Centria University of Applied Sciences’ measures to fulfill the Gender Equality Plan requirements

From 2022 onwards, the European Union (EU) requires that every higher education institution that applies for or participates in Horizon Europe complies with the requirements of the Gender Equality Plan (GEP): “Individual organisations applying to any part of Horizon Europe, and belonging to the following categories of legal entities established in EU Member States or Associated countries, are all required to have a GEP as of calls for proposals with deadlines in 2022 onwards…” (Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans 2021, 5) Higher education institutions are such organisations that are subject to this requirement.

This document presents Centria University of Applied Sciences’ (Centria) measures to fulfill the GEP requirements.

The document contains five chapters of which the first four answer to one of the four requirements presented in the GEP. The fifth chapter deals with the details that are mentioned in the Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans document.

# Public document

The GEP must be publicly available on the higher education institution’s website, signed by senior management and actively communicated to the institution’s personnel.

This document is signed by the Rector/CEO and this document is available on the higher education institution’s website. In addition, a yearly equality and non-discrimination plan is made at Centria, which largely answers to the matters required by the GEP. The equality and non-discrimination plan is also signed by the Rector/CEO and is available on Centria’s website.

Centria is committed to promoting equality in its operations. The objective of the equality and non-discrimination plan is

* to promote equality and prevent discrimination,
* to ensure non-discrimination in the processes, practices and instructions of human resource management,
* to ensure equal participation with reasonable adjustments

The purpose of the equality promotion measures is to achieve truly non-discriminatory procedures in the university of applied sciences:

* in recruiting
* in planning work tasks
* in student admission decisions
* in deciding wages and employee benefits,
* in determining responsibilities related to working or employment relationships and in developing the work community and personnel.

The starting and target level information, ongoing measures as well as planned measures are presented in Centria’s *Equality and non-discrimination plan 2021–2022* document(*Tasa-arvo- ja yhdenvertaisuussuunnitelma 2021–2022*). The document describes the matters presented in this document in more detail. Equality promoting measures and Centria’s employment relationship personnel policy are described in more detail in the document *Centria’s personnel, training and occupational well-being plan 2020–2023* (*Centrian Henkilöstö-, koulutus- ja työhyvinvointisuunnitelma vuosille 2020–2023*).

# Dedicated resources

Equality promoting measures are resourced for the operations of Centria’s human resources management and occupational health and safety. On behalf of the employer, the CEO and the head of occupational health and safety are responsible for equality and non-discrimination matters. In addition, the equality plan’s objectives, measures and realisation are monitored in the following bodies: equality group, occupational health and safety operation and employer-employee cooperation team.

The equality and non-discrimination plan is updated every other year and its realisation is monitored yearly. The realisation of equality is reported in the statement of human resources. Progress is monitored in the following bodies: equality group, occupational health and safety operation and employer-employee cooperation team.

The working time for the equality group’s members has been estimated to be 5–10 working hours a year, and matters related to equality will be processed as needed by the occupational health and safety committee, which assembles 4–6 times a year. Centria’s head of occupational health and safety has been allocated 200–300 working hours per year to tend to the matter. Human resource processes spends time on equality matters as needed.

In Centria, it is understood that political dimensions are also involved in resource budgeting, which is why equality is striven to be taken into account in resourcing.

# Data collection and monitoring

Centria produces a yearly statement of human resources in which matters related to equality are also reported. The statement of human resources is also a public document, which is available on Centria’s website. Information is collected from the financial administration and human resources management systems of Centria.

The collected and reported information includes:

* gender distribution
* size of personnel groups (teaching, RDI, higher education institution services) and gender distribution
* size of job levels (administration, management, directors, employees) and gender distribution
* number of international employees
* personnel’s level of education
* number of full-time and part-time employees

In addition, a yearly personnel survey is conducted in Centria. The results are published on the intranet where they are available for the personnel. The results are jointly reported to the entire personnel and processed individually in teams.

The information of the statement of human resources is dealt with yearly in the following bodies: occupational health and safety operation and employer-employee cooperation team.

The cycle of Plan-Do-Check-Act is followed in such operations of Centria that correspond to the GEP equality plan model.

# Training

Equality training and communication occur in various connections. They are first gone over in orientation. They are also included in Centria’s research and development department’s human resources and project manager training. These training sessions are organised every other year in Centria’s RDI.

In order to promote equality, training on recognising unconscious bias is organised for the personnel of Centria in 2022.

# Details

## Work-life balance

In its equality and non-discrimination plan, Centria has outlined its objective to promote work-life balance especially in terms of work load, making work tasks easier, working hours and the flexibility of absences. The instruments have been described in *Centria’s personnel, training and occupational well-being plan 2020–2023* document.

*We enable*:

* parental leave, study leave, unpaid personal leave, job alternation leave
* partial sick leave
* partial early old-age pension
* flexible working hour arrangements (e.g. reduced working hours)
* as few difficult career breaks in career path as possible
* permanent employment

*We offer*:

* active support for monitoring workload
* guidance and support for work-life balance
* resources for studying while working
* occupational health discussions
* early caring and discussion model
* extensive remote work possibility

## Equality in leadership and decision-making

Equality is a natural part of leadership, and the promotion of equality is reflected in Centria’s working culture and practices. The senior management of the university of applied sciences (administration, rector, CEO) and the management team commit themselves to promoting equality. It is the manager’s duty to intervene in discrimination, sexual harassment and any other harassment that occurs in the workplace. A working culture that values the members of the higher education community supports an equal working community. Directors and managers ensure that equality and non-discrimination is realised in the personnel policy by practical actions and showing example. Centria enforces equality with the following measures:

* taking into account the objectives of the equality and non-discrimination plan in the distribution of positions in decision-making (administration, management team, managers)
* involving students in decision-making (administration, management team, other teams)
* providing training for the personnel to understand equality issues and acknowledge possible deviations
* striving to especially acknowledge in the upcoming strategic period that non-Finnish speaking labour has equal chances to obtain information, participate and integrate into the working community
* always acknowledging possible effects on equality and non-discrimination in decision-making

## Equality in recruitment and career progression

As an employer, Centria has a role in the promotion of equality and non-discrimination in its employment contracts and conditions related to work tasks. The General collective agreement for the private teaching sector of Sivistystyönantaja ry (Finnish Education Employers) is applied to the conditions of employment of the university of applied sciences’ employees. Local agreement strives to remove harmful effects affecting the promotion of equality and non-discrimination.

The most central condition for the realisation of equality is the principle of equal pay for equal work included in the Equality Act. Equal wage is paid for the same work and work with mostly similar tasks. A person’s wage is determined by the task’s required education, experience, competence and the task’s challenge level. In addition, a person may be paid additional pay related to their expertise, further training or special duties. This additional pay may be task-specific or a personal bonus.

The remuneration systems are developed to promote equality and non-discrimination with the pay being determined on the basis of the level of difficulty of the job, the professional competence demonstrated by the person, the success in work and the results achieved at work. The grounds for employees’ pay are specified in a way that task-specific pay and pay determined by expertise, experience and achieved results are stated separately. Gender discrimination must not affect the pay basis. An encouraging pay policy is implemented equally in all operations.

The human resources manager monitors wages and wage structures within their authority in cooperation with the employees’ representatives. This promotes equal pay for equal work or work of equal value. When making wage decisions, employees on maternity or parental leave, child care leave or other leave must be treated equally with currently working employees.

In particular, the following have been set as the new objectives in wages and job content:

* Objectives and measures for “senior leader” equality positions
* Career progression through career path and effects on pay
* Evaluation and comparison criteria for evaluating researchers
* Taking into account administration, guidance and evaluation in a researcher/teacher
* Equal distribution of different workloads

## Integrating equality into research and teaching content

In RDI and the service business, it is encouraged to apply expertise and services to new fields while disregarding traditional viewpoints regarding male and female dominated fields. In externally funded projects, an assessment on taking into account the gender perspective in the project is often required. Centria’s objective is to motivate members of the higher education community regardless of field and to promote the realisation of diversity in project work.

## Measures against discrimination and harassment

All employees, students and other operators in Centria are responsible for ensuring that the community members, regardless of their personal features, are able to study and work in an equal and non-discriminatory manner. In Centria, the prevention of discrimination and harassment and intervening includes all forms of discrimination and harassment – not only sexual harassment. In the first place, a person who experiences discrimination or harassment themselves or recognises such situations in the community must intervene by discussing the matter with the persons involved. If the discrimination or harassment continues, one or several of the following persons must be contacted:

* If a student recognises or experiences discrimination or harassment due to a personal matter, they can contact the teacher of their student group or the student counsellor. The student may also contact Student Union COPSA.
* If an employee recognises or experiences discrimination or harassment due to a personal matter, they can contact their supervisor, health and safety representative or employee representative. Occupational health care may also be involved in the conversation if necessary.

Reports related to discrimination or harassment of employees are processed in the occupational health and safety committee. Based on the committee’s processing and deliberation, the matter is forwarded to be handled by a competent party. The occupational health and safety committee requests a report on the situation’s progression.

Discrimination and harassment incidents experienced by students are handled confidentially with the student in question by either the student counsellor, tutoring teacher or a representative of the student union, depending on who the student has contacted. If necessary, the person who has experienced harassment or discrimination will be forwarded to support services and, with their consent, the matter can be handled with the other persons involved. If necessary and with the consent of the student, the administration of the university of applied sciences can be involved in the matter.

Compliance with the Non-Discrimination Act is overseen by the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, the National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal as well as labour protection authorities.

# Signatures

In Kokkola 20 December 2021

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Kari Ristimäki, Rector/CEO
Centria University of Applied Sciences

# References

Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans (GEPs). 2021. European Commission. Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffcb06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-232129669>