

# Gender Action Plan

## Activities towards implementation within the departments and administration

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On 10 February 2014, the executive board of ETH Zurich adopted a Gender Action Plan, in which the departments of ETH Zurich and various administrative divisions are called upon to put in place measures within the following subjects:

1. Careers and career development within academia
2. Integration of gender-specific aspects in research and education
3. Reconciliation of studies, work and family
4. Prevention of sexual harassment and discrimination on the basis of gender

The present report summarises the most important activities and discussions of the departments and various administrative divisions up until November of 2014.

## Implementation within the Departments

In the summer of 2014, all 16 departments have submitted either a report or a relatively detailed plan of implementation pertaining to the Gender Action Plan.

Within their reports and plans, a large number of departments have presented a variety of very innovative support measures and have further taken on more subject matters than those that are addressed in the Gender Action Plan.

As of yet, no departments have developed strategies to support reintegration into the scientific career. Only few of the departments mention individual measures within the following subject matters:

1. Progress monitoring of GAP-measures within the departments
2. Qualified mentoring for assistant professorships and senior scientists
3. Creating attractive frameworks for (employed) female professors
4. Support of female senior scientists
5. Adapting teaching and curricula to women (and men)

# Intriguing Ideas of the Departments

In this section, some of the particularly promising measures by various departments are presented in order of the areas of action defined by the Gender Action Plan.

## Area of Action 1: Career Development within Academia

### **Academic Staff and (Potential) Female Professors**

Almost all departments have expressed the goal of developing a form of active recruiting. For example, the departments follow the careers of excellent national and international scientists through the use of "Watch Lists", in order to invite or contact them upon an open professorship position.

The department of ERDW particularly emphasises a programme of guest lecturing positions and guest junior professorships in order to get to know as many members of the pool of female applicants and to establish a liaison with potential female professors.

The department of ERDW is further in the process of creating a mentoring-programme for women. A committee of 3-4 people (consisting of professors as well as academic staff) will be instated to meet with Postdocs at least once per year, individually and in groups. These meetings aim to exchange experience and they will serve to provide an outlet for worries and problems connected to the academic career.

In order to increase the size of the pool of female applicants, the department of GESS deems reasonable to advertise professorships in as broad a fashion as possible.

Worth noting is also the approach of the department of PHYS, which plans to instate a "hiring committee" that specialises in aspects of gender concerning recruitment processes.

The department of USYS aims to establish an internal discussion (within the department board) about structural adaptations to the appointment procedure.

In March 2014, the department of USYS has put in place a new mentoring and evaluation system for assistant professors. It consists of two committees, one of mentors and the other of evaluators. For example, the evaluation committee is comprised of the individual department heads, while the committee of mentors is comprised of former assistant professors.

The department of BIOL has developed a comprehensive concept of assistant professorships, which will be extended to incorporate the subjects mentoring and equal opportunities. The concept plans to create additional assistant professorships, that will be financed by the department internally. Any open positions will be advertised to women scientists in a targeted fashion and they will be encouraged to apply.

The department of MAVT has created guidelines to support senior scientists. Senior scientists will be individually assigned to a group of professors to help improve the quality of teaching. The department further plans to employ senior scientists who qualify for permanent professorship positions. Currently, these guidelines are extended upon, particularly to support women senior scientists. Basically, the guidelines hope to make the department aware of how and by whom support could be given and they serve to determine the expectation towards postdocs and senior scientists to achieve the next career level.

### **Prospective Students and New Students**

Almost all departments are involved in ETH-wide or inter-departmental events and efforts to attract more women students. Furthermore, some departments hold additional events on their own.

The department of MATH participates in the “European Girls’ Mathematical Olympiad”, that among other things aims to improve young girls’ awareness of the field of mathematics. Additionally, the department of MATH maintains and publishes a self-evaluation test in mathematics. Girls (and boys), who are uncertain of their capabilities in mathematics, thus have the opportunity to test and improve their abilities before enrolling at ETH Zurich. Further, the department of MATH aims to influence the mathematics abilities of children at a young age by making courses about “Girls and Mathematics” available to high-school teachers.

Particularly interesting for new students is the week end shortly after the start of the semester, organised by the department of USYS. In a closed setting, groups of 10 to 15 students are given the opportunity to discuss experiences, expectations and fears with lecturers and graduates of the department of USYS. Being able to contact graduates allows exchanges with people who have already reached the next step of their career and future planning.

### **“Women’s Clubs”**

Some departments have established women’s clubs, such as the WINS (D-CHAB), the forum of women civil engineers (D-BAUG), Women in Computer Science (D-INFK) and Limes (D-MAVT/D-ITET). These clubs organise various networking and career events that focus on their particular professional field. In general, these clubs are formed thanks to the committed work of women students and doctoral students and the clubs are more or less supported by the departments themselves.

### **Visibility of Women Scientists in their Field**

A few departments invite female guest lecturers and professors to increase the visibility of women scientists in their respective field (i.e. role models). The department of USYS progresses even further in that it places a focus on women pioneers and their research during its seminars. Furthermore, the department of USYS awards an honorary doctorate particularly to women, due to the fact that women were in the past less likely to be awarded for their work.

The department of MATL endeavours that female researchers are depicted particularly during their work in images, for example for brochures.

### **Women in Boards/Executive Functions/Work Groups**

Some departments have put in place contact persons and committees to support the implementation of equal opportunities internally.

The department of ERDW, for example, has introduced a discussion forum on “Gender Issues” for employees of all levels. There have already been meetings for the staff groups technical and administrative personnel as well as for doctoral students.

Starting in September, the department of HEST will employ a Gender Action Committee (GAC), that is comprised of representatives of the individual staff groups within the department. The committee will be responsible for carrying recommendations for the implementation of the GAP as well as for further subject matters pertaining to equal opportunities to the department heads.

Contact persons for matters of equal opportunities are Prof. Olga Sorkine within the department of INFK and Prof. Marloes Maathuis within the department of MATH. With the support from such contact persons, the department leaders aim to be informed of important matters and problems within their respective department, such that they may intervene in a targeted fashion.

The department of HEST has decided that women professors be represented within decision committees (executive committee, tenure committee and head of doctoral affairs) according to their respective proportional representation among faculty members. Thereby, the work load of the individual women professors shall be taken in account.

The department USYS has adopted the rule of having one woman within the department leaders from now on.

## Area of Action 2: Gender Aspects in Research and Education

Only few departments evaluate their teaching methods on the basis of "Gender Aspects".

The department of PHYS already offers the optional module of "Gender specific teaching" as part of the assistant training (half-daily workshops with lecturers and assistant of a particular course).

The department of HEST as well as the department of MTEC further intend to evaluate their current research and education activities on the basis of gender aspects and to make adjustments if necessary.

The department of INFK hopes to reform the Bachelor's programme, according to which the first year examination will be split into smaller parts. This is based on the hypothesis that women seem to perform better at exams, if the material is divided into smaller units.

The department of USYS aims to incorporate interdisciplinary competences into their curriculum and further to introduce a balanced mix of learning evaluations in order to best support the various performance types among students.

## Area of Action 3: Reconciliation of Studies, Career and Family

Many departments improve the implementation measures available ETH-wide by extending these with their own measures to ensure the reconciliation of studies, career and family.

The department of HEST aims to provide further financial resources to those leaders that have received the Golden Tricycle award. The same will be true for those women scientists who have received the Marie-Heim-Vögtlin stipend.

The department of PHYS has decided to reschedule the "Zurich Physics Colloquium" to a family-friendly time-period.

In the department of BIOL, the assistant professor concept states that individual solutions are sought out in the case of issues concerning reconciliation of research and family. Furthermore, assistant professors with young children will appointed additional support personnel (for example through the resources of the respective professors) such that their particular research field may continue unhindered. Tight cooperation between assistant professors and full professors will be required for this measure to work.

In the department of USYS, the resource manager was instructed to make financial resources from motherhood insurance directly available to the respective unit of the mother.

The department of HEST discusses the problem that financial resources from motherhood insurance may expire at the end of the year if they had not yet been requested. This problem creates a structure that encourages the use of resources from units that are not affected by motherhood.

## Area of Action 4: Sexual Harassment/Work Climate

Almost all departments have explicitly stated, to ensure a “women-friendly” work climate free from discrimination. They emphasise to follow a zero-tolerance policy concerning sexual discrimination.

In that respect, the department of INFK has created its own rules of conduct, that was handed to all new students at the beginning of the fall semester 2014. This code of conduct was created and launched by the department leaders. Other departments and ETH Zurich as a whole may reference this code of conduct in related activities.

## Implementation within the Administrative Divisions

In Summer of 2014, the administrative divisions LET, SoC, Staff of Scientific Coordination and the Career Centre have put forth their reports concerning the Gender Action Plan. In Fall of 2014, these reports were extended with plans for 2015.

### Area of Action 1: Career Development within Academia

Strategies that were successful over the past years are upheld. As an example, this includes measures by the Career Centre. The Career Centre regularly holds numerous events pertaining to the subject “Careers”. Furthermore, they hold application trainings and offer individual career guidance. Target audience are all students as well as postdocs and senior scientists.

The talent support programme Femtec will also be continued, which is a special support programme exclusively for excellent female students that is maintained in cooperation with 9 technical universities and 10 internationally active top employers. The programme aims to increase the number of ETH applications by public outreach.

The coaching programme by the SoC will be continued as well, and it’s disproportionately often made use of by female students. These coaching sessions encourage and support students to overcome motivational lows, to deal with stress and to develop successful work strategies.

At the start of 2015, the SoC of the executive board will present a new concept to support talented students on the Bachelor’s level. The concept envisages a joint programme for young female and male scientists under special observation of gender aspects. The concept is expected to be detailed over the following months.

The staff of the SoC will continue to support the aforementioned “Women’s Club” LIMES (D-MAVT/D-ITET), for young women interested in studying at ETH, in organisational matters. For 2015, the SoC aims to publicise this union as good practice in other departments and in student organisations. In this context, the rector plans an appropriate appearance.

The staff of professorships and the office of equal opportunities hold a yearly lunch workshop on the subject of appointment procedures, for female postdocs exclusively. This workshop has received much praise and as such it is intended to offer these workshops every semester.

## Area of Action 2: Gender Aspects in Research and Education

In light of the consideration of gender aspects in research, the staff of scientific coordination – group research coordination – has adapted the guidelines for instruments for internal research support (ETH grants, ETH fellows, pioneer fellows). The adaptations were approved of by the vice president for research and corporate relations and by the research commission of ETH Zurich in Summer of 2014 and are as follows:

### **ETH Grants:**

Section 10. Gender Aspects (S.3)

*“ETH Zurich strives to promote gender equality in scientific research by integrating the gender dimension into the research content in all fields of research. Research in gender studies is also being supported through the ETH Grants funding programme.*

- *Gender must be consistently taken into account throughout the whole research cycle (from the proposal to the research and dissemination phase) if it involves humans as research objects (e.g., as patients, consumers, end-users or as citizens in surveys) and must be considered in the experimental design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of the outcomes. If the gender dimension for such research is not being considered, a justification must be supplied why it is not being addressed.*
- *Research not directly involving humans should adopt the principles of gender-sensitive research if appropriate (e.g., fundamental research on genomics, development of materials for use in the biomedical sector, product design).”*

Section 12. Evaluation: Review, Recommendation and Decision Procedures (S.3):

*“Review criteria are as follows:*

- *[...]*
- *Are gender aspects being considered where appropriate? [...]*

**ETH Fellows:** equivalent to ETH Grants

### **ETH Pioneer Fellows:**

Section: Evaluation criteria (S.2)

*“(..)A gender sensitive approach in the composition of the team, in the design of the service or the product and in the consideration of the market approach.*

With respect to the evaluation of departments, the staff of scientific coordination – group strategy and university development – has adjusted the guidelines for the nomination procedure of experts in Summer of 2014 to state in paraphrase: *“It is to be ensured that women are represented in committees in a balanced manner and that a diverse spectrum of nationalities be kept among evaluators”*. In the guidelines for self-evaluation of the departments, the departments are now further requested to provide information about *„measures to support women and a diverse environment on all levels“*. The team of reviewers, that provides field-specific feedback to the departments in order to support them in their development, has additionally received the task: *„Assess the department’s measures to foster gender balance and diversity on all levels.“*

For many years, innovations in education at ETH Zurich have been financed by a special fund “Innovendum”, that is integrated into the rectorate. For 2015, one subject for so-called focus projects will be “inter- and trans-disciplinary study projects”. It is intended to support those study projects that develop integral and particularly inter-disciplinary strategies to relevant problems. Furthermore, those

study projects, that address the connection between education, research, career and society with emphasis, shall be supported in particular. The division rectorate assumes that such innovative study projects will contribute to decreasing the gender gap in teaching.

For the integration of gender aspects in education, we further direct to the LET. The LET has been offering didactic courses at university level for many years, and gender aspects are addressed therein as well. Furthermore, courses are offered specifically to lecturers. Corresponding opportunities will continue to be offered.

In addition, the LET will develop specific measures in cooperation with the office of equal opportunities, with the goal of making courses and examinations equally attractive and appropriate for women and men. Specifically for the start of 2015, the LET plans to establish a work group of motivated lecturers in order to enable a direct exchange of experiences and to allow input by external experts. Based on improved know how, the criteria for Innovendum grant proposals will be extended with a gender-specific component in the second half of 2015.

### Area of Action 3: Reconciliation of Studies, Career and Family

For many years, ETH Zurich has been supporting personnel and students with childcare. Since October of 2014, all ETH members, whose young children have to be taken care of outside of the family, receive a subsidy such that they do not pay more for infant care than they do for childcare, regardless of the day nursery in question.

Starting on 1 December 2014, the division of human resources will maintain the service post "Hello kids!". There, (prospective) parents will receive information pertaining to external childcare, individual counselling on the subject of childcare and intermediation for individual care solutions. This offer is available for all employees and students of ETH Zurich. The service post will further be responsible for evaluating recompenses for childcare expenses for infants.

Starting in May of 2015, 11 additional spaces for children will be made temporarily available on the campus Höggerberg. These spaces will be distributed and maintained by the kihz foundation, but they will exclusively be financed by ETH Zurich. In Autumn of 2016, a new kihz day-care centre will be opened on the campus Höggerberg, whose funding will be significantly contributed to by ETH Zurich.

### Area of Action 4: Sexual Harassment/Work Climate

Encouraged by the efforts of the departments, the rectorate evaluates the introduction of an "ETH Code", with which students will be obliged to follow specific rules of conduct.



## **Contact**

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