

Gender Equality Plan of the Institute of Human Genetics, Polish Academy of Sciences in Poznań

1. Introduction

The Gender Equality Plan of the Institute of Human Genetics, Polish Academy of Sciences (IHG PAS) in Poznań for the years 2022-2024 is a strategic document created to ensure a safe and friendly workplace, free from discrimination, enabling free scientific, professional and personal development for everyone.

The Institute of Human Genetics, Polish Academy of Sciences is guided by the principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunities for women and men. The Institute respects the applicable human rights regulations that protect against discrimination and violence, and strives to implement the highest standards to ensure equal treatment.

For several years, the Institute has been actively implementing the policy of equality, which was recognized by the European Commission, which in January 2019 awarded the Institute the "HR Excellence in Research" logo. Institutions awarded by the European Commission provide researchers with the best working and development conditions, support scientific initiatives, pursue a policy of equal opportunities, promote mobility and provide training to improve employees' competences. The award not only promotes the current human resources policy of the unit, but above all constitutes a commitment to continuous improvement of the policy in the field of human resources management in accordance with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

The adoption of this Plan complements and extends the scope of activities in the area of promoting equality and counteracting discrimination, including discrimination on grounds of sex, related to the implementation of the obligations undertaken by the IHG PAS to constantly improve its recruitment and personnel policies under the award "HR Excellence in Research".

Activities to promote the idea of gender equality are one of the priorities of the European Union, which was emphasized both in the assumptions of the Framework Programme Horizon Europe, as well as before, in the practices used by the European Research Area (ERA) in cooperation with Member States and research organizations.

The European Commission's commitment to promoting gender equality in research and innovation is an important part of the broader European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, announced in March 2020. One of the objectives of this strategy is to strengthen the European Research Area to ensure equal opportunities in the work environment where everyone, regardless of gender, can develop their talents and better integrate the gender dimension in research projects to improve the quality of research as well as its relevance to a knowledge, technology and innovation society.

This Plan also responds to the requirement of the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation of the European Commission that every university, research unit and public administration entity must have a gender equality plan in order to be eligible for funding under the EU Framework Programme for 2021-2027 "Horizon Europe" (HE). Pursuant to Article 7 (6) of the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the EU Council of 28 April 2021, the HE program "ensures effective promotion of equal opportunities for all and taking into account the gender aspect, including the inclusion of the gender aspect in the content of research and innovation".

The plan was signed by prof. Michał Witt, Director of the Institute of Human Genetics, Polish Academy of Sciences in Poznań and implemented by the order of the Director No. 21/2022.

The plan was developed on the basis of a diagnosis made by the human resources department, as well as in relation to the Action Plan for 2021-2023 for the "HR Excellence in Research" award and the requirements and recommendations of the European Commission. The Working Group for the Charter and Code and employees of the Institute appointed by the Director will be responsible for the implementation of activities under the Gender Equality Plan at the IHG PAS.

2. Institute of Human Genetics, Polish Academy of Sciences (IHG PAS)

The Institute of Human Genetics, Polish Academy of Sciences is a research institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences. It was established in 1974 as the Department of Human Genetics, PAS and then by the decision of the President of the Polish Academy of Sciences No. 06/2003 of March 20, 2003, it was transformed into the Institute of Human Genetics, Polish Academy of Sciences. As a unit, the institute employs 40 researchers, 34 engineering and technical workers and 22 administration employees. The education of doctoral students takes place within the framework of the International Doctoral Studies, which is currently being phased out, and the Poznań Doctoral School of Institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences, which is run jointly by the Institutes: Bioorganic Chemistry, Dendrology, Molecular Physics, Human Genetics and Plant Genetics. Researchers employed at the IHG PAS are not obliged to conduct classes and have no teaching duties.

3. Gender Equality Plan for IHG PAS includes:

- a) **DIAGNOSIS** – it is an analysis and the most important conclusions based on analytical data obtained from the human resources department,
- b) **GOALS** along with an indication of activities and indicators as well as their discussion, contained in four thematic areas, key to achieving gender equality in research and innovation, as required by the European Commission.
- c) **ACTIONS** along with the identification of responsible persons, timeline and indicators.

3a. Diagnosis

The starting point for this analysis was the characterization of the general gender structure of people employed at the IHG PAS with the division into: scientific, engineering and technical and administrative employees. The number of titles and academic degrees was determined among women and men employed in 2021. Another element of the diagnosis was to determine the structure of the division of positions in order to identify and counteract possible manifestations of inequality. Next, the performance of managerial functions and participation in committees were analyzed.

The diagnosis made for the Gender Equality Plan for the Institute of Human Genetics, Polish Academy of Sciences was prepared on the basis of information on the participation of women and men in human resources. Data on researchers were analyzed by gender and in relation to the four levels of career development proposed in the European Commission Communication "TOWARDS A EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH CAREERS" of 21 July 2011¹:

R1 - before obtaining a doctoral degree or equivalent;

R2 - after obtaining a doctoral degree or its equivalent, scientists are not yet independent;

R3 - independent scientists with recognized achievements (with habilitation);

R4 - leading scientists (with the title of professor).

In the table below data on the number of researchers are presented, broken down into groups R1-R4 and gender (employment as of December 31, 2021).

Table 1. Employment structure among researchers at IHG PAS

Group	Number of women	Number of men	Sum
R4	2	5	7
R3	7	2	9
R2	15	3	18
R1	4	2	6
Total	28	12	40

¹ https://cdn5.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy_library/towards_a_european_framework_for_research_careers_final.pdf

IHG PAS is a relatively small institute with a total of 40 researchers. Among them, women dominate, accounting for 70% of scientists. With the exception of the group of leading scientists (R4), more women than men are employed at the Institute. The most numerous group among the researchers of the IHG PAS are assistant professors (R2) - 18 persons, which constitutes 45% of the research staff of the institute. The distinctive feature of this group was the vast majority of women - 83%. The second largest group in terms of the number of researchers is the group R3 (Ph.D. with habilitation, professor of the Institute), the number of which is 9 people, and the share of women definitely exceeds the share of men (78% vs.22%). The third most numerous group are leading scientists (R4) - this is the only group where men are overrepresented (71%). The least numerous is the group of assistants. Nevertheless, also in this group, twice as many women are employed as men.

As of December 31, 2021, the IHG PAS employed a total of 96 employees. The Institute is a special place due to the fact that women constitute the vast majority not only of the academic staff, but also of all employees of the Institute. Employment in particular groups of employees, broken down by gender, is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Total number of employees employed at the Institute

Employees	Number of women	Number of men	Sum
Researchers	28	12	40
Engineering-technical	30	4	34
Administration	16	6	22
Total	74	22	96

Among all employees of the institute, 77% of employees are women and 23% are men. In particular groups of employees, the share of women ranges from 70% (academic staff) through 73% (administration) to 88% (engineering and technical workers). The largest disproportion in employment of women and men occurs in the group of engineering and technical workers, dominated by workers employed as a biologist (20 women and 3 men). The employment structure in engineering and technical and administrative positions reflects greater female interest in support positions.

Women predominate not only among the employees of the institute. This trend also continues among people who want to do an internship at the Institute, complete a master's thesis or conduct research as part of a doctoral dissertation. In 2021, the vast majority of interns, graduate students, doctoral students and candidates to the Doctoral School were women (72%), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Division by gender among PhD students, master students and interns

	Number of women	Number of men	Sum
PhD students	18	1	19
Candidates to the Doctoral School*	14	13	27
Master students*	22	8	30
Interns*	3	0	3
Total	57	22	79

*2021 data

With the exception of candidates for the Doctoral School in 2021, where the proportions between women and men were very even, women predominate among PhD students, master students and interns. This is a trend that is reflected in the employment structure of the Institute's research staff and is specifically related to the discipline under which research and promotion are conducted.

The institute has 5 research departments and 3 independent research groups managed by the heads appointed by the Director. Despite the significant advantage of women in the employment structure, the share of women and men employed in scientific positions who perform managerial functions at the IHG PAS is relatively equal (5 men vs. 3 women). In the case of research departments, managerial functions are most often performed by men with the title of professor (3 people). Only one woman is the Head of the Department. In the case of independent research groups, managerial functions are performed by 2 women and 1 man. All researchers in management positions are advanced in their career development and belong to the R4 or R3 group. The table below presents the division of the heads by gender and the stage of their scientific career development.

Table 4. Structure of managerial functions among researchers

Unit/Head	Women	Men
Department of Molecular and Clinical Genetics		R4
Department of Nucleic Acid Function		R4
Department of Molecular Pathology	R3	

Department of Reproductive Biology and Stem Cells		R4
Department of Cancer Genetics		R3
Independent Research Group of RNA biology	R4	
Independent Research Group of Non-coding Parts of the Genome	R3	
Independent Research Group of Advanced Tissue Models		R2

When analyzing the above data, it can be noticed that men (4 out of 5) who are leading scientists (3 out of 4) are dominant among Heads of Departments. Only one woman is in charge of a research department. However, two independent research groups are led by women at different stages of their career development. Considering jointly the heads of departments and independent research groups, we notice almost equal gender distribution (e women and 5 men).

The management of the Institute of Human Genetics, PAS comprises: the Director of the Institute (M, R4) together with two Deputies: research (M, R4) and administration (F). The Board of Directors is supported by a Chief Accountant (K). This gender distribution applies to both the 2016-2019 and 2020-2023 terms. The table below presents the management of the IHG PAS broken down by gender.

Table 5. Management of the Institute

	Women	Men
Director		✓
Deputy Director of Research		✓
Deputy Director of Administration	✓	
Chief Accountant	✓	

Participation in recruitment committees and other committees established at the Institute in 2021 was also analyzed. The predominance of women in recruitment committees reflects the gender imbalance among researchers. On the other hand, the percentage of women twice as high as men in the remaining committees is influenced by the predominance of women among all employees of the Institute.

Table 6. Participation of women and men in committees in 2021

Committees	Number of women	Number of men	Sum
Recruitment	25	9	34
Other	31	16	47
Total	56	25	81

The Institute is authorized to confer doctoral and postdoctoral degrees in the discipline of medical science. The table below presents the data on the defended doctorates obtained in 2019-2021.

Table 7. Number of PhDs defended, broken down by gender

Year	Number of defended PhD theses		Sum
	Women	Men	
2019	4	0	4
2020	2	1	3
2021	1	1	2
Total	7	2	9

All employees of the institute have the opportunity to improve their competences by participating in training. In 2021, a total of 42 employees participated in the training courses, and nearly 86% of them were administration employees.

Table 8. The structure of the participation of particular groups of employees in training courses in 2021

Employees	Women	Men	Sum
Researchers	3	3	6
Administration	34	2	36
Total	37	5	42

Based on the diagnosis, it can be concluded that:

- at the Institute, there are problems of gender inequality typical of scientific units conducting research in the field of medical sciences;
- there are some significant gender imbalances among researchers - with the exception of the group of professors, women dominate at every stage of their career;
- in the early stages of a research career, the number of women exceeds the number of men, which indicates that women finish doctoral studies more often and do better in the qualification procedures for the doctoral school.
- women dominate in the group of young researchers (19 women in the R1 and R2 stages);
- the share of women and men in the management staff and decision-making processes of the Institute is even;
- women dominate the employment structure not only in the group of scientists, but also in engineering and technical workers as well as administrative staff;
- work-life balance should be strengthened.

3b. Goals

The structure of the Gender Equality Plan for IHG PAS, presented below, was created on the basis of five key areas indicated by the European Commission and contains the goals identified on the basis of the diagnosis and planned actions by means of which these goals will be achieved.

GOAL 1. Raising awareness of the principles of equality and non-discrimination

GOAL 2. Gender equality in the recruitment and career development process

GOAL 3. Strengthening work-life balance

GOAL 4. Promoting the balanced participation of women and men in decision-making processes

GOAL 5. Preventing harassment and discrimination

3c. Actions

Actions	Responsible	Timeline	Indicators
Appointment of the Gender Equality Officer (GEO) The main tasks of GEO will include: - promoting gender equality through information campaigns, - monitoring the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan - collecting data on gender equality in the IHG PAS	Board of Directors	06/2022	Establishing a position - contact details available on the Institute's website and in the intranet
Adding the Gender Equality Plan on the Institute's website - in the Logo HR tab.	GEO	09/2022	Published Gender Equality Plan

Creation of a GEP tab in the intranet. The content will include: - Gender Equality Plan for IHG PAS, -Useful information raising awareness of gender equality issues.	GEO	09/2022	Published content
Information and promotion activities regarding events related to the promotion of gender equality and diversity, interesting webinars, important publications - encouraging the participation and involvement of employees	GEO	2022-2024	Increased employees' awareness - survey in 2024
Trainings and seminars on gender equality, gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and anti-discrimination - conducted by specialists in a given field, obligatory for all employees	Board of Directors; GEO	2022-2024	At least 1 training/ seminar per year
Monitoring and control of the percentage representation of women and men in teams and decision-making committees	GEO	2022-2024	Annual report on the percentage of men and women submitted to the Board of Directors
Monitoring and control of the percentage representation of women and men in the recruitment process and competitions for scientific positions	GEO	2022-2024	Annual report on the percentage of men and women submitted to the Board of Directors
Monitoring the participation of women and men in submitting and obtaining grants	Coordinator for Research	2022-2024	Annual report on the percentage of men and women submitted to the Board of Directors
Developing the rules for maintaining gender balance in competition committees	GEO; HR Working Group	06/2023	Recommendations for the Board of Directors
Updating the anti-mobbing policy with aspects related to gender equality	Board of Directors	12/2023	Updated document
Diagnosing the needs of people returning to scientific work after parental leave in terms of support from the institute.	GEO; HR Working Group	06/2024	Formulating a recommendation regarding the scope of activities

			and solutions that the Institute can offer in this area
Identifying the needs of parents and foster-parents in terms of support from the institute in the area of work-life balance	GEO; HR Working Group	12/2024	Formulating a recommendation regarding the scope of activities and solutions that the Institute can offer in this area

4. Implementation of GEP and monitoring of actions

Since January 2019, the IHG PAS has the right to hold the "HR Excellence in Research" award granted by the European Commission. The HR Working Group is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the action plan. This group will also be involved in the implementation of the proposed Gender Equality Plan. One of the key aspects will be the appointment of the Gender Equality Officer (GEO). This person will supervise, with the support of the members of the HR Working Group, the proper course of the actions taken. GEO will also be responsible for linking actions for the equal treatment of women and men with actions related to the implementation of the Charter and Code principles at the Institute of Human Genetics, Polish Academy of Sciences. Full support from the Institute's management will facilitate the introduction of GEP and the implementation of particular actions.

The Gender Equality Plan has been developed for a period of 3 years. In our opinion, it is the minimum period necessary to introduce major changes to the institute. The plan will be evaluated in 2024. At this stage, it will be possible to introduce the necessary changes and modifications.

5. Resources

The implementation of the Gender Equality Plan requires the allocation of adequate resources, both human and financial. The Institute will allocate funds for the implementation of the plan, in particular for anti-discrimination training for the management and other employees, the position of the Gender Equality Officer. Moreover, in line with the generally accepted policy at the Institute, additional sources of financing will be sought, e.g. in the form of grants, which will enable the Institute to extend the scope of activities for gender equality. As our Institute is a small research unit, there is no need to create a separate section dealing with gender equality. The Gender Equality Officer will be responsible for the implementation of GEP.

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