



# Gender Equality Plan

2025-2028



# GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AGH University of Kraków treats gender equality as a core academic value and a condition for research quality, innovation, and excellent education. A university that ensures safe conditions for learning and work, and supports people in developing their potential without bias, builds stronger teams, makes better decisions, and delivers higher-quality science and technology.

This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) for 2025–2028 builds on quantitative and qualitative research conducted among students and staff, analysis of representation across the university, and a review of institutional documents. The diagnosis confirms that most people experience AGH as a space of generally equal treatment. It also identifies persistent barriers that slow progress and reduce trust, especially around senior careers, leadership representation, work–life balance, and effective responses to unequal treatment and harassment.

Key patterns include: (1) vertical segregation in academic careers, with women underrepresented at the professorial level; (2) persistent gender imbalance in decision-making bodies; (3) heavy workloads and administrative burdens that affect well-being and productivity; (4) a gap between formal policies and everyday practice; and (5) limited confidence in reporting procedures due to concerns about confidentiality, retaliation, and effectiveness.

The Action Plan translates these findings into coordinated commitments across seven objectives: strengthening equality institutions and procedures; raising awareness and knowledge; supporting equal access to careers and recruitment; promoting inclusive teaching and student life; supporting work–life balance and caregiving roles; increasing diversity in decision-making; and preventing harassment while ensuring safety. AGH will monitor progress through regular reporting, evaluation, and systematic data collection.

## FOREWORD

The diversity of perspectives and experiences in the academic context strengthens academic excellence, creativity, and innovation. Gender equality therefore represents more than compliance with external requirements. It expresses how the university understands quality, fairness, and the public role of science and technology.

When unequal treatment occurs, whether through stereotypes, dismissive behaviour, exclusion from opportunities, or failures to respond to harassment, the university loses potential.

Individual careers slow down, trust weakens, and institutional effectiveness declines. In a time of rapid technological and social change, AGH accepts responsibility for creating a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all members of its community.

This Gender Equality Plan sets out AGH's commitments for 2025–2028. It focuses on practical solutions: stronger procedures, better leadership and communication, more inclusive teaching and research environments, and consistent accountability. AGH will treat equality as a shared institutional responsibility across governance, faculties, and administrative units.

## WHAT THIS PLAN COVERS

The Gender Equality Plan addresses five areas:

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

Gender interacts with academic and professional status, career stage, caregiving responsibilities, age, nationality, disability, neurodiversity, and psychosexual identity. This Plan therefore addresses equality as a structural and cultural issue, not as an individual problem.

## HOW AGH DEVELOPED THE GEP

AGH developed the Gender Equality Plan through a comprehensive diagnostic process that combined quantitative surveys, analysis of representation across the university, review of internal regulations, and qualitative research focused on experiences of equality within AGH structures. This mixed-methods approach helped identify both measurable patterns and cultural mechanisms shaping opportunities, safety, and participation.

# WHERE AGH STANDS TODAY: KEY FINDINGS

## 1) ACADEMIC AND TEACHING STAFF: CAREERS AND PROGRESSION

Women constitute 30.4% of AGH's academic and teaching staff, while men represent 69.6%. Representation declines sharply with seniority: women hold only 15% of professorial positions, a figure that has remained unchanged since the previous GEP cycle. Although women steadily obtain doctoral and postdoctoral degrees, this progress does not translate into proportional advancement to senior roles.

Research suggests several mechanisms that limit progression. Staff point to heavy teaching and administrative workloads that reduce time for research and professional development. Women also report that promotion criteria often fail to account for career breaks linked to parenthood. Requirements such as extended research stays abroad can indirectly disadvantage those with caregiving responsibilities.

AGH also needs to address fairness in access to resources. Respondents more often describe men as beneficiaries of informal privileges, such as better access to senior guidance, decision-making networks, recognition, and institutional support, while women more often describe additional duties and less visible work. Even when many people do not perceive gender differences in everyday tasks, those who do describe patterns that can accumulate across careers.

This Plan therefore prioritises transparent criteria, mentoring, leadership development, and practical measures that help staff balance research, teaching, administration, and care responsibilities.

## 2) ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF: RECOGNITION, DEVELOPMENT, AND COOPERATION

Administrative staff often describe career paths as short or unclear. Many employees see promotions mainly when positions become vacant, and they report limited incentives, unclear evaluation criteria, and uneven distribution of workload. Respondents also describe unequal treatment of people in similar roles, reflected in differences in pay and responsibilities.

AGH also needs to address the institutional divide between academic and administrative staff. Administrative employees sometimes experience dismissive remarks and discriminatory behaviour from academic staff. Because administrative roles at AGH are predominantly held by women and academic positions predominantly by men, this divide often reflects intersecting inequalities of gender and professional status.

At the same time, academic staff often express frustration with bureaucracy and the quality of administrative processes, especially in areas such as research project management. Both perspectives point to the same institutional need: AGH must improve cooperation, clarify responsibilities, invest in digitisation, and strengthen management competencies.

Despite the challenges, many administrative employees report overall satisfaction with their work at AGH. Pay remains the main source of dissatisfaction, especially among women. Overall, recognition, career development paths, and transparent workload management are key areas for improvement.

### 3) STUDENTS: STUDY EXPERIENCE, WELL-BEING, AND INCLUSION

Students most often report overload, burnout, and mental health strain. Organisational challenges related to teaching schedules, assessment methods, and administrative procedures affect students across faculties. These pressures matter for equality because they disproportionately affect students who already face barriers, such as caregiving responsibilities, health issues, neurodiversity, or financial constraints.

International students face additional challenges. Limited access to information in English can reduce participation and create dependence on informal support. Clear communication becomes a core inclusion measure.

Students also share expectations that the university will support women's visibility in STEM, provide mentoring and skills development, and address stereotypes and inappropriate behaviour from peers and staff. These measures should be strengthened through teaching standards, training, and transparent reporting pathways.

### 4) LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING

AGH governance structures show persistent gender imbalance. Men dominate senior leadership positions across central bodies, faculties, and parts of the administration. This imbalance does not reflect the diversity of the university community.

Research links this pattern to interconnected factors: (1) structural barriers that slow women's academic progression; (2) work-life balance constraints and limited flexibility; (3) cultural assumptions about authority and competence; and (4) psychological barriers linked to confidence and belonging in male-dominated environments. These mechanisms reinforce each other and reduce women's access to visible, influential roles.

At the same time, respondents express mixed attitudes toward affirmative measures. Many people support gender balance in decision-making, yet some resist quotas or targeted programmes, often because they equate them with lower standards.

## 5) EQUALITY IN RESEARCH AND TEACHING

Staff report that heavy teaching loads and administrative burdens reduce time for research and limit participation in grant activity. Administrative processes can hinder rather than support research, especially where reporting requirements are complex.

Many employees describe the strong positive impact of supportive supervisors and senior colleagues. However, access to this support often depends on luck rather than a systematic leadership model. Mentoring and leadership competence should be strengthened so that good supervision becomes a standard expectation rather than an exception.

Students and staff also report that stereotypes and subtle bias can affect perceptions of competence, especially in STEM contexts. Therefore, integrating gender (and broader diversity perspectives, often called "gender+") into research and teaching is crucial for not reproducing stereotypes.

## 6) WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Balancing work and personal life poses a major challenge at AGH. Many employees describe long working hours, blurred boundaries, and high expectations that extend beyond formal schedules. Administrative staff emphasise the need for flexible working hours and clear rules for hybrid and remote work. Academic staff describe a different challenge related to flexibility: work that extends into evenings and weekends as teaching schedules stretch across the day and administrative demands continue to grow.

Low digitisation and limited automation create additional burdens for both staff groups and also generate tensions between academic and administrative units. Digitisation, workload management, and clear remote-work rules can be seen as equality measures because they directly affect well-being and fair access to opportunities.

# SAFETY, RESPECT, AND EQUAL TREATMENT

Most members of the AGH community experience the university as a space of generally equal treatment. Most respondents report no direct experiences of discrimination, inequality, or harassment.

At the same time, unequal treatment persists and disproportionately affects women and non-binary persons. These experiences often arise in contexts marked by power asymmetries, such as teaching relationships or hierarchical workplace structures. Even when individual incidents are perceived as minor, such as sexist jokes, stereotypes, or dismissive behaviour, they contribute to a culture that normalises inequality and discourages reporting.

## WHAT STUDENTS REPORT

Students most often describe verbal misconduct: sexist jokes, comments that question women's competence, and stereotypes that treat women's presence in STEM as exceptional or less legitimate. Many incidents occur in public settings such as classes, which shows that parts of the community still treat inappropriate language as acceptable.

Some students also report sexualised comments, intrusive remarks about appearance, unwanted invitations, or inappropriate physical behaviour. These incidents remain less common than jokes and stereotyping, yet they require a clear institutional response because they harm safety, dignity, and trust.

## WHAT STAFF REPORT

Staff more often describe unequal treatment that reflects workplace power dynamics. Women report being undermined, patronised, or assigned tasks based on stereotypes rather than competencies. Some employees report disrespectful forms of address, such as diminutives or omission of academic titles, especially when people address women informally while addressing men formally in the same context.

Staff also describe discrimination linked to parenthood, both having and not having children, and difficulties when returning from parental leave. These institutional challenges require clear standards, leadership competence, and accountability.

# HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA

Research indicates a decline in homophobia among students compared to earlier findings, though incidents still occur, often among peers. A significant theme in the 2024 findings concerns transphobia, including misgendering, dismissive comments, and barriers to using affirmed names and identities in university systems. Inclusion measures in communication, systems, and support services should be strengthened.

## KEY BARRIERS AND WHAT THE COMMUNITY EXPECTS

### WHAT STAFF REPORT

Research identifies several barriers that limit effective responses to unequal treatment at AGH. These barriers matter because they prevent learning, delay intervention, and undermine trust.

- Limited awareness of reporting mechanisms and available support
- Low trust in institutional effectiveness
- Fear of retaliation (career delays for staff; unfair treatment during assessments for students)
- Fear of secondary victimisation and victim blaming
- A gap between formal policies and everyday practice (procedures exist “on paper” but do not translate into action)
- Fragmentation of equality initiatives across university structures
- Concerns about confidentiality and anonymity for complainants and witnesses

### WHAT STUDENTS AND STAFF EXPECT

Students and staff support expect the university to act consistently, communicate clearly, and protect people who report problems. Key expectations include:

- Clear anti-discrimination and anti-mobbing procedures, applied consistently
- Visible consequences for proven violations and protection against retaliation
- Leadership and management training that improves communication and reduces power abuse

- Better information and stronger visibility of equality initiatives and reporting options
- Psychological support for those affected by unequal treatment, harassment, or violence
- Inclusive teaching standards and fair assessment practices
- Targeted support for groups with specific needs (e.g., neurodivergent students; transgender and non-binary people; international students)

## ACTION PLAN 2025–2028

The Action Plan translates the diagnosis into institutional commitments. AGH will implement actions across seven strategic objectives.

### OBJECTIVE 1. STRENGTHEN EQUALITY INSTITUTIONS AND PROCEDURES

AGH will strengthen the structures that protect equal treatment and make them trusted, visible, and effective. Clear procedures and reliable support reduce fear and increase fairness.

Key actions:

- Strengthen the Equality Ombudsman role and ensure visibility across the university
- Develop and implement a clear anti-discrimination procedure, including reporting and follow-up steps
- Develop and implement an anti-mobbing procedure
- Update the Equal Treatment Policy
- Expand the GEP Team to support implementation across organisational levels
- Introduce mediation as an official conflict-resolution mechanism and build a trained mediator pool
- Monitor disciplinary proceedings related to discrimination, harassment, and violence, and use lessons to improve practice
- Review internal documents to ensure equal opportunities and accessibility
- Establish a role responsible for data collection on gender and intersectional inequalities

### OBJECTIVE 2. BUILD AWARENESS, KNOWLEDGE, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

AGH will strengthen community knowledge about inequality and its consequences. Awareness reduces resistance, improves everyday behaviour, and supports a culture where people feel safe to speak up.

Key actions:

- Run a university-wide information campaign on equal treatment, reporting options, and available support
- Organise an annual Equality Day that connects education, community building, and visibility
- Disseminate research findings from the GEP diagnosis in accessible formats
- Provide training for leaders and committee members on equal treatment, bias, and fair decision-making
- Promote inclusion and accessibility as core principles in innovation and technology design
- Offer training on gender (gender+) perspectives in research and technology development
- Launch an annual competition for theses that integrate gender, diversity, and equality perspectives
- Offer training on psychological safety, respectful communication, and conflict prevention

## OBJECTIVE 3. SUPPORT FAIR RECRUITMENT AND EQUAL ACCESS TO ACADEMIC CAREERS

AGH will strengthen fairness in recruitment, evaluation, and career development. Transparent criteria and systematic mentoring help reduce the effects of informal networks and unequal access to resources.

Key actions:

- Improve visibility of academic career paths and clarify expectations at each stage
- Train staff involved in recruitment on equal treatment and diversity
- Provide mentoring at early career stages, especially for people from vulnerable groups
- Ensure diverse recruitment and examination committees where feasible
- Strengthen peer networking for researchers at similar career stages

## OBJECTIVE 4. PROMOTE INCLUSIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LIFE

AGH will strengthen teaching standards and student support to ensure that all students can learn safely and effectively.

Key actions:

- Implement solutions that allow transgender and transitioning people to communicate in internal systems in line with their identity (where legally possible)
- Support creating spaces and formats for dialogue about students' expectations regarding equal treatment
- Develop practical brochures and guidance on diversity and inclusion for students
- Strengthen integration and support for international students and staff, including English-language information

## OBJECTIVE 5. SUPPORT WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND CAREGIVING ROLES

AGH will recognize work-life balance as a central equality concern. Clear rules and supportive arrangements reduce burnout and help people sustain long-term academic and professional development.

Key actions:

- Identify and implement mechanisms that support effective remote, flexible, and hybrid work
- Assess the feasibility of aligning parts of the academic calendar with local school holidays
- Digitise processes and documents to reduce bureaucracy and improve service quality
- Introduce clear arrangements for people taking or returning from parental leave in teaching and research work
- Strengthen information policy on employee rights and available support
- Expand professional psychological support for students and staff
- Develop training and materials on burnout prevention, work-life balance, and healthy work practices

## OBJECTIVE 6. INCREASE DIVERSITY IN DECISION-MAKING BODIES

AGH recognizes that the diversity of leadership and decision-making is a matter of fairness and institutional quality.

Key actions:

- Develop guidelines for assessing competencies for managerial and decision-making roles

- Introduce leadership development pathways and strengthen accountability for managerial standards
- Implement procedures that increase women's participation in decision-making bodies and committees while maintaining transparent competence criteria
- Apply diversity principles in committee composition and nomination processes

## OBJECTIVE 7. PREVENT HARASSMENT AND ENSURE SAFETY

AGH will treat harassment and violence as incompatible with academic values. The university will strengthen prevention, clear response pathways, and support for those affected.

Key actions:

- Include anti-harassment content in compulsory training for employees and students
- Develop and implement training for leaders on preventing mobbing and misuse of power
- Introduce mandatory leadership-skills training for people who manage others
- Provide psychological assistance for people experiencing violence or harassment at the university
- Develop language guidelines supporting inclusive and non-violent communication
- Strengthen cooperation and exchange of good practices with other universities
- Provide supervision and support for people handling violations (e.g., ombuds roles, mediators, committee chairs)
- Evaluate actions implemented under earlier GEP cycles and use results to improve measures
- Collect and analyse data on student well-being and inclusion to guide interventions

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# TEAM

## THE GENDER EQUALITY PLAN FOR AGH WAS DEVELOPED BY THE GEP TEAM FOR THE YEARS 2021–2024.

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