODY	Commissioner for gender equality
INDICATOR	Compiled and published guidelines for the implementation of research and projects, which will include the condition for gender-neutral expression
IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE	Continuously
MEASURE	
	3.2.2. Encourage the usage of gender-sensitive language in student theses
RESPONSIBLE BODY	Commissioner for gender equality
INDICATOR	Compiled and published guidelines which will include the condition for gender-neutral expression
IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE	Continuously

Conclusion

In the next five years, this Gender Equality Plan shall tackle the issue of gender equality in various parts of the UASVG community. Relevant strategic areas of focus were identified based on the analysis of the current state of gender equality at the university. The primary goal of this GEP is to build the institutional culture of gender equality, followed by supporting the balance between professional and private life in the UASVG community, as well as integrating the gender dimension in teaching, training and research. All strategic areas are addressed with specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-related objectives and measures. Introducing the Commissioner for gender equality, who will be the responsible body for the majority of all measures, will lay a base for the successful implementation of all activities. Furthermore, annual reports on all activities envisaged with this GEP will ensure a systematic, practical and efficient approach to monitoring gender equality at UASVG by 2027. Such an approach shall enable the achievement of solid grounds for continuous efforts in the eradication of gender-based inequalities. UASVG shall simultaneously contribute to balancing opportunities in academia and research, which is an integral part of achieving a more sustainable and fair future for all.

Dean of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica

Ivan Toth, PhD, col. prof.



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