

Gender Equality Plan (GEP) of Georgian Technical University

*To ensure an equal, non-discriminatory and
family-friendly environment and academic relationships*

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Preamble:

Georgian Technical University considers the principle of equality as one of the main characteristics / indicators of the quality of teaching and science. Ensuring equal opportunities, eliminating discrimination and fostering a culture of respect for diversity provide an essential basis for the implementation of these principles in research, teaching and university management.

Georgian Technical University is an open, inclusive and intercultural institution focused on gender equality and family values, which considers the diversity of its members as a productive resource and opposes all forms of discrimination based on personal or social characteristics. The University is focused on creating supportive and motivating working environments for students and staff. Thus, it resists all forms of discrimination that may arise on the grounds of ethnicity, sex, religion or worldview, age, special needs or gender identity.

Georgian Technical University expresses its commitment to the observance and implementation of the principle of gender equality and adherence to the relevant values in its mission and vision, as well as in the University Code of Ethics, and also confirms and extends through this document.

This plan reflects the approach defined by Georgian Technical University regarding the introduction of the principle of gender equality at the level of both institutional and academic culture and the tasks and measures to be implemented in this direction.

Legislative Framework for the Implementation of the Principle of Gender Equality at Georgian Technical University

(LEPL) Georgian Technical University defines and implements the principle of gender equality in accordance with the Constitution of Georgia and the legislation of Georgia,

which implies "ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men". As a higher education institution, the Georgian Technical University also assumes the obligations established by the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, which implies: 1. "Prohibition of any forms of discrimination in the field of higher education, including discrimination on any ground such as academic, ethnic, social or religious affiliation, and/or opinion, sex and other grounds"; 2. "Equal treatment irrespective of the ethnic origin, sex, social origin, and the political or religious affiliation of a person"; and also 3. the obligation under the Law of Georgia "On Combating Crimes against Sexual Freedom and Inviolability" according to which, "A person convicted of a crime against sexual freedom and inviolability under the [...] [mentioned] law or/and a person who has been deprived of the right to work in an educational institution by a court under the same law may not be employed in a higher education institution".

The University is also committed to the Law of Georgia on Gender Equality, which provides for "that equal conditions are created for men and women to acquire general, vocational and higher education in all kinds of educational establishments, and to participate in educational and scientific processes".

Gender Equality Plan of Georgian Technical University: Goal and Approach

The present plan serves to ensure the in-depth and systematic implementation of the principle of gender equality and relevant values, both at the institutional and cultural levels of the University, in teaching, research and university management.

The structure and approach of the Gender Equality Plan take into account the basic principles and recommendations of the European Commission Gender Equality Strategy (Gender Equality Strategy for 2020-2025) and the European Research Area (European Research Area) on the specifics of ensuring gender equality in the administrative sphere as well as in the fields of teaching, research and innovation. Among them, the following aspects are considered:

- Work-life balance and organisational culture
- Gender balance in leadership and decision making
- Gender equality in recruitment and career progression
- Integrating the gender dimension into research and teaching content
- Measures against gender-based discrimination/violence, including sexual harassment

Objectives and Measures Set Within the Framework of the Implementation of the Gender Equality Plan at Georgian Technical University:

1. Establishment of a Gender Equality Commission at Georgian Technical University

Georgian Technical University makes efforts focused on the protection and implementation of the principle of gender equality and relevant measures in the fields of both university management and academic (research) activities.

One of the University's top priorities in the Gender Equality Plan is its integration into the concept of organizational development and university culture.

In the administrative field, the principle of gender equality is integrated into the university management and quality assurance tools and [evaluation] mechanisms; It is also declared as one of the important prerequisites for the strategic development of the University and a priority related to the social responsibility of the University. The principle of gender equality is also enshrined in the University Code of Ethics, which guarantees compliance with this principle in the field of relations and academic cooperation between students, academic, administrative and support staff of the University.

In order to implement and promote the principle of gender equality at the institutional level, the University plans to establish a **Gender Equality Commission**, which will be tasked with developing a university concept for gender equality support as well as of developing, coordinating and monitoring policies for their implementation and development processes across the University. The main tasks of the mentioned commission during the next **5 years** are the following:

- A) To support decentralized structures and initiatives to promote gender equality in the areas of teaching, research and university management;
- B) To intensify the implementation of the University Concept of Gender Equality and the introduction of an effective monitoring system;
- C) To introduce an effective mechanism of measures to combat cases of gender discrimination and their preventive measures;
- D) Ensuring maximum involvement of faculties in the development of the University Concept of Gender Equality, as well as in the development of monitoring mechanisms, both at the administrative and academic levels.

2. Introduction of a Women-Supporting Approach at Georgian Technical University

In order to promote the involvement of women in the administrative and academic activities of the University, the University plans to introduce a women-oriented approach, within

which a plan will be developed to promote the involvement of women in the management, teaching and research processes of the university. In order to develop a plan **over the next 5 years**, the University plans to carry out the following activities:

1. Study of opinions and assessments among students and the University staff regarding the state of gender equality at Georgian Technical University, with special emphasis on the involvement of women in academic (research) and administrative activities, in order to identify the existing problems in this direction and to develop ways to solve these problems in the approach of supporting women.
2. Taking measures to promote equal access to career development for women through information campaigns and special trainings.
3. In the context of pandemic-induced constraints, the study of specific factors that have an impedimental effect on women's involvement in the University's administrative and academic (research) activities and adversely affect women's work-life balance. These include identifying the special needs of women associated with the transition of schools and educational institutions to online mode, the closure of kindergartens and the need to find and mobilize additional financial, labor and moral resources caused by this problem; identification of these factors and development of the ways to address them in the Women Support Plan.

These measures, in turn, will help the Gender Equality Commission to obtain relevant information about the state of gender equality across the University, the problems, and the views and approaches to solving these problems. This information will serve as an important basis for the development and implementation of effective policies to promote the involvement of women as well as the introduction and development of the principle of gender equality.

3. Introduction of the Principle of Gender Equality in Quality Assurance and Evaluation Mechanisms

In parallel with the implementation of measures to promote gender equality in university management, Georgian Technical University also plans to integrate the principle of gender equality and related values into the mechanisms of teaching, research, quality assurance and evaluation of university management. In particular, this principle will be introduced as an important quality indicator/evaluation criterion in reports, concepts and plans for organizational and staff (both academic and administrative) development, to be submitted to the University, where the aspect of equal treatment and gender equality will be integrated into the context of individual evaluations (e.g. in training and research reports, in academic

and administrative staff assessment tools, in the concepts of faculty internationalization, in the concept of development focused on the next generation of researchers, etc.).

This event, in turn, will contribute to the introduction and implementation of the university concept of gender equality throughout the University.

4. Integration of the Gender Aspect into Research and Teaching

In the field of academic activities, in order to promote the idea of Gender Equality, the University has implemented a number of events, including the cycle of international scientific conferences "World and Gender", which has been held every other year since 2012 at Georgian Technical University and is dedicated to the modern world challenges in the field of Gender Equality and Mainstreaming. Issues such as: Gender Equality and Legislation, Gender: Paradigms and Dilemmas, Women and Politics, are presented as the main thematic blocks of the conferences. The papers presented at the conference will be published as a collection by University Press.

In order to promote gender equality in research and teaching, the University also plans to support the development and implementation of gender equality-oriented activities and activities in research projects and educational programmes, including activities with a direct purpose of:

1. Raising awareness and respect for the topic of gender diversity;
2. Development and implementation of a concept of career development adapted and compatible with the family;
3. Introduction of effective cooperation and communication mechanism between administrative and academic staff on gender equality issues and key problems;
4. Development and implementation of optimal mechanisms for the timely identification of gender discrimination and the implementation of appropriate restrictive measures.

These measures, in turn, will contribute to improving the effectiveness of the work of the Gender Equality Commission and the continuous development of the university concept of gender equality and policy, ensuring the high involvement of university researchers in it and integrating the results of the latest research.