



Code of Conduct for Gender Equality in Research University of Crete

**Annexed to the Funding and Management Guide of the Special Account for
Research Funds (SARF)**

**Endorsed by the Research Committee (meeting 699/2021) and the University Senate (meeting
472/18.11.2021)**

Gender Equality Committee (GEC)

University of Crete



**ΕΠΙΤΡΟΠΗ
ΙΣΟΤΗΤΑΣ
ΘΥΛΩΝ**

November 2021

Code of Conduct for Gender Equality in Research

University of Crete

Annexed to the Funding and Management Guide of the Special Account for Research Funds (SARF)

INTRODUCTION

The European Commission (EC) and the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAIE) are the two European Union bodies which work on and shape the policy and strategies of the latter on issues pertaining to research and innovation (R&I).

Within the established regulatory framework of the European Union for gender equality, the European Commission's strategy for research and innovation integrates in a clear and binding manner, more so for the 2020-2025 time period, the principle of advancement of gender equality in research.¹ Already set since 2012, the three objectives underpinning the said strategy include: (a) fostering equality in scientific careers; (b) Ensuring gender balance in decision-making processes and bodies; (c) Integrating the gender dimension in research and innovation content.² Owing to the distinct features of the research area and the challenges in the promotion of gender equality in research and innovation, the EU seeks to remove the structural obstacles in achieving this goal through the principles embedded in the establishment of the European Research Area (ERA), the commitment to these principles on the part of the EU member states (through the formulation of National Action Plans/Roadmaps), as well as by means of provision of funding tools such as Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe .

In reference to the European Research Area, gender equality and the integration of the gender dimension in research have been one of the six priority areas for the 2015-2020 period,³ while constituting one of the fourteen actions in the ERA for the period 2020-2025. Specifically, action 12 encourages the development of concrete partnerships among the member states to promote gender equality, diversity and inclusiveness in science, research, and innovation.⁴ According to findings of surveys on the progress of ERA,⁵ the European Union member states and associated countries have made progress in the implementation of pertinent EU and ERAIC policies and initiatives. Nevertheless, there is still a glass ceiling in most ERA member states, despite the initiatives and policy measures that have been undertaken in recent years at EU, national, and institutional levels. The reproduction of

¹ European Commission, Gender equality in research and innovation | European Commission (europa.eu), https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/democracy-and-citizens-rights/gender-equality-research-and-innovation_en.

² EIGE, Gender Equality in academia and research GEAR tool, 2016, <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear>

³ ERA priority areas:1: more effective national research systems, 2a: optimal transnational cooperation and competition, 2b: research infrastructures, 3: open labour market for researchers, 4: gender equality and gender mainstreaming in research, 5: optimal circulation, access to and transfer of scientific knowledge, and 6: international cooperation. European Commission, ERA Monitoring Handbook, Research and Innovation, 2018, https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research_and_innovation/era/era_progress_report_2018-handbook.pdf

⁴ European Commission, European Research Area (ERA), https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/era_en; https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/era_el#commissions-plan-for-a-new-era-based-on-excellence.

⁵ European Commission, ERA Monitoring, *ibid*

societal perceptions, both in academia and research, leading to gender-based bias or discrimination⁶, the association of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) with male skills or aptitudes, the conscious/intentional or unconscious gender-based prejudiced actions, the neglect for or non-availability of sex-disaggregated data, the existence of gender-blind or gender-biased research, the inequalities in career opportunities and others, account for the very slow pace of progress. Most ERA countries including Greece have managed to achieve around half of the objectives indicated in their respective National Action Plan/Roadmap (medium-sized progress).⁷

Within the policy framework of the ERA the member states have drawn up National Action Plans/Roadmaps (NAP/RMs). The Greek republic has developed a thorough National Roadmap for the period 2015-2020,⁸ while public deliberation regarding its reform is on-going in the context of the new ERA. In this roadmap the integration of gender dimension in research is defined as one of its priority areas. The roadmap acknowledges the need for achieving a gender-based balance in the synthesis of evaluation and selection committees as well as of the various advisory bodies regarding research, technology and innovation, while setting a quota of a minimum representation of 1/3 for each gender, according to article 116 of the Greek Constitution provided that the candidates possess the necessary qualifications for the said position. Currently, there are no data as to whether such measures have been implemented and if so, to what extent⁹.

Notably, the ERA and the European Council encourage the member states to provide incentives and urge Higher Education and Research Institutions to revise their research strategies towards fostering a gender-equality perspective (*gender-mainstreaming strategies*).¹⁰ This policy has been reformulated to include reinforced provisions in the context of the new ERA and within the *Horizon Europe* research funding programme, whereby committing to these principles is a pre-condition for funding, while integration of gender equality in research and innovation is among the eligibility criteria.¹¹

⁶ Gender based discriminations are formed over time. According to current theoretical approaches, gender discriminations are associated with other forms of discrimination such as that due to social class, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation or other cultural identities.

⁷ EIGE, Gender Equality in academia and research GEAR tool, *ibid*

⁸ Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, General Secretariat of Research and Technology, Greek Strategic Plan for the European Research Area (ERA), National Roadmap (2015-2020), Athens, April 2016, pp 31-37

⁹ Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, General Secretariat of Research and Technology, Greek Strategic Plan for the European Research Area (ERA), *ibid*. D. Anagnostou, N. Avlona, The European Union and gender equality in research and higher education: A view from Greece, Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP)

¹⁰ The principle of gender integration in research comprises a) the balanced representation of men and women in research, b) the gender integration in research and innovation content, see: European Commission's *Communication for a reinforced European research area* (2012), p.12, <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/reinforced-european-research-area-partnership-excellence-and-growth>

¹¹ European Commission, Horizon Europe Work Programme 2021-2022 13. General Annexes (European Commission Decision C(2021)1940 of 31 March 2021), https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-13-general_annexes_horizon-2021-2022_en.pdf. Also see: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (European Commission), *Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans*, September 27, 2021, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffcb06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-232129669>

1. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

a. The University of Crete advocates the promotion and implementation of substantive gender equality at all levels of academic life and across all its sectors and processes. The Gender Equality Action Plan of the UoC encompasses its equality principles and policies which apply to everybody who works or studies in the Institution.

b. The Code of Conduct for Gender Equality in Research (CCGER)

b1. It reflects and details the principles of Ethics for Transparency and Quality which have been adopted by the University of Crete as stated in its Organisational Plan, specifically in the article 'Ethics Stipulations in Research'.

b2. It is founded on three pillars: gender equality in research; respect for diversity in the research environment; and, gender-based good practices.

b3. The main objectives of the proposed rules/changes in line with the European Commission and ERA are a) the strengthening of representation and retention of women in research seeking to achieve the 1:1 ratio (currently <20% globally) paying special attention to the sectors where women are underrepresented, and b) the integration of gender dimension and gender-based prospects in research and innovation, when research relates to or has an impact on humans.

b4. It is annexed to the Funding and Management Guide (FMG) of the Special Account for Research Funds (SARF) of UoC.

2. HUMAN RESOURCES IN RESEARCH

a. The research area should aim at a balanced representation of men and women at all levels and processes. If candidates are equally qualified, the code of conduct recommends favouring the candidate of the underrepresented gender.

b. Researchers should be treated equally regardless of their sex or gender identity, at all levels and across all research activities and processes. These include, for example, the gender equitable job calls and selection procedures for the formation of the research team, the gender balanced assignment of research tasks, the gender proof representation of the research team in conferences or scientific fora, in the communication of research findings, and others, without compromising the standards of excellence in research.

c. Evaluation and recruitment procedures for early career researchers should be conducted in accordance with the principle and practices of gender equality (without prejudice to paragraph 2a) and should be anti-discriminatory on the grounds of sex, gender identity and sexual orientation.

d. Research project evaluation boards and researcher recruitment boards should be gender balanced numerically or else the underrepresented gender should comprise at least 40% of the evaluation and recruitment committee members.

e. Promotion of scientific excellence should fully consider gender equality and inclusivity principles.

f. The fostering of gender equality in research may be pursued through the adoption of good practices with regards to the integration of gender identity in research and/or the interpretation of scientific findings.

3. RESPECT AND DIGNITY IN THE RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

a. No one should suffer negative impacts on the grounds of their sex, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation.

b. One's dignity and integrity should be respected in the research environment. Sexist behaviour, pestering and sexual harassment constitute insults to the human condition and dignity. Research team leaders and laboratory directors should consider them as such.

c. The research leaders and directors should ensure that any discriminatory behaviour or incidents occurring within the research team or laboratory are reported to the appropriate institutional bodies, according to the existing procedures in the University of Crete.¹²

d. If a researcher experiences or notices incidents of discriminatory behaviour or harassment within their research team or laboratory they may report to the principal investigator (PI) or the laboratory director. In the case that the incident involves the PI or director, they should report to the University's appropriate bodies.¹³

e. Principal investigators and directors of research structures should ensure that the work environment and the working conditions are conducive to the principle of reconciliation of professional and family life for all.

4. GENDER-BASED GOOD PRACTICES

a. Use of gender visible and/or gender-neutral language so that sexist and gender discriminatory language is avoided in the communication of research findings (written reports, oral presentations, publications). The same principle should apply with regard to oral communication in the context of the research environment.

b. Development and implementation of practices in order to strengthen research on gender, gender equality and to address discrimination.

c. Integration of gender dimension in research and innovation seeking to upgrade scientific quality and societal relevancy of the ensuing knowledge, technology and/or innovation.

d. Monitoring and assessment of the progress in the implementation of the strategies of gender equality in research based on quantitative and qualitative indicators at institutional level and in comparison with national and EU levels. Regular collection and analysis of data, on-going review of the strategies, tools and outcomes aiming at policy amendments and possible adoption of new measures in achieving gender equality in research, in keeping with the Action Plan of Gender Equality of the UoC in force at the time (analysis plans, interventions planning, implementation, on-going assessment and feedback).

¹² Regarding the bodies for reporting discrimination or harassment incidents as well as the procedures, see . <https://eif.uoc.gr/index.php/el/> (addressing discrimination > reports > bodies-procedures > report management).

¹³ *ibid*

e. Promotion of a gender-coequal academic and research model in academic fora, mass communication media, and on other occasions.

5. COMMITMENT TO ADHERING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF GENDER EQUALITY IN RESEARCH

Principal investigators and research team coordinators should be well versed in the Code of Conduct for Gender Equality in Research and, on acceptance of the research projects which they will supervise, they should commit to observing its principles and practices.