



BURGAS FREE UNIVERSITY

the new idea in education

**GENDER EQUALITY PLAN FOR BURGAS FREE UNIVERSITY(BFU)
FOR THE PERIOD 2022-2026**

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I. Introduction

With this document, Burgas Free University expresses its policy for gender equality.

It was developed in compliance with:

- the requirements of the EU Action Plan on gender equality and the empowerment of women in external action for the period 2021-2025 (GAP III);
- the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations (<https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>), aimed at people, the planet and the achievement of prosperity;
- the European Commission (EC) Gender Equality Strategy for the period 2020-2025 (https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_bg);
- the National strategy for promoting the equality of women and men for the period 2021-2030 (<https://www.mlsp.government.bg/blgarsko-zakonodatelstvo>).

Equality between women and men in research and innovation has been a key priority in the policies related to building the European Research Area (ERA) since its launch in 2000, which aims to remove barriers to the recruitment, retention and career development of female researchers and to eliminate gender imbalances in decision-making. This priority is also maintained in the EC's plans for the new EPP based on excellence.

The participation of women in the field of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) will be further promoted and entrepreneurship will be stimulated.

The plan for gender equality for BFU was developed to establish the parameters for promoting educational, research, labour and social relationships within the university community in conditions of equality.

The motives for developing a Gender Equality Plan for BFU stem from both the above-mentioned ERA policy priority and a number of specific EU priorities for the development of universities in Europe. The EC leading recommendations for strengthening gender equality policies in universities are set out in the report "Towards a vision for the future of universities in Europe by 2030" (<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a3cde934-12a0-11eb-9a54-01aa75ed71a1/>).

The Gender Equality Plan is in line with the institutional policy and social responsibility of BFU to provide equal training opportunities and working conditions, avoiding any form of discrimination expressed in the University Code of Ethics. The plan sets out the following main goals for equality:

- removing barriers to women's career development;
- addressing the gender imbalance in decision-making processes;
- expanding the coverage of aspects related to equality in scientific research.

II. Guiding principles

The guiding principles in the plan for gender equality for BFU are aligned with the principles laid down in the National Strategy for the Promotion of Equality between Women and Men for the period 2021-2030. In the context of the institutional policy of BFU, the following are defined as leading principles:

Coordination and cooperation

Taking into account the comprehensive nature of the topic of gender equality, the preparation, implementation and reporting of the Gender Equality Plan for BFU is the result of the coordinated joint efforts and cooperation among all interested parties - the academic management, the main structural units (Centres), administrative departments.

Transparency

In the preparation of the Gender Equality Plan for BFU, the accompanying documents and reports, the principle of transparency will be observed, giving the opportunity to all interested parties to actively take part in the planning and monitoring of the policy on the equality of women and men.

Continuity and sustainability over time

With the adoption and implementation of the Gender Equality Plan for BFU, the aim is to ensure a long-lasting positive effect of the implemented policy on the equality of women and men in all priority areas of activity.

Performance monitoring and control

The Gender Equality Plan for BFU will be implemented through activities in priority areas for the time period 2022-2026.

Progress will be presented in reports that will contain information on the implementation of the planned activities.

All participants in the processes related to the policy on the equality of women and men can further develop the basic principles according to the level at which they conduct their activities.

III. Objectives and areas of intervention

3.1. The **general objectives** that predetermine the implementation of the Plan are related to the general European, national and institutional policies and grounds specified in the grounds for development.

Specific objectives are designed in the following areas:

Integrating equality in gender characteristics and in the content of the institutional policy regarding the issue of the representation of women and men in it. Both dimensions should be taken into account in all phases of the decision-making process.

Raising awareness of issues of equality between women and men, and building relevant capacity and a collective culture, with zero tolerance for gender-based repression or violence.

Reflecting equality aspects in the university's educational or research activities and in the management of work-life balance and a supportive work or study environment

3.2. The areas of intervention arise from the specifics of the organisation and functioning of the systems at BFU and the perspective of equality between women and men in the organisational, educational and research activities of the university.

Area of intervention 1. Design and promotion of institutional changes in the direction of equality between women and men

Area of intervention 2. Building university commitment and sustainable support for equality

Area of intervention 3. Capacity building in the field of equality

Area of intervention 4. Increasing the sensitivity of the university culture to the topic

Area of intervention 5. Ensuring work-life balance and study and work conditions

Area of intervention 6. Reflecting aspects related to equality in scientific research and training

IV. Activities by areas of intervention

Area of intervention 1. Design and promotion of institutional changes in the direction of equality between women and men

Activity	Participants	Deadline for implementation	Performance indicators
Bringing up issues of equality between women and men in undivided part of university policies, related to compliance with the scientific and professional ethics.	Commission on Gender Equality at BFU Academic Management	2022	Engaged Ethics and Academic Committee unity Equality as part of the university ethics policy Evidence of integration
Promotion of good practices of European universities	International Relations Office	Constant	A set of good practices

and research organisations, related to gender equality.			Organised promotion initiatives Number of participants
Analyzing the criteria for appointment and career development of the academic staff and others official university documents from the point of view of equality.	Quality Management Department	2023-2024	An analysis of institutional documents Number of documents analyzed

Area of intervention 2. Building university commitment and sustainable support for equality

Activity	Participants	Deadline for implementation	Performance indicators
Providing appropriate support of equality from the management of BFU, the structural units in BFU and all groups of interested parties (vertical and horizontal support)	Commission on Gender Equality	2022-2024	Organised actions to ensure support Levels of management covered Supporting evidence
Motivating the HEI community for support of the institutional change in direction of equality (massive support)	Commission on Gender Equality	Constant	Organised motivation initiatives Different channels used Number of participants/
Regular follow-up and promotion of European policies and initiatives for equality	International Relations Office	2023-2025	EU policies examined and initiatives for equality Organised promotion initiatives

			Number of participants
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Area of intervention 3. Capacity building in the field of equality

Activity	Participants	Deadline for implementation	Performance indicators
Building sensitivity, understanding and knowledge of equality through different types of initiatives	Commission on Gender Equality	2023-2025	Organised initiatives to build the capacity Different stakeholder groups and stakeholders covered Evidence of sensitivity/understanding/capacity/knowledge in the field of equality Number of participants
Raising awareness of the use of language, sensitive to the ideas of equality in professional communication	Quality Management Department	2023	Organised initiatives to increase awareness of the use of language consistent with the ideas of equality. Stakeholder groups covered persons Number of participants

Area of intervention 4. Increasing the sensitivity of the university culture to the topic

Activity	Participants	Deadline for implementation	Performance indicators
Raising awareness among the BFU community of the importance of culture for equality (through organising and participating in trainings and	Teachers Students Administrative personnel Trainers Deans	2023-2025	Organised initiatives on the relevance of equality culture Different methods and techniques used Number of participants

providing information materials			
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Area of intervention 5. Ensuring work-life balance and study and work conditions

Activity	Participants	Deadline for implementation	Performance indicators
Enriching the possibilities for flexible work/study modes and remote work/learning	Academic management Heads of departments Teachers Students	2022-2025	Enriched options for flexible working time and telecommuting Stakeholder groups covered persons Number of participants

Area of intervention 6. Reflecting aspects related to equality in scientific research and training

Activity	Participants	Deadline for implementation	Performance indicators
Introduction, enrichment and stimulation of aspects of equality in the training	Quality Management Department	2023-2025	Introduced/enriched aspects of equality in education Organised initiatives Different specific issues covered : questions/ disciplines/topics/activities Number of participants
Evaluation by experts of training courses and materials for compliance with the ideas of equality	The Quality Assurance and Assessment Committee	2024-2026	Conducted evaluation of training courses and compliance materials on the ideas of equality Number of courses and material assessed

The Gender Equality Plan for BFU for the period 2022-2026 was approved with Protocol Nr.3 at a meeting of the Academic Council of Burgas Free University held on 15.04.2022.