



21 measures for a more inclusive university: Diversity and Gender Equality

Proposal

Introduction

In line with the priorities of the new European Research Area (2021), the purpose of these measures is to promote gender equality at the University of Mons (UMONS) and raise awareness of the diverse profiles that contribute to the University's successful development. Accordingly, they also aim to prevent the various forms of inequality by identifying the underlying causes of discrimination and bias and by implementing various initiatives to reinforce the measures adopted in recent years, such as the 100% Respect campaign, which aims to tackle all forms of harassment.

In addition to the various points listed below, UMONS is committed to pursuing the fight against all forms of sexism, racism, harassment, violence, and discrimination related to gender and sexual orientation, among its staff and students, with a particular focus on those who are more at risk of, and subjected to, these types of discrimination. The goal is to maintain safe and inclusive working and learning spaces that are conducive to education, well-being and empowerment.

The challenge resides in the fact that discrimination is based on implicit and often unconscious biases that are invisible or difficult to observe.

The measures aim to contribute to:

- Develop awareness-raising activities on discrimination issues (especially gender)
- Remove existing obstacles for recruitment and career development
- Reduce gender inequality in all fields of study and boost the attractiveness of scientific careers, particularly in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) disciplines where women are under-represented

- Reduce gender imbalances in decision-making
- Adopt a gender-sensitive approach within research and teaching contexts, where appropriate.

The University undertakes to implement as many of the measures listed below as possible within a reasonable timeframe. Furthermore, consideration will be given to the practical aspects of the objectives, the deadlines that apply to some of these measures, and to any follow-up measures which may be required.

Areas of intervention

Tackling implicit bias and discrimination is a complex and particularly difficult issue, as these biases are often rooted in children's upbringing and education, and in the way that institutions and organisations structure our society. Consequently, what an individual organisation can do in this area is inevitably limited. However, if progress is to be made, all organisations - including UMONS - have a duty to consider how they can contribute to reducing these biases. This can only be done through a change in mentality and by implementing profound changes in procedures and habits. To be effective, such initiatives must be designed and implemented on a long-term basis.

As a result, and accordance with the objectives set out in the introduction, UMONS aims to make changes in five areas.

Develop awareness-raising activities on discrimination issues (especially gender)

1. Continue to organise an annual scientific day on a theme related to the issues of discrimination and implicit bias (entrusted to the *GenreS* think tank and MUMONS).
2. Continue to organise an awareness-raising activity on *International Women's Day* (entrusted to the *GenreS* think tank and MUMONS) and other days, or during events to raise awareness on the importance of respecting all forms of diversity, and particularly in support of the LGBTQIA+ community.
3. Continue to participate in the organisation of the inter-university Master's degree in Gender Studies and have an active role in the bodies set up in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation to tackle gender issues.
4. Continue to produce an annual "*Gender Equality Status Report*" and make the findings more visible.
5. Maintain a taskforce which addresses gender issues, and which aims to provide our University with concrete project proposals, which are likely to strengthen our

University's actions in this area and contribute to a better visibility of the initiatives taken in this field. These actions may of course be carried out in partnership with other academics or non-academics, as long as they contribute to the success of the projects concerned. A single internet page grouping together all the actions carried out by UMONS in the field of gender will be set up. The Department for Research Support and Technology Transfer (DAVRE) will run this page and make sure that it permanently corresponds to European requirements.

6. Coordinate between all UMONS organisations active on gender issues, namely: the "Gender Contact Persons Network", the Women and Science Committee, the Gender and Development Advisory Committee (ARES), and the COGES (Gender Commission in Higher Education - ARES). This mission is entrusted to the Vice-Rector, whose role covers addressing gender issues.
7. Promote, more specifically in French, the use of epicene forms (e.g. "*scientifiques*"), collective terms (e.g. "*le corps enseignant*"), and the feminisation of names of professions, functions, grades and titles in official UMONS documents, and raise awareness of implicit bias in communication materials.

Remove existing obstacles for recruitment and career development

8. During the recruitment process (whether for scientific, academic, administrative, technical or manual job offers), explicitly state that "*UMONS strives to be a diverse and inclusive community*".
9. Determine how to better recognise the investments of all UMONS staff (scientific, academic, administrative, technical or manual staff members), while taking into account the diversity of career paths and the way in which each staff member has been able and been willing to commit to the three missions on which academic and scientific careers are built: teaching, research and service to the community.
10. Offer training to boost confidence in leadership roles and responsibilities, with a particular focus on how to be inclusive when managing teams and appraising staff. These training courses should be included in the range of courses already offered by the Human Resources Department and should be accessible to all staff (scientific, academic, administrative, technical and manual staff members). This initiative must be combined with routinely raising awareness when recruiting and promoting staff to leadership positions.
11. Introduce a mentoring system to assist newly recruited staff and anyone who requests it. This could be managed by the Faculties and the PhD College for scientific and academic staff, and by HR for administrative, technical and manual staff members.

12. Consider ways to limit the risks of “structural imbalances” in academic promotions (where significant differences are observed). The Academic Affairs Committee and the Research Council are responsible for drawing up a joint proposal.
13. Raise awareness of discrimination issues in recruitment processes and systematically inform recruitment, performance and promotion committees of the implicit biases that may be present in these processes. This objective is entrusted to the Human Resources Department and is relayed by the Deans and Secretariats of the Faculties and Schools (for selection processes originating within the Faculties and Schools).
14. Come up with specific initiatives designed to support parents in the event of the birth and/or adoption of their children, while taking into account specific situations (divorce, serious health problems, and so on). The Academic Affairs Committee and the Budget, Personnel, Infrastructure and IT Committee are responsible for drawing up a joint proposal.
15. Come up with proposals for a better work-life balance, for example, adopt a policy to ban, to the extent possible, the organisation of meetings starting after 5 p.m.

Reduce gender inequality in all fields of study and boost the attractiveness of scientific careers, particularly in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) disciplines where women are under-represented

16. Organise specific activities for primary and secondary school students (and their teachers and parents, if feasible) to show that STEM careers are as suitable for girls as they are for boys, and that some of the fields that currently geared more towards girls are also perfectly suitable for boys. These activities could be carried out as part of our “Université des enfants”, “Conférences pour l’enseignement secondaire” and, in partnership with MUMONS, “Printemps des Sciences” programmes.
17. Highlight a wide range of role models, especially female role models, to the University’s student and scientific communities. This activity could be carried out in partnership with the Professional Integration and Alumni Department, MUMONS, the PhD College, the DCOM, and the FPMs and FWEG alumni associations.
18. Propose activities to promote female entrepreneurship. These activities could be implemented by anyone at the University who is active in the field of entrepreneurship, in partnership with the Professional Integration and Alumni Department, the “Click” team, and the FPMs and FWEG alumni associations.

Reduce gender imbalances in decision-making

19. Come up with a plan to improve female representation in all the University's governing bodies (Strategic Orientation Committee, Board of Directors, Rector's Team, Rector's College, Faculty and School Boards, CRECH, CAA, CPBI, CASE).
20. Make it a rule that, whenever possible, recruitment and promotion committees and selection committees must be gender balanced, and that they must not be held if they are composed of members of only one sex. For the Faculties where the presence of women is currently limited, an explicit and written justification of the reasons that make it impossible to respect the above-mentioned rule must be attached to any decision made in this regard. In addition, for the Faculties and Schools where respecting this rule means an additional workload for the women, this additional investment, for serving the UMONS community, should be taken into account when assessing the careers of the colleagues concerned.

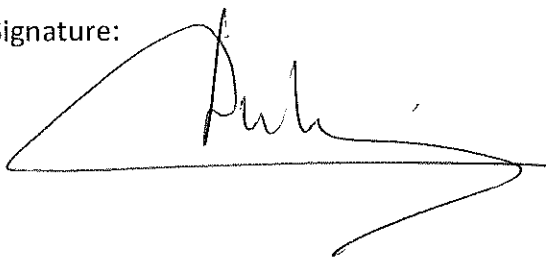
Adopt a gender-sensitive approach within research and teaching contexts, where appropriate

21. Set up a simple and flexible process of reflection to question the extent to which the University's courses and research are likely to contribute to gender biases and how, if at all, researchers and teachers intend to address them. In the case of research, this initiative is to be carried out by the research institutes and our Research Council, which would determine its content and how, in practical terms, it is to be implemented. As for teaching, a similar reflection is to be carried out by the councils of the Faculties and Schools and by our Academic Affairs Committee.

Date: 24 March 2022

Function: Rector, UMONS

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Paul', written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and extends to the right of the line.