# Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

## Union University – School of Computing

**Address:** Knez Mihailova 6/VI, 11000, Belgrade, Serba
**Contact:** T: +381 11 33-48-087, E: raf@raf.rs
**Staff:** Approximately 92
**Students:** 1283

**Implementation Period:** 3 January 2022 - 31 December 2026
**Document Version:** 1.0
**Created:** 30 September 2021

## 1. Executive Summary and Commitment

Union University – School of Computing is committed to promoting equal opportunities for all staff and students, regardless of gender, and to creating an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive. This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) has been developed in compliance with the European Commission's Horizon Europe requirements and aligns with national legislation on non-discrimination and equal treatment.

This document formalizes our institutional commitment to gender equality through concrete actions, measurable targets, and systematic monitoring over the five-year period from 3 January 2022 to 31 December 2026. The GEP serves as both a compliance document for Horizon Europe eligibility and a strategic framework for sustainable institutional change.

**Leadership Commitment:** This GEP is formally endorsed and will be signed by Prof. dr Stevan Milinkovic, dean of the faculty, demonstrating our highest-level commitment to gender equality.

## 2. Compliance with Horizon Europe Requirements

### 2.1 Mandatory Process Requirements

This Gender Equality Plan meets the four mandatory process requirements for Horizon Europe eligibility:

### 1. PUBLICATION
- This GEP is formally published on the University's official website (https://raf.edu.rs/en/) in both Serbian and English versions
- The document is signed by Prof. dr Stevan Milinkovic on 30 September 2021
- Annual implementation reports will be published online by 31 March each year
- Mid-term review report published by 30 June 2024

## 2. DEDICATED RESOURCES

- **Personnel:** 0.2 FTE dedicated Gender Equality Officer (appointed by 31 January 2022)
- **Administrative Support:** Gender Equality Committee for monitoring and reporting (established by 28 February 2022)
- **Annual Budget:** €59.300 for training, awareness activities, and implementation
- **Infrastructure:** Online platforms, reporting systems, and training materials (operational by 31 March 2022)

## 3. DATA COLLECTION & MONITORING

- Systematic collection of sex/gender-disaggregated data on all personnel and students (baseline completed by 31 March 2022)
- Annual reporting based on established Key Performance Indicators (first report by 31 March 2023)
- Regular analysis of recruitment, promotion, and participation patterns (quarterly reviews)
- Anonymous climate surveys conducted biennially (first survey by 30 September 2022)

## 4. TRAINING

- Mandatory awareness-raising training on gender equality for all staff (completed by 31 December 2022)
- Specialized training on unconscious bias for decision-makers (completed by 30 June 2022)
- Regular workshops on integrating gender dimension in research and teaching (quarterly from April 2022)
- Bystander intervention and harassment prevention programs (launched by 30 September 2022)

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# 3. Organizational Context and Baseline Assessment

## 3.1 Institutional Profile

- **Institution Type:** Higher education (private university)
- **Location:** Belgrade, Serbia
- **Total Staff:** 92 (academic: 81, administrative: 11)
- **Student Population:** 1283 (41% female, 59% male)
- **Research Areas:** Computer Science, Computer Engineering, Software Engineering, Information Systems, Information Technology, Multimedia

## 3.2 Current Gender Distribution

| Category | Total | Women (%) | Men (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Senior Management | 5 | 40 | 60 |
| Academic Staff - Professors | 18 | 50 | 50 |
| Academic Staff - Associate Professors | 18 | 50 | 50 |
| Academic Staff - Assistant Professors | 33 | 43 | 57 |
| Academic Staff - Lecturers | 12 | 42 | 58 |
| Administrative Staff | 11 | 72 | 28 |
| PhD Students | 14 | 42 | 58 |

| Category | Total | Women (%) | Men (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Master's Students | 86 | 47 | 53 |
| Bachelor's Students | 1183 | 40 | 60 |

# 4. Thematic Areas and Strategic Objectives

## 4.1 Work-Life Balance and Organizational Culture

**Objective:** Create a supportive work environment that enables all staff to balance professional and personal responsibilities effectively.

**Current Challenges:** - Limited formal flexible working arrangements - Traditional expectations around availability and presence - Insufficient support for returning parents

**Concrete Measures:**

1. **Flexible Working Policy**
   – **Target:** Implement comprehensive flexible working policy by 30 June 2022
   – Remote work options up to 2 days per week
   – Flexible start/end times within core hours 9AM – 9PM
   – Compressed working weeks where operationally feasible
   – Clear guidelines for requesting and approving flexible arrangements
2. **Parental Support**
   – **Target:** 100% of eligible staff utilize parental leave entitlements by December 2023
   – Enhanced communication during parental leave (implemented by 31 March 2022)
   – Phased return-to-work options (available from 1 July 2022)
   – Lactation facilities and support (established by 30 April 2022)
   – Childcare information and support services (launched by 30 September 2022)
3. **Workplace Culture**
   – **Target:** 80% positive ratings in work-life balance satisfaction by December 2024
   – Regular work-life balance surveys (first survey September 2022, then annually)
   – Management training on supporting flexible working (completed by 31 August 2022)
   – Clear expectations about after-hours communication (policy effective 1 May 2022)

**Timeline:** - Year 1 (2022): Policy development and approval - Year 2 (2023): Full implementation and training - Year 3-5 (2024-2026): Evaluation and refinement

**Budget:** €25.400 annually

## 4.2 Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making

**Objective:** Achieve balanced representation of women and men in all leadership positions and decision-making bodies.

**Concrete Measures:**

1.  **Representation Targets**
    –   **Target:** Minimum 40% representation of each gender in all committees and governing bodies by 31 December 2024
    –   **Target:** 50% women in senior management positions by 31 December 2025
    –   Systematic monitoring of all appointment processes (monthly reports from March 2022)
    –   Gender balance considerations in succession planning (integrated by 30 September 2022)
2.  **Appointment Procedures**
    –   Mandatory gender balance in search committees (effective 1 April 2022)
    –   Structured interview processes to minimize bias (training completed by 31 May 2022)
    –   Transparent criteria and decision-making processes (published by 31 March 2022)
    –   Regular review of appointment outcomes (quarterly from July 2022)
3.  **Leadership Development**
    –   **Target:** 50% of women participate in leadership development programs by December 2025
    –   Mentoring programs pairing junior and senior staff (launched by 30 September 2022)
    –   External leadership training opportunities (budget allocated from January 2022)
    –   Cross-institutional networking and collaboration (partnerships established by 31 August 2022)

**Monitoring:** - Quarterly reporting on committee composition - Annual analysis of appointment and promotion patterns - Regular review of leadership pipeline

**Budget:** €6.900 for leadership development programs

### 4.3 Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Progression

**Objective:** Ensure transparent, fair, and bias-free recruitment and promotion procedures that support career advancement for all genders.

**Concrete Measures:**

1.  **Recruitment Process Reform**
    –   **Target:** Achieve 50% gender balance in applicant pools by 31 December 2023
    –   Gender-neutral language in all job postings (implemented from 1 February 2022)
    –   Diverse recruitment channels to reach broader candidate pools (expanded by 31 March 2022)
    –   Mandatory unconscious bias training for all hiring managers (completed by 31 May 2022)
    –   Gender-balanced recruitment panels minimum 40% each gender where possible (effective 1 June 2022)

2. **Promotion and Career Development**
   – **Target:** Equal promotion rates across genders within 31 December 2025
   – Clear, transparent promotion criteria and timelines (published by 30 April 2022)
   – Regular career development conversations (quarterly from July 2022)
   – Skills development and training opportunities (expanded budget from January 2022)
   – Recognition and award programs with gender balance monitoring (launched by 30 September 2022)
3. **Academic Career Support**
   – Research collaboration opportunities (formalized by 31 August 2022)
   – Conference attendance and presentation support (increased budget from January 2022)
   – Publication and grant writing workshops (quarterly from May 2022)
   – International mobility and exchange programs (partnerships established by 31 December 2022)

**Key Performance Indicators:** - Gender distribution of applicants, shortlists, and appointments - Promotion rates by gender and career level - Participation in professional development activities - Career progression timelines

**Budget:** €33.800 for training and development activities

## 4.4 Integration of Gender Dimension into Research and Teaching Content

**Objective:** Systematically integrate gender perspectives into research methodologies, project design, and educational curricula where relevant and applicable.

**Concrete Measures:**

1. **Research Integration**
   – **Target:** 50% of applicable research projects incorporate gender analysis by 31 December 2024
   – Mandatory training on gender-sensitive research methodologies (completed by 30 September 2022)
   – Guidelines for integrating sex and gender variables in data collection (published by 31 July 2022)
   – Support for interdisciplinary collaboration on gender-related research (established by 31 October 2022)
   – Regular review of research proposals for gender dimension integration (process implemented by 30 June 2022)
2. **Curriculum Development**
   – **Target:** 50% of courses include gender perspective considerations by 31 December 2025
   – Faculty training on inclusive teaching practices (completed by 31 August 2022)
   – Review of course materials for gender-inclusive examples and case studies (completed by 31 December 2023)
   – Student feedback mechanisms on inclusive teaching (implemented by 30 September 2022)

3. **Knowledge Dissemination**
   – Regular seminars on gender and technology topics (monthly from October 2022)
   – Collaboration with gender studies researchers (partnerships established by 31 December 2022)
   – Participation in conferences on gender in STEM (budget allocated annually)
   – Publication of gender-sensitive research findings (support available from January 2022)

**Resources:** - Access to gender research databases and literature (subscriptions active from 1 March 2022) - Expert consultation on gender methodology (contacts established by 30 April 2022) - Funding for gender-focused research projects (annual allocation from 2022)

**Budget:** €9.700 for training and resources

## 4.5 Measures Against Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Harassment

**Objective:** Maintain a safe, respectful environment free from all forms of gender-based violence, sexual harassment, and discrimination.

**Concrete Measures:**

1. **Prevention and Awareness**
   – **Target:** 100% of staff and students complete harassment prevention training by 31 December 2022
   – Annual awareness campaigns (first campaign launched by 8 March 2022)
   – Bystander intervention training (available from 30 September 2022)
   – Clear communication of zero-tolerance policy (published by 31 January 2022)
   – Regular climate surveys on safety and respect (first survey by 30 September 2022, then biennially)
2. **Reporting Mechanisms**
   – **Implementation Date:** 28 February 2022
   – Multiple reporting channels (online, in-person, anonymous)
   – Designated contact persons (Doc. dr  Nemanja Radosavljevic)
   – External reporting options (established by 31 March 2022)
   – Clear information about reporting procedures widely available
3. **Investigation and Support Procedures**
   – **Response Time:** Initial response within 48 hours
   – Trained investigation team (training completed by 31 January 2022)
   – Clear timelines and procedures for investigation (maximum 30 working days)
   – Interim protection measures (available immediately)
   – Professional counseling and support services (contracted by 28 February 2022)
   – Regular review and improvement of procedures (annually)
4. **Support Services**
   – Confidential counseling services (available from 1 March 2022)
   – Legal information and support (partnerships established by 31 March 2022)
   – Referral to external support organizations (directory created by 28 February 2022)
   – Follow-up support for affected individuals

**Key Contacts:** - Gender Equality Officer: Dragana Petrovic - External Support: Computer Equimpment and Trade, Skadarska 45, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia

**Budget:** €17.300 for training, systems, and support services

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## 5. Implementation Framework

### 5.1 Governance Structure

**Gender Equality Officer:** Dragana Petrovic - **Responsibilities:** Overall GEP implementation, monitoring, reporting, and stakeholder coordination - **Time Commitment:** 0.2 FTE - **Reporting:** Directly to dean.

**Gender Equality Committee:** (Established by 28 February 2022) - **Chair:** Gender Equality Officer - **Members:** - Representative from senior management - Academic staff representatives (3) - Administrative staff representative (1) - Student representatives (1) - External expert (1) - **Meeting Frequency:** Quarterly (first meeting March 2022) - **Responsibilities:** Strategic guidance, monitoring progress, addressing challenges

**Implementation Teams:** Dedicated teams for each thematic area with specific responsibilities and timelines (formed by 31 March 2022).

### 5.2 Implementation Timeline

#### Year 1 (2022): Foundation
- Q1: Establish Gender Equality Officer position, form Gender Equality Committee, conduct comprehensive baseline data collection
- Q2: Launch first awareness training programs, implement harassment reporting mechanisms, develop detailed policies and procedures
- Q3: Begin flexible working arrangements, launch bystander intervention training, establish support services
- Q4: Complete mandatory training rollout, conduct first climate survey, publish first quarterly report

#### Year 2 (2023): Deployment
- Q1-Q2: Roll out comprehensive training program, implement gender-balanced recruitment panels
- Q3: Launch mentoring and leadership development programs, expand flexible working options
- Q4: Complete first annual comprehensive review, publish annual report, adjust strategies based on feedback

#### Year 3 (2024): Consolidation
- Q1-Q2: Conduct mid-term comprehensive review and evaluation, engage external evaluators
- Q3: Implement strategy adjustments based on mid-term review, expand successful initiatives
- Q4: Prepare for final phase implementation, address identified gaps and challenges

*Years 4-5 (2025-2026): Optimization and Sustainability*
- 2025: Focus on achieving representation targets, strengthen research integration, enhance support services
- 2026: Final evaluation, preparation for next planning cycle, ensure sustainability of changes

### 5.3 Resource Allocation

**Total Annual Budget:** €59.300

**Budget Breakdown:** - Personnel (Gender Equality Officer): €5.700 - Training and Development: €12.000 - Awareness and Communication: €7.600 - Support Services: €3.000 - Monitoring and Evaluation: €10.000 - Infrastructure and Systems: €12.000 - Contingency: €9.000

**Funding Sources:** - University operational budget: 80% - EU funding opportunities: 10% - External grants: 10%

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## 6. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

### 6.1 Key Performance Indicators

*Quantitative Indicators:*

**Gender Distribution:** - Percentage of women/men across all staff categories (baseline March 2022, annual monitoring) - Gender composition of leadership positions and committees (quarterly monitoring) - Student enrollment by gender across all programs (annual analysis)

**Recruitment and Career Progression:** - Application, shortlisting, and appointment rates by gender (quarterly reports) - Promotion success rates by gender and career level (annual analysis) - Participation in professional development by gender (quarterly tracking)

**Work-Life Balance:** - Uptake of flexible working arrangements by gender (monthly reports) - Parental leave utilization rates (annual analysis) - Staff turnover rates by gender (quarterly monitoring)

**Training and Awareness:** - Participation rates in mandatory training programs (monthly tracking) - Completion rates of online learning modules (quarterly reports)

*Qualitative Indicators:*

**Organizational Culture:** - Staff satisfaction with work-life balance policies (biennial surveys) - Perceived institutional commitment to gender equality (annual surveys) - Experiences of inclusion and belonging (focus groups annually)

**Policy Effectiveness:** - Effectiveness of reporting and support mechanisms (annual review) - Quality of investigation and resolution processes (case-by-case analysis) - Impact of prevention and awareness programs (survey data and feedback)

## 6.2 Data Collection Methods

**Administrative Data:** - HR systems and databases (continuous monitoring) - Student information systems (annual extracts) - Committee and meeting records (quarterly compilation) - Training participation records (real-time tracking)

**Survey Data:** - Annual staff satisfaction surveys (conducted each October) - Biennial climate surveys on gender equality and safety (2022, 2024, 2026) - Exit interviews with departing staff (continuous) - Student feedback on inclusive teaching (semester-end)

**Qualitative Data:** - Focus groups with staff and students (annually) - Individual interviews with key stakeholders (as needed) - Case studies of successful interventions (compiled annually)

## 6.3 Reporting Schedule

**Quarterly Reports:** (Published by the 15th of the following month) - Basic statistical data and progress updates - Internal distribution to Gender Equality Committee and senior management

**Annual Reports:** (Published by 31 March each year) - Comprehensive analysis of all indicators - Progress against targets and objectives - Recommendations for improvement - Public publication on university website

**Mid-term Review:** (Completed by 30 June 2024) - External evaluation of GEP effectiveness - Stakeholder consultation and feedback - Strategic planning for final implementation phase

**Final Evaluation:** (Completed by 31 March 2027) - Comprehensive assessment of five-year implementation - Lessons learned and recommendations - Planning for next GEP cycle

# 7. Intersectionality and Inclusion

## 7.1 Intersectional Approach

The University recognizes that gender intersects with other characteristics including age, disability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic background. Our commitment to intersectionality means:

**Policy Integration:** (Implemented from 1 April 2022) - All GEP measures consider multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage - Data collection includes relevant demographic variables where legally permissible - Support services are tailored to diverse needs and circumstances

**Inclusive Practices:** (Training completed by 31 August 2022) - Recruitment and promotion processes consider diverse backgrounds and experiences - Training programs address multiple forms of bias and discrimination - Facilities and services accommodate diverse needs

**Stakeholder Engagement:** (Ongoing from March 2022) - Regular consultation with diverse staff and student groups (quarterly sessions) - Collaboration with relevant community organizations (partnerships established by 30 June 2022) - Participation in wider diversity and inclusion networks (memberships confirmed by 31 December 2022)

# 8. Stakeholder Engagement and Communication

## 8.1 Internal Stakeholders

**Staff Engagement:** (Launched March 2022) - Regular consultation sessions and feedback opportunities (monthly sessions) - Representation on Gender Equality Committee - Anonymous suggestion and feedback mechanisms (online system active from 1 March 2022) - Integration with existing staff development programs

**Student Involvement:** (Established April 2022) - Student representatives on Gender Equality Committee - Regular feedback sessions and focus groups (semester-end sessions) - Integration with student support services - Peer education and awareness programs (launched September 2022)

**Leadership Commitment:** (Ongoing) - Regular briefings to senior management (monthly reports) - Integration with strategic planning processes (annual cycle) - Resource allocation decisions (budget reviews quarterly) - External representation and advocacy

## 8.2 External Partnerships

**Academic Networks:** (Established by 31 December 2022) - Collaboration with other Serbian universities on gender equality initiatives - Participation in European networks for gender equality in research - Knowledge sharing and best practice exchange

**Community Organizations:** (Partnerships formalized by 30 June 2022) - Partnership with local women's organizations - Collaboration with diversity and inclusion advocacy groups - Support for community gender equality initiatives

**Professional Bodies:** (Engagement initiated March 2022) - Engagement with computing and technology professional associations - Advocacy for gender equality in STEM fields - Industry collaboration on inclusive practices

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# 9. Risk Management and Contingency Planning

## 9.1 Identified Risks

**Implementation Risks:** - Insufficient buy-in from senior leadership or staff - Limited financial resources for full implementation - Competing priorities and resource constraints - Resistance to change or cultural barriers

**External Risks:** - Changes in national legislation or EU requirements - Economic pressures affecting resource availability (particularly relevant post-COVID-19) - Broader social or political resistance to gender equality initiatives

## 9.2 Mitigation Strategies

**Leadership and Culture:** (Implemented from January 2022) - Strong commitment and visible leadership from top management - Regular communication about benefits and importance of gender equality (monthly updates) - Gradual implementation to allow for adaptation and learning - Recognition and celebration of progress and achievements (quarterly celebrations)

**Resource Management:** (Active monitoring from January 2022) - Diversified funding sources to reduce dependence on single source - Phased implementation to spread costs over time - Partnerships to share resources and expertise - Regular monitoring to ensure efficient resource use (quarterly budget reviews)

**Stakeholder Engagement:** (Continuous process) - Proactive communication and transparency about goals and progress - Regular consultation and feedback mechanisms (monthly sessions) - Flexibility to adapt approaches based on feedback and results

## 10. Legal and Regulatory Compliance

### 10.1 National Legislation
- Law on Gender Equality (Republic of Serbia, 2021)
- Labor Law of the Republic of Serbia
- Law on Prohibition of Discrimination
- Higher Education Law

### 10.2 EU Requirements
- Horizon Europe Gender Equality Plan requirements
- Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union
- European Research Area priorities
- UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

### 10.3 Institutional Policies
- University Code of Conduct (updated by 31 March 2022)
- Staff Handbook and Employment Policies (revised by 30 June 2022)
- Student Code of Conduct (amended by 30 April 2022)
- Research Ethics Guidelines (enhanced by 31 August 2022)

## 11. Review and Continuous Improvement

### 11.1 Regular Review Process

**Annual Review:** (Completed by 31 March each year) - Comprehensive assessment of progress against objectives - Analysis of quantitative and qualitative data - Stakeholder feedback and consultation - Identification of challenges and opportunities

**Mid-term Review:** (30 June 2024) - External evaluation by independent experts - Comprehensive stakeholder consultation (April-May 2024) - Strategic planning for final implementation phase - Budget and resource reallocation as needed

**Final Review:** (31 December 2026) - Comprehensive evaluation of five-year implementation - Preparation for next GEP cycle (2027-2031) - Dissemination of lessons learned

## 11.2 Adaptive Management

**Flexibility and Learning:** (Ongoing process) - Regular adjustment of strategies based on evidence and feedback - Innovation in approaches and methodologies - Learning from best practices at other institutions - Responsive to changing needs and circumstances

**Continuous Improvement:** (Built into all activities) - Regular training and professional development for implementation team (quarterly updates) - Participation in professional networks and conferences - Research and evaluation to improve effectiveness - Documentation and sharing of lessons learned

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# 12. Conclusion and Commitment Statement

Union University – School of Computing is committed to creating an inclusive, equitable environment where all individuals can thrive regardless of gender. This Gender Equality Plan represents our formal commitment to systematic, sustainable change that will benefit our entire community over the five-year implementation period from 3 January 2022 to 31 December 2026.

We recognize that achieving gender equality requires sustained effort, adequate resources, and the engagement of all members of our university community. Through the implementation of this plan, we aim to serve as a model for gender equality in higher education and research in Serbia and beyond.

This plan will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness. We welcome feedback and suggestions from all stakeholders as we work together to build a more equitable future.

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**Formal Approval and Implementation**

This Gender Equality Plan is hereby approved and adopted by Union University – School of Computing, effective 3 January 2022.

**Signed:**

Dean Prof. dr Stevan Milinkovic
Date: 30 September 2021

**Contact Information:**

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