Sarajevo School of Science and Technology

Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

2025-2027

INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY

The Sarajevo School of Science and Technology is committed to becoming a center of excellence for equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) practices within the higher education community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the wider region. The continuous pursuit of gender equality in particular is paramount to the University's institutional identity and, as such, informs its twin academic and research missions. The University supports greater inclusion for people in all roles, of all identities and in particular those that are especially at risk from exclusion. This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is planned to run from 2025 to 2027.

Guiding principles for the University Gender Equality Plan:

- All individuals must always receive fair and equitable treatment, free of discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, or any other grounds.
- The University's pursuit of excellence in research and teaching must be informed by meaningful efforts to promote and foster equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).
- There must be equal distribution of decision-making power and influence between the genders.
- The University's leadership will recognize, support and reward work that contributes towards addressing inequality on campus.

Key objectives the University's Gender Equality Plan:

1. Create a safe and supportive working and learning environment, free from bullying, harassment, and violence of any form.
2. Continuously review and improve the University's internal policy framework aimed at guarding against discriminatory behavior in recruitment, retention and career progression.
3. Raise awareness, and enhance knowledge, skills and abilities, of faculty, staff and students in detecting and addressing barriers to gender and other forms of equality.
4. Mainstream EDI considerations in both research and teaching, ensuring that gender and other form of equality are integrated in course curricula and research proposals.
5. Promote work-life balance as a key consideration in how university operations are organized across both academic and non-academic departments, taking special care to accommodate parental leave and childcare obligations.

Components of the University's Gender Equality Framework:

Gender Advisory Board (GAB)

This committee will be made up a representative of the university's leadership structure, academic and non-academic staff as well as a representative of the student community. Within its purview, the Board will:

a) Regularly review and monitor progress in implementation of measures committed to in the institution's Gender Equality Plan;
b) Devise and propose new policies and measures designed to promote gender equality;
c) Advise university leadership on concrete steps to foster gender equality and encourage equal opportunity;
d) As requested, provide inputs on research and academic products of the University;
e) Provide advisory support to relevant university bodies in disciplinary cases involving allegations of discrimination based on gender.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Unit (EDIU - formerly the Office of Gender Equality)

The Unit will serve as the primary organizational focal point for all activities aimed at promoting gender equality, diversity and inclusion.

Specific duties will include but will not be limited to the following:

a) Initiate and organize events and campaigns to build awareness of gender issues;
b) Provide training to staff and students on gender equality and related fields;
c) In conjunction with Office of Human Resources, offer support to individuals alleging discrimination based on gender or sexual identity;
d) Help develop new university policies and practices, and ensure institutional compliance with local legislation and relevant international standards;
e) Collect quantitative and qualitative data and prepare reports on gender topics of relevance to university life.

Human Resources Office (HRO)

Together with the EDI Unit, the Office of Human Resources will work to:

a) Develop new policies, and ensure institutional compliance with relevant local legislation;
b) Ensure that all new hires are made aware of, and sign, the SSST Equality Pledge;
c) Organize and administer disciplinary proceedings for alleged violations of relevant EDI policy framework;
d) Assist with training of staff on compliance;
e) Ensure that staff career progression and development are government by equality and work-life balance considerations.

Office of Research and Project Administration (ORPA)

Within its remit, ORPA will:

a) Work to mainstream gender throughout the university's research portfolio;
b) Provide support to early-stage female researchers in building up the necessary skills to access external research funding;
c) Collect and maintain gender data generated through research.

Academic Departments will help ensure staff compliance with requisite regulations, and offer learning opportunities to students in the form of lectures and workshops.

Rectorate will provide institutional leadership and oversight in implementing gender equality policies and support the mainstreaming of gender equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) principles across all university functions.

Executive Director (ED), together with Rectorate, will be involved in making important decisions at the University level, such as:

•   Oversees the development and implementation of policies that foster gender equality.
•   Ensures that decisions about organizational practices align with gender equality objectives.
•   Monitors the implementation of work-life balance policies and flexible work arrangements.

Dean of Students and *Office of Registrar and Student Affairs* will provide help provide induction training for students to ensure their full understanding of the University's commitment to gender equality as well as the relevant policies that are in place to enforce EDI compliance.

Additionally, *Dean of Students* will:

a) Facilitate the integration of gender equality policies across departments.
b) Lead initiatives to promote inclusivity, diversity, and equal treatment among the student body.
c) Organize campaigns and events to raise awareness about gender equality issues.
d) Support international students through cultural exchange programs and the formation of student associations.

Finance Office

a) Implements gender-sensitive budgeting and conducts gender impact assessments.
b) Monitors and ensures transparent salary structures to address any gender pay gap.
c) Works with the EDI Unit to ensure that gender considerations are integrated into financial decisions.

PR Office

a) Manages the university's public image and promotes its commitment to gender equality.
b) Organizes external outreach, including campaigns to raise awareness of gender equality.
c) Enhances the visibility of female role models and the university's contributions to gender equity in society.

Information Technology and Development (IT and DEV) team

a) Supports the development of digital resources that promote gender equality, such as accessible websites and online learning platforms.
b) Assists in making educational materials accessible to students with disabilities.
c) Ensures that technological resources align with the university's inclusion goals.

Figure 1. Wheel model for Gender equality plan (GEP)

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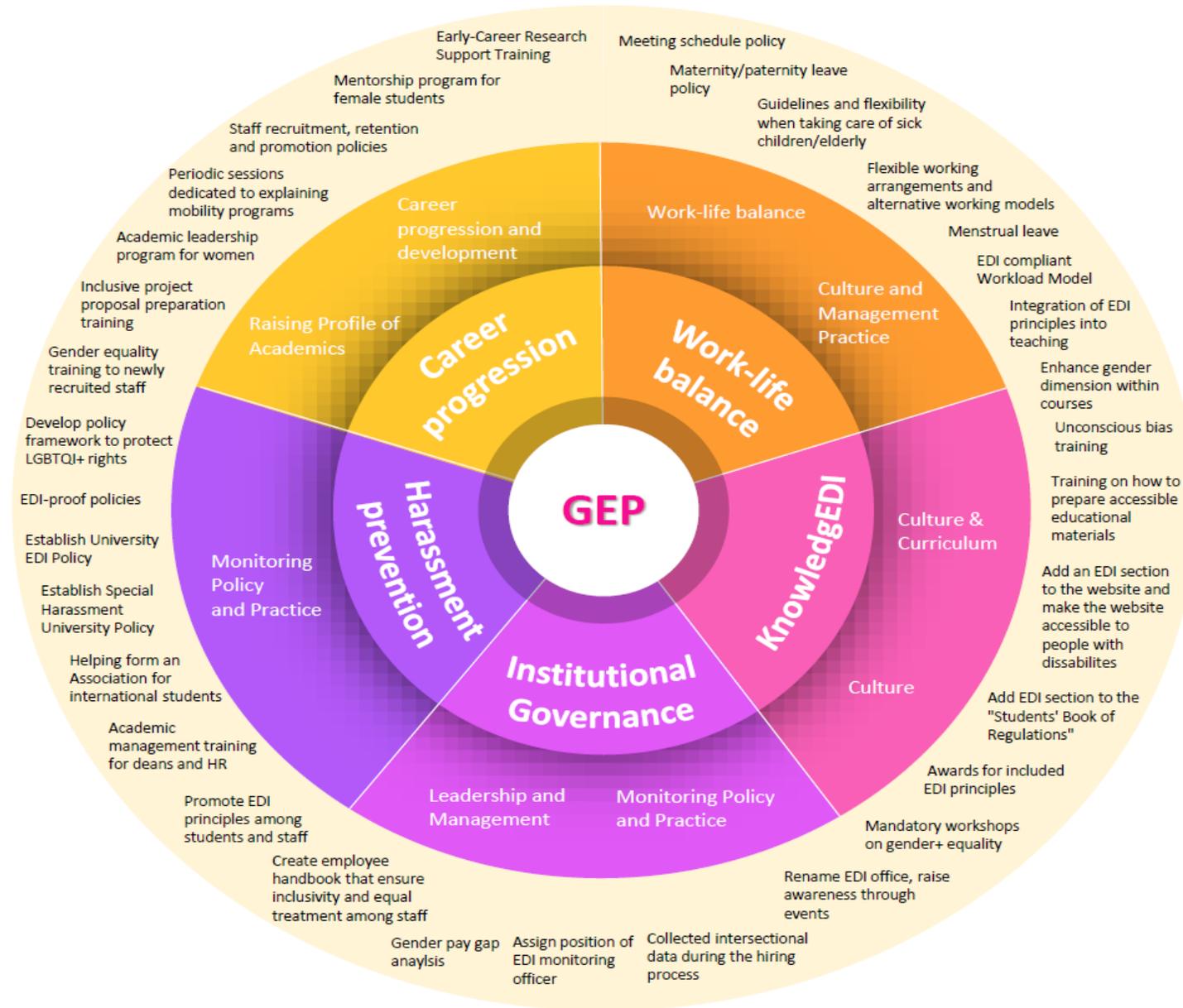
Career Progression, Development and Recruitment Process

THEME	Issues to be addressed/evidence	Planned Action	Timescale	Person/Unit/Department responsible	Measures of success	Budget Item
Career progression and development	Lack of awareness of externally funded research opportunities/low research proposal writing skills by early-stage female researchers/(1)	Early-Career Research Support Training	October and March 2025/26/27	EDIU, ORPA, academic departments	10 female early career researchers trained per year. 20% increase in research proposals by women researchers for two consecutive years.	Internal teaching resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.
	Lack of mentorship opportunities for undergraduate students/(2)	Launch mentorship program for female students, in cooperation with interested industry and community partners.	January-December 2025 (development) January-December 2026 (launching)	EDIU, ORPA, academic departments, Office of Registrar and Student Affairs	Mentorship program designed, with mentors on board, program launched.	Annual costs of 1000 EUR for outreach activities and promotion.
	Perceived lack of transparency surrounding career advancement/(3)	Review staff recruitment, retention and promotion policies with an eye to EDI, disseminate.	January - December 2025 (development) January-December 2027 (dissemination)	EDIU, HRO	Relevant standard operating policies adopted and disseminated to all staff. Staff awared about policy.	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.

	Lack of readily available information about internationalization and mobility programs among staff/(1, 3)	Host periodic sessions dedicated to explaining mobility programs and their advantages, targeting staff across departments.	December 2025/26/27	ORPA, academic departments	Increased staff participation in mobility programs, inreased awareness and understanding of internationalization opportunities, and tangible collaboration outcomes.	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.
Raising Profile of Academics	Lack of proposal preparation skills among female academic staff/(1)	Inclusive project proposal preparation training.	November 2025/26/27	EDIU, ORPA, academic departments.	5 female researchers trained. 20% increase in applications and maintance of the success rate in the next 2 years.	Internal teaching resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.
	Female mentors attract fewer MS and PhD students/(2)	Academic leadership program for women.	April 2025/26/27	EDIU, ORPA, academic departments.	10 academics trained per year.	Internal teaching resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.

Evidence:

(1) - Qualitative study: Working conditions; Training
(2) - International statistics
(3) - Qualitative Study - Working conditions; Recruitment and promotion
(4) - Qualitative Study - Behavior; Bullying, Harassment, Micro-agressions

Work-life Balance

THEME	Issues to be addressed/evidence	Planned Action	Timescale	Person/Unit/ Department responsible	Measures of success	Budget Item
Culture and Management Practice	Late afternoon meetings scheduled/(2)	Develop policy to schedule meetings between 10.00AM-3.00PM unless prior notice of at least one week is given. Furthermore, ensure that attendance at meetings scheduled after 3:00 PM is made flexible by allowing participants to join online.	January-June 2025 (development) June 2025-December 2027 (implementation and monitoring)	EDIU, HRO, ED	Policy drafted, adopted and followed.	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.
Work-life balance	Undeveloped maternity/paternity leave policy/(1)	Develop maternity/paternity leave policy where all genders are represented.		EDIU, HRO, ED	Policy drafted, adopted and followed.	Additional staff replacement costs/losses will need to be calculated after the policy has been in effect for a minimum of 12 months.
	Support for employees with small children/elderly/(1, 3)	Clear guidelines and flexibility when taking care of sick children/elderly.		EDIU, HRO, ED	Policy drafted and adopted.	Additional staff replacement costs/losses will need to be calculated after the policy has been in effect for a minimum of 12 months.

	Lack of flexible working arrangements to establish potential for alternative working models/(2)	Review of working arrangements to establish potential for alternative working models (i.e. work from home)		EDIU, HRO, ED	Proposal for alternative working arrangements made by HRO.	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.
	Lack of menstrual leave/(2)	Enhance opportunities for employees to work from home or take leave due to menstruation by establishing a clear process that allows them to request this accommodation with a doctor's approval. Additionaly, provide free sanitary products (pads/tampons) in the toilets.		EDIU, HRO, ED	All deans and heads of units informed of policy on menstrual leave.	Additional staff replacement costs/losses will need to be calculated after the policy has been in effect for a minimum of 12 months. EUR 500 per year for sanitary products (pads/tampons) in the toilets.
	Lack of transparency regarding Workload Allocation/(2)	Develop & Pilot a Workload Model across all faculties which is EDI compliant.	January-December 2026 (development)

January-December 2027 (implementation) | HRO, ED, Academic departments | Model drafted and adopted. Model followed. | Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution. |
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Evidence:

(1) -Qualitative Study -Working conditions; Parental leave
(2) - Qualitative Study - Working conditions; Work-life balance
(3) - Qualitative Study - Working conditions; Caring responsibilities

THEME	Issues to be addressed/evidence	Planned Action	Timescale	Person/Unit/ Department responsible	Measures of success	Budget Item
Culture & Curriculum	Insufficient mainstreaming of EDI in teaching/(1)	Integration of EDI principles into teaching across at least one course per academic program.	September 2025/26/27	EDIU, Deans, ED	All academic departments introduce two weeks of EDI knowledge in at least one required academic course.	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.
	Lack of gender dimension in academic courses/(1)	Enhance gender dimension within courses that are not directly or necessarily related to gender issues.		EDIU, Deans, Rectorate	Implement one pilot course per department where the gender dimension is explicitly addressed.	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.
	Insufficient engagement with outside community on EDI issues/(1)	Integrate community engagement in three pilot courses a year.		Deans, EDIU, ORPA, PR office	Revise syllabi to integrate mandatory community engagement in assignments for students.	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.
	Lower Visibility of Female Role Models/(2)	Unconscious bias training for the academic and administrative community, review university posts.	January -June 2026	EDIU, academic departments, ORPA, PR office	More female invited speakers, more female quotes at university, visibility monitored.	Up to EUR 500 annually for logistical costs
	Lack of special provisions in curriculum for students with disabilities/(1)	Training on how to prepare accessible educational materials appropriate for disabled students.	May-July 2025/26/27	Deans, academic departments, EDIU	Adding specific sections/provisions to course syllabus	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.

Culture	The university's commitment to EDI principles is not widely acknowledged or understood, both internally and externally.	Add an EDI section to the website and make the website accessible to people with dissabilites.	January-December 2026	EDIU, IT and DEV team	Increased enrollment or applications from underrepresented groups. Growth in partnerships with EDI-related organizations.	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.
	Recognition of the involvement of EDI principles in undergraduate, master theses, PhD theses and research.	Add a section to the "Students' Book of Regulations" highlighting the importance of EDI principles and award criteria.	January-September 2025 (development) September 2025-December 2027 (monitoring)	EDIU, Deans, Rectorate, Office of Registrar and Student Affairs	Increased awareness and understanding of EDI principles among students and academic staff.	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.
	Recognition of the involvement of EDI principles in undergraduate, master and PhD theses/(4)	Awards for included EDI principles in final thesis.	October 2025-December 2027	EDIU, ED, academic departments, Rectorate	Percentage of theses at each academic level (undergraduate, master, and PhD) that explicitly include EDI principles in the research or methodology sections.	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.
	Recognition of the involvement of EDI principles in research/(4)	Awards for included EDI principles in research.		EDIU, ED, academic departments, Rectorate	Percentage of research projects at SSST that include EDI principles in their objectives, methodologies, or outcomes.	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.
	Recognizing the inclusion of EDI principles in society/(5)	External awards for included EDI principles in research and society.		EDIU, ED, academic departments, Rectorate	Partnerships with community organizations or NGOs that focus on advancing EDI within society. Media coverage or public recognition of SSST's commitment to EDI in its societal role.	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.

	Mainstreaming gender+ equality in SSST administrative offices/(2, 4)	Mandatory workshops on gender+ equality, focusing on understanding and addressing biases (gender, race, disability, LGBTQI+, etc.) in the workplace.	January 2026-December 2027	EDIU, ED, academic departments	Implementation of gender+ equality policies in hiring, promotion, and staff training within administrative offices.	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.

Evidence:

(1) - Curriculum review
(2) - Working conditions - Training
(3) - Working conditions - Job and career
(4) - Organizational culture and climate - Gender Equality
(5) - International statistics

Institutional Governance

THEME	Issues to be addressed/evidence	Planned Action	Timescale	Person/Unit/ Department responsible	Measures of success	Budget Item
Monitoring Policy and Practice	Low visibility of EDI Unit/(1)	Rename office, raise awareness through events.	January 2025-December 2025	EDIU, HRO	EDI Office established and functioning. 5 trainings performed per annum, 5 thematic issues collected and addressed per annum.	1000 EUR for organizational costs per year.
	EDI-proofing hiring process/(1)	Collected intersectional data during the hiring process.	January 2025-December 2027	HRO, EDIU, ED	Hiring process intersectional data available. Clear decision are made without unconscious bias	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.
	Lack of a monitoring system to ensure the progress of equality policies and practices/(1)	Assign position of EDI monitoring officer to collect data and prepare reports.	January-March 2025	ED, HRO	Position is created and someone is hired to fill the position.	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.
	Gender pay gap - unequal pay for equal work or unequal representation of women and gender-diverse individuals in higher-paying roles/(1)	Analyze pay structures to identify gender disparities, establish transparent salary frameworks, and regularly monitor and report on progress in reducing the pay gap.	January-December 2025 (analysis) January-December 2026 (development)	Finance office, EDIU, HRO, ED	Data available, greater institutional transparency, reduced gender pay gap percentage, and positive employee feedback on fairness and transparency.	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.

	Gender budgeting - Lack of integration of gender perspectives in budgeting processes within the organization/(1)	Conduct gender impact assessments, develop guidelines for gender-sensitive budgeting, and pilot gender budgeting practices for organization-wide adoption.	January-December 2027 (monitoring)	Finance office, EDIU, HRO, ED	Implementation of gender-sensitive budget guidelines, measurable reductions in gender disparities in resource allocation, and positive feedback from stakeholders on inclusivity and impact.	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.
Leadership and Management	Lack of staff knowledge and awareness of gender equality principles and policies/(1)	Create employee handbook that ensure inclusivity and equal treatment among staff. Additionally, implement transparent and accessible procedures for addressing and resolving complaints effectively.	January-December 2025 (creation) January 2026-December 2027 (dissemination)	EDIU, HRO	All incoming staff aware of gender equality principles and policies, verified through questionnaire.	EUR 500 for external consulting fees.
	No formal training for deans in how to integrate EDI principles in teaching, research and management/(2)	Academic management training for deans and HR.	Ferburary 2025 /26/27	EDIU	All deans and HR completed trainings and able to recognize and integrate EDI principles.	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.
	Cultural differences with international and local students/(1)	Helping form an Association for international students.	January 2025-March 2025	EDIU, Dean of students, Office of Registrar and Student Affairs	International Student Club formed. Organized events helping International students share their culture with each others.	EUR 1500 to help fund international student events

	Discrimination between students based on ethnicity, LGBTQI+ identity, or disability/(1)	Organizing campaigns, providing resources, and encouraging campus-wide participation to promote EDI principles among students and staff.	January 2025-December 2027	EDIU, Dean of students, Office of Registrar and Student Affairs	Increased awareness of equality, diversity, and inclusion, the implementation of supportive policies, and the creation of a more inclusive campus culture where all individuals are respected and treated equally.	EUR 1500 to help fund campaigns and merch.

Evidence:
(1) - Qualitative study - Organizational culture and climate – Gender Equality
(2) - Qualitative study - Working conditions; Training

THEME	Issues to be addressed/evidence	Planned Action	Timescale	Person responsible	Measures of success	Budget Item
Monitoring Policy and Practice	Women observed and experienced sexist remark/(1)	EDI-proof policies	January-June 2025 (development) June 2025-December 2027 (implementation and monitoring)	HRO, Rectorate, ED, EDIU	Policy drafted, adopted and followed.	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.
	EDI Policy does not exist at the university/(2)	Establish University EDI Policy	January-June 2025 (development) June 2025-December 2027 (implementation and monitoring)	HRO, Rectorate, ED, EDIU	EDI Policy drafted, adopted and followed.	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.
	Lack of Harassment Prevention Policy including policy for racial harassment, LGBTQI+ and people with disabilities/(2)	Establish Special Harassment University Policy	January-June 2025 (development) June 2025-December 2027 (implementation and monitoring)	HRO, Rectorate, ED, EDIU	Harassment Policy drafted, adopted and followed.	Internal resources to be employed at no additional cost to institution.

Evidence:

(1) - International statistics
(2) - Qualitative study - Organizational culture and climate – Gender Equality

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