

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN



November 2021

MOSSAKOWSKI MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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Introduction

Mossakowski Medical Research Institute is the only institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences conducting research in the fields of both medical biology and clinical medicine. It has also received the status of Leading National Research Centre (KNOW) for the period 2012-2017.

Established in 1967, MMRI consists of 20 departments including seven clinical research units directly collaborating with hospitals and seven core facilities laboratories.

Main subjects of interest are: basic and clinical neurophysiology; neurochemistry; neuropathology; clinical pathophysiology; neurosurgery; applied physiology; renal physiology; transplantation; immunology; experimental pharmacology; and biotechnology and bioinformatics.

Principal areas of study: Rare diseases; Regenerative medicine, including stem cells; Civilizational diseases, especially: metabolic, neoplastic, neurological and vascular, as well as ageing and age-related diseases; Brain diseases and disorders, including brain ischemia, degenerative disorders of the central nervous system (Alzheimer's disease in particular), hepatic encephalopathy, neuromuscular diseases, and trauma of the central nervous system; New diagnostic methods for tumors, the synthesis of new biologically active compounds, and umbilical cord stem cells that can be converted into brain cells; and Biotechnology and bioinformatics.

MMRI has a range of well-equipped laboratories for cell cultures and organotypic slice cultures, an operating theatre with six operating rooms and a number of laboratories for molecular biology. An integral part of the MMRI is the (NIH-certified) Animal House, where many species of small rodent are bred under specific pathogen free conditions. MMRI has extensive experience in the realization of national and international research and R&D projects. Currently MMRI is involved in the following international programmes: e.g. ERA-NET NEURON 2011 programme "European Research Projects on Cerebrovascular Diseases" – "MRI Navigated Enhancement of Mesenchymal Stem Cell (MSC) Homing Toward Stroke Lesion – Evaluating an Impact on Animal Recovery with Behavioral Testing and Imaging"; EEA and Norway Grants "Contribution of glutamine transport to brain edema and dysfunction of the glutamatergic synapse associated with hepatic encephalopathy (Hepentrans)"; Joint Programming Neurodegenerative Disease (JPND) "Biomarkers for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases". MMRI scientist and PhD students conduct many project funding from the National Science Centre grants. MMRI is a member of the Centre for Preclinical Research and Technology Consortium (CePT). It is also running a Translational Platform for Regenerative Medicine dedicated to basic 3 research, developmental projects (within the preclinical ones) and clinical trials concerning the application of adipose derived regenerative cells in regenerative medicine. MMRI co-ordinates co-operative connections that increase the chances of commercialization research such as Mazovian Peptide Cluster, Alice Med (Advanced Laboratories in Centre of Excellence) and Pain Relief Scientific Cluster. MMRI has its own spin-off company focused on technology transfer to business. MMRI publishes about 140 annual indexes by JRC articles. In 2014, MMRI had a Hirsch Index of 62, with 3,016 citations.

We hereby present "The Gender Equality Plan for the Mossakowski Medical Research Institute Polish Academy of Sciences", which was conceived of and created on the basis of input from the entire Institute community, to account for everyone who is working, studying, and preparing doctoral dissertations.

1. Methodology

In 2016, the Mossakowski Medical Research Institute, Polish Academy of Sciences developed and published a document entitled ‘Human resources strategy for researchers - internal gap analysis and action plan’. In order to define appropriate Action Plan on the basis of current level of implementation of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (C&C principles) in the MMRI there were few tools applied, as mentioned below:

- Working group,
- Internal analysis,
- Survey,
- Summary – establishment of action plan.

1.1. Working group

The Working Group (WG) was established of representatives of MMRI staff (scientific and administrative position):

1. Coordinator: Prof. Barbara Zablocka – Deputy Director for Scientific Affairs
2. Professors:
 - Prof. Andrzej Ziemia, PhD - Deputy Director for Scientific Affairs
 - Prof. Joanna Sypecka, PhD – Head of Doctoral Study
3. Administration:
 - Katarzyna Wyszowska – Financial Director
 - Katarzyna Szeliga Radwańska – Research Organisation Unit Director
 - Renata Zwolska - HR Unit Director
 - Agnieszka Czupryniak – Project and development Manager

Working Group was the key source of data that allowed to conduct internal analyses and finally to define Action Plan. There were three meetings of working group organised during which participants were analysing the C&C principles and existing in-house procedures. Results from the WG meetings shown that there is a space for a few HR processes improvement.

1.2. Internal analysis of MMRI documentation and practices

Under internal gap analysis a comparison of principles indicated in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and the existing rules and practices of the MMRI was made. The analysis was conducted on the basis of the following documents:

- a. national law, including:
 - Act on the Polish Academy of Sciences,
 - Law on Higher Education,
 - Law on Academic Degrees and Title and Degrees and Title in the Arts,
 - Act on the Principles of Financing Science,
 - Act on the National Science Centre,
 - Labour Code,
 - Public procurement Law,

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- implementing regulations for the above acts.
 - b. Polish Academy of Sciences Regulations, including:
 - Charter of the Polish Academy of Sciences,
 - PAN ethical code.
 - c. MMRI regulations, including:
 - Charter of the Mossakowski Medical Research Centre of the Polish Academy of Sciences,
 - Organizational Regulations,
 - Scientific Board Regulations,
 - Committee for Science Regulations,
 - Committee for Scientific Staff Regulations,
 - Committee for PhD courses and students Regulations,
 - PhD course and PhD representation Regulations,
 - Regulations on requirements for applicants applying for a scientific position,
 - Terms of periodic evaluation of scientific employees,
 - Remuneration policy Regulations with attachments,
 - MMRI Director grants and payment of additional annual remuneration Regulations,
 - Social policy Regulations,
 - Regulation on terms of intellectual property rights and the principles of commercialization of the results of research and development activities of MMRI,
 - Terms and conditions of functioning of Units and Laboratories of the MMRI.

1.3. Survey

The survey was carried out between 23 April and 6 May 2016. After the information meeting, survey was sent do all employees and PhD students of MMRI. The survey was prepared in Polish. The reference to the Polish and English version of the Charter & Code was indicated. The survey covered almost all principles of C&C and consisted of 35 questions covering and 4 general questions to define profile of respondents. There was also one question in which all respondents were asked to express their opinion and propose any action to implement or improve at the MMRI C&C principles realisation. The 35 questions set forth in the survey were divided into four dimensions in line with the C&C principles:

- I. Ethical and professional aspects
- II. Recruitment
- III. Working conditions and social security
- IV. Training.

For each of the 35 items, the participants were asked to evaluate the level of implementation at MMRI of each item for an individual:

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION: What is your knowledge and opinion related to the level of implementation of the principle in MMRI at the date of survey:

- 1 – I totally disagree
- 2 – I disagree
- 3 – neither agree, nor disagree

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- 4 – I rather agree
 - 5 – I totally agree

40 responses have been obtained. The total group of respondents was representative enough in all sub-group of staff employed and PhD students to define general conclusion and further recommendation to the Action Plan.

1.4. Summary – the action plan

Next, the survey results were summarised by Working Group. Survey results and internal gap analysis based on MMRI documents and practices results served for action plan formulation. A proposal of Action plan was prepared by WG and submitted to MMRI Board of Directors for acceptance.

2. Results of internal analysis

2.2. General Principles and Requirements applicable to Employers and Funders

2.2.1. Non discrimination

C&C principles: Employers and/or funders of researchers will not discriminate against researchers in any way on the basis of gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic condition.

Existing MMRI rules and/or practices: In accordance with labour Law, the Act on Polish Academy of Sciences and MMRI Regulations, MMRI does not discriminate researchers in any way on the basis of gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic condition. There is no evidence of any discrimination against researchers on any other basis.

Actions required: none

2.2.2. Gender balance

C&C principles: Employers and/or funders should aim for a representative gender balance at all levels of staff, including at supervisory and managerial level. This should be achieved on the basis of an equal opportunity policy at recruitment and at the subsequent career stages without, however, taking precedence over quality and competence criteria. To ensure equal treatment, selection and evaluation committees should have an adequate gender balance.

Existing MMRI rules and/or practices: MMRI respect equal opportunity policy. However recruitment and employment decisions are based on competition and merit criteria. The choice of reviewers and panelists responsible for assessing applications is based on their expertise, experience and non-partiality. MMRI supports the proposed aim for a representative gender balance, but without that taking precedence over criteria of quality, competence or conflict of interest.

Actions required: none

2.2.3. Selection (Code)

C&C principles: Selection committees should bring together diverse expertise and competences and should have an adequate gender balance and, where appropriate and feasible, include members from different sectors (public and private) and disciplines, including from other countries and with relevant experience to assess the candidate. Whenever possible, a wide range of selection practices should be used, such as external expert assessment and face-to-face interviews. Members of selection panels should be adequately trained should be realistic.

Existing MMRI rules and/or practices: In MMRI applicants for the vacancy are selected on the basis of submitted documentation and a successful interview. Members of the selection committees represent various expertise and qualifications. Usually the qualification interview is conducted on-site at MMRI. However, there is possibility to conduct a qualification interviews via Internet. Compositions of selection committees is indicated in internal MMRI regulations i.a Ordonnance on methods and procedures for scientific posts recruitment, Scientific staff Committee Regulation, Procedures for PhD study Recruitment.

Actions required: none

3. Survey findings

3.1. Characteristics of survey respondents

The survey was conducted among researchers at the turn of April and May 2016. As a result MMRI has obtained 40 responses. Below we specify characteristics of respondents who decided to take part in the survey.

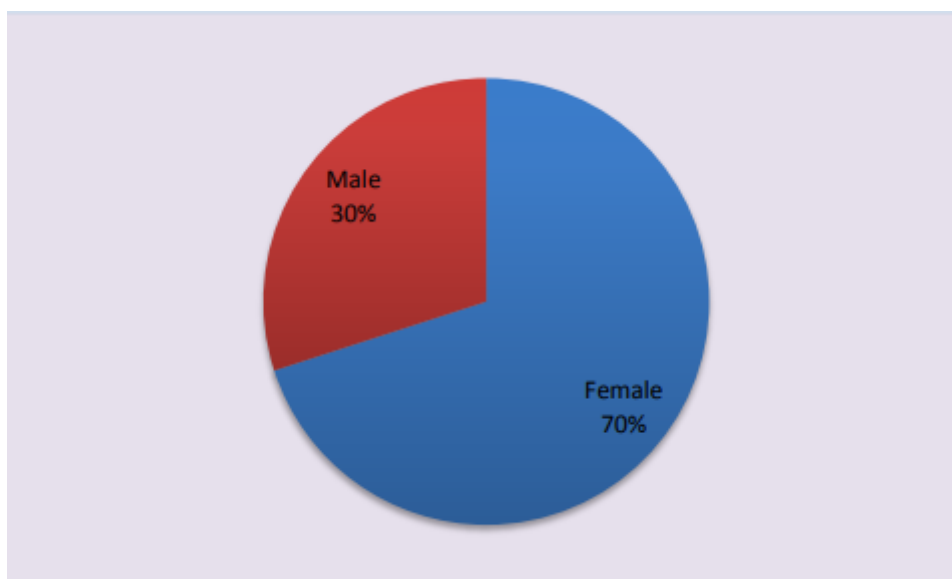


Fig. 1 Gender of respondents

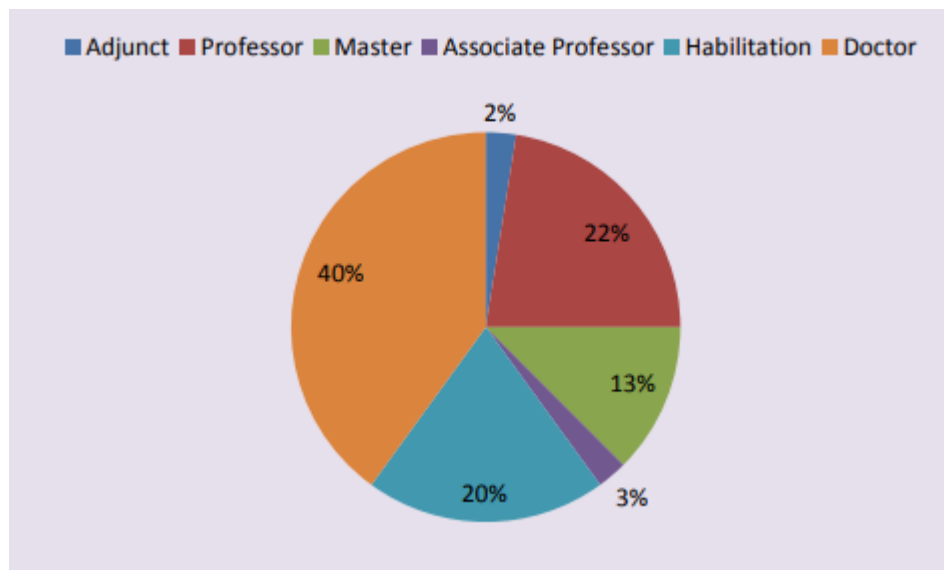
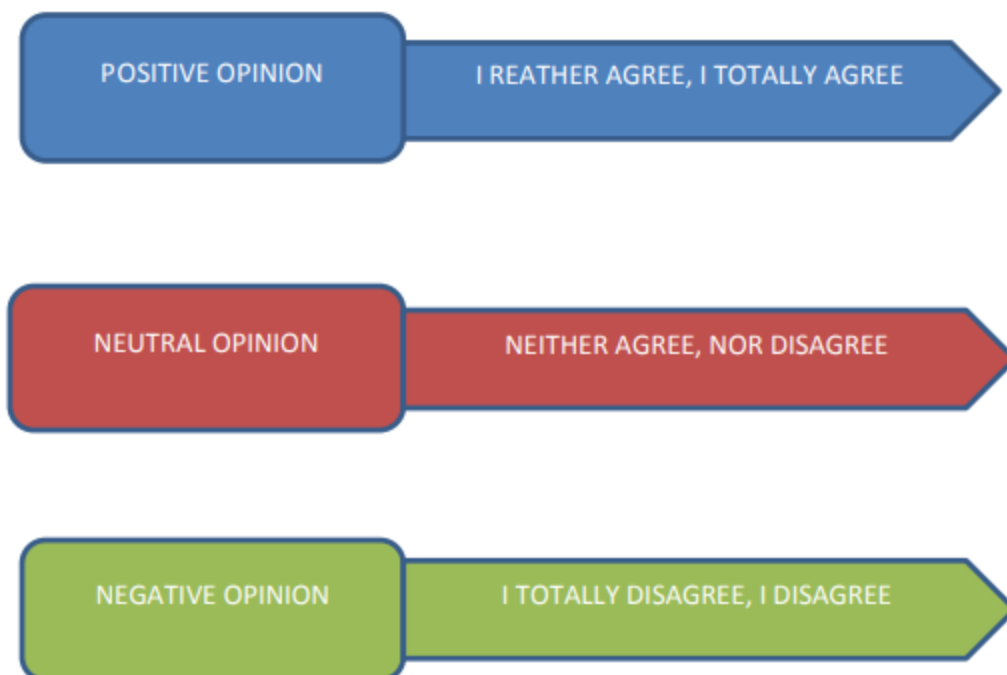


Fig. 2 Respondents division among their professional profile (in % left hand side)

The group of respondents is consistent with overall characteristics of scientific workers in MMRI. Thus, it may be assumed as representative.

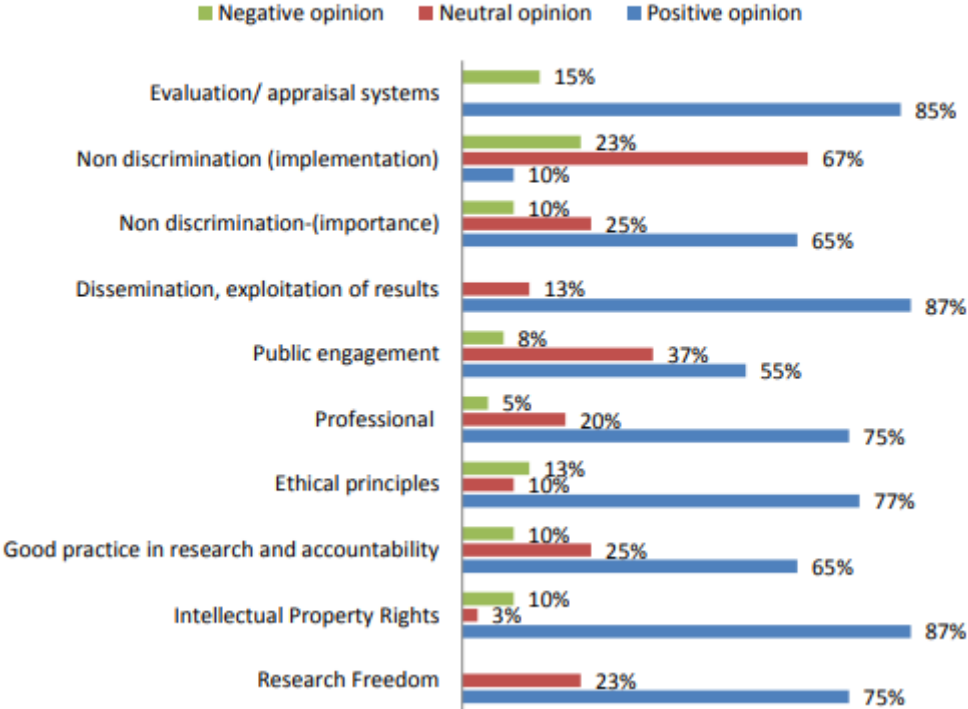
3.2. Survey results HR Excellence

Research logo is the improvement of working conditions for researchers, those already working at the Institute and future colleagues. The respondents have evaluated the level of implementation of the rules included in the Charter and Code. For all of the 40 principles, survey participants were asked to evaluate the level of implementation at the Institute by scoring the level of agreement or disagreement:

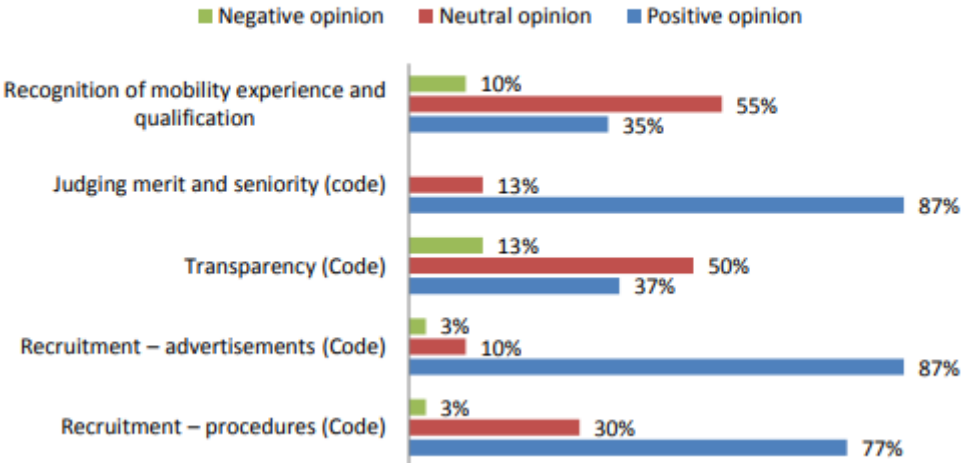


The following graphs present detailed answers grouped as positive and negative dedicated to each principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

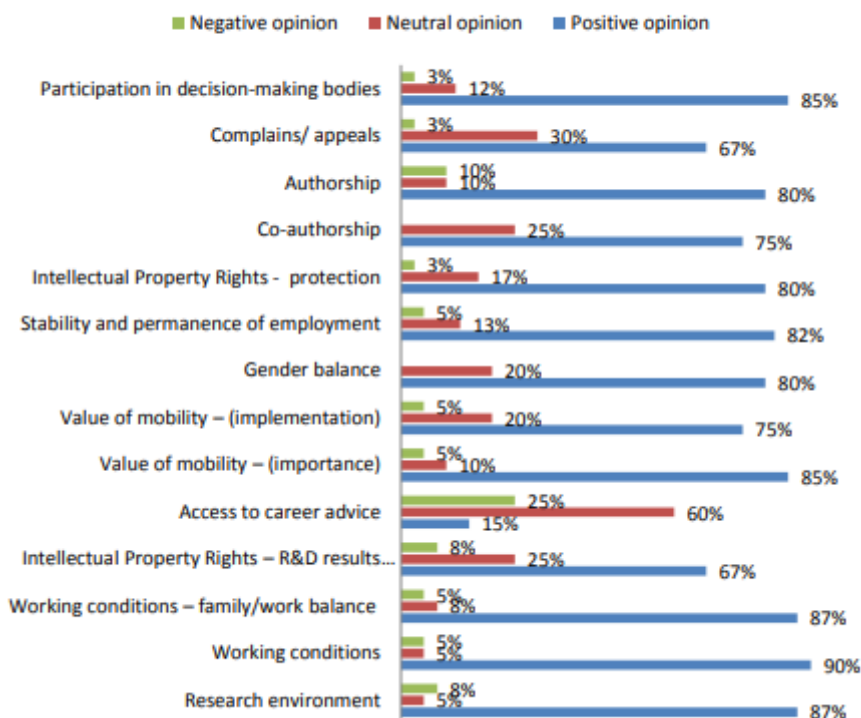
I.Ethical nad Professional Aspects



II.Recruitment



III. Working Conditions and Social Security



4. Accepted practices under HR Excellence

It is worth mentioning that the European Commission awarded the Mossakowski Medical Research Institute the right to use the prestigious HR Excellence in Research label. The award reflects the commitment of our Institute to the continuous improvement of human resources policy in line with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct, ensuring a transparent and fair recruitment process for researchers, job stability and career development opportunities. The European Charter for Researchers describes the rights and obligations of researchers, their employing institutions and research funding organizations (funders).

Working conditions

The MMRI ensures that the working conditions of researchers, including researchers with disabilities, are flexible as necessary to achieve effective research results in accordance with applicable national legislation and national or sectoral collective agreements. Their aim should be to ensure working conditions that allow both women and men to reconcile family and work life, having children and developing a professional career. Particular attention should be paid, inter alia, to for flexible working hours, part-time work, teleworking, sabbatical leave and the necessary financial and administrative regulations governing such agreements.

Gender balance

The MMRI aims to ensure a representative gender balance at all levels of staff, including supervisors and managers. This goal should be achieved on the basis of an equal opportunities policy at

the recruitment stage and subsequent stages of the professional career, but without lowering the quality and qualification criteria. In order to ensure equal treatment, there should be an appropriate gender balance in the selection and evaluation committees.

Personnel selection

Selection committees should have a wide variety of experiences and qualifications, and have an appropriate gender balance and, where necessary and possible, be made up of members from a variety of industries (public and private sectors) and disciplines, including from other countries and with relevant experience to evaluate candidates. Whenever possible, a wide variety of selection practices should be used, such as external expert assessment and face-to-face interviews. Members of the panel that selects candidates should be properly trained.

5. Focus areas

5.1. Work-life balance and organisational culture

Measures to help reconcile work, private and family life. Foresee and disseminate different ways of support to achieve a proper worklife **balance of Técnico staff** that ensures equal opportunities:

- implementing measures that specifically encourage the balanced participation of men and women in family life;
- offering flexible working options (hours, locations, etc.) and professional development opportunities considering specific responsibilities, of workers at family level;
- disclosing the legal rights that assist protection in parenting, paternity, maternity and family assistance, as well as existing resources that facilitate the articulation of professional, family and personal life, including services and protocols with support services for dependent children of male and female workers.

5.2. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

Promoting gender balance in the decision-making field and professional development in faculty and technical-administrative careers:

- ensuring transparent and objective promotion and career development processes for men and women;
- implementing procedures that guarantee equal opportunities for promotion and career development;
- adopting measures, mentoring, counseling and/or coaching practices to achieve a balanced participation of women and men in the top decision-making and management/leadership positions.

5.3. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

Promoting balanced representation of men and women in working teams within faculty staff, administrative and technical staff, and students:

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- ensuring that criteria and procedures for recruiting and selecting human resources bear in mind the principle of equality and non-discrimination based on sex;
 - encouraging the application and selection of men or women in areas where they are underrepresented;
 - maintaining information disaggregated by sex.

5.4. Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content

The aim of this point is to help researchers and teaching staff understand the relevance of gender to scientific inquiry by introducing questions to their is to:

- raise awareness about the value of integrating the gender dimension in research;
- examine how the gender perspective could lead open new opportunities research inquiry;
- promote more socially responsible and sensitive scientific inquiry.

5.5. Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment

Fighting sexual harassment is ranked among the priorities of the Gender Equality Plan adopted by the MMRI. A comprehensive protocol was designed to monitor, report and take action about potential cases. This protocol targets all categories of users, including doctoral students, teaching staff, researchers and other staff. It aims at building an atmosphere based on mutual respect, to prevent any illegal behavior and to offer victims or witnesses of gender-based violence or harassment a safe environment to report, ensuring the privacy of what they communicate. A monitoring unit consisting of 3 staff from the HR department was established, who are in direct contact with the different categories of users of the Institute. The members of this unit will receive accurate training. It also includes the dissemination of guidelines on sexual harassment, as well as a dedicated mail address, permanently displayed on the internal information system of MMRI.