

SOUTH-WEST UNIVERSITY “NEOFIT RILSKI”

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

2021-2024

**Approved by the Rector of SWU "Neofit Rilski"
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INTRODUCTION

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) aims to propose a conceptual vision and practical measures for systematization, institutionalization and improvement of gender equality policies in SWU "Neofit Rilski".

The preparation of the Plan and its implementation are within the Project "Supporting and Implementing Plans for Gender Equality in Academia and Research (SPEAR)", funded from the European Commission under Horizon 2020.

The plan is made taking into account the most important documents of the UN, the European Union and the Republic of Bulgaria, providing the basis for the policy for achieving gender equality worldwide, on European and national level and above all the decisions of the European Commission related to Gender Equality in the European Research Area, among which the European Commission's "Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025"¹ and the Policy Report "Towards a 2030 Vision on the Future of Universities in Europe"², as well as the "Law on Equality of Women and Men in the Republic of Bulgaria"³ and "National Strategy for the Promotion of Equality between Women and Men 2021-2030 in the Republic of Bulgaria"⁴.

The plan is consistent with mission and objectives of the SPEAR project, the which operates with four overall objectives: increasing the number of RPOs with implemented Gender Equality Plans (GEPs), removing barriers and improving career prospects for women in academia, improving the gender balance in decision-making bodies and strengthening the gender dimension in research content.

The plan is based on the information and conclusions contained in the Status Quo Assessment - Overview Report, implemented within the SPEAR project, as well as on the data from the research on the state of gender equality at SWU "Neofit Rilski".

The main task of the adoption of the Plan is the creation of a system for institutionalization of the activities related to gender equality in SWU. A special Commission for Gender Equality will be set up to carry out this task.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152>

² <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a3cde934-12a0-11eb-9a54-01aa75ed71a1>

³ <https://www.lex.bg/bg/laws/ldoc/2136803101>

⁴ https://www.mod.bg/bg/doc/ravnopostavenost/20210119_National_strategy_2021-2030.pdf

The chairman of the Commission will be the vice-rector of SWU "Neofit Rilski". It will include vice-deans of the nine faculties, the chairman of the Ethics Commission of SWU, the head of the department "University Staff" and gender equality experts from the university. In determining the composition of the commission, priority will be given to the principle of observing the gender equality of its representatives.

The Commission will lead and monitor the implementation of the GEP. It will work in collaboration with the University Staff Department, the Ethics Committee, the Needs Committee, the Quality Department, the Student Council, the Center for Research and raising the qualification of University Staff on Gender Equality, external experts and related organizations.

The Commission will carry out its activities permanently, with regular meetings during each semester.

A Center for Research and raising the qualification of University Staff on Gender Equality will also be established. Its main activities will be focused on:

- conducting systematic surveys, which will provide constant and appropriate in terms of quantity and quality statistical and sociological data;
- implementation of trainings for raising the awareness and qualification of the representatives at all levels (higher, secondary and executive) of the management staff, as well as of the lecturers and the administrative staff in SWU on the issues of gender equality and possible ways and means for its improvement.

The center will be built as a structure of the Faculty of Philosophy of SWU. The head of the center will be an established lecturer and researcher of gender equality. Members of the center will be gender equality experts from the faculty. The center will include one representative from the specialties of philosophy, political science, sociology, psychology, as well as one specialist in social pedagogy and one specialist one specialist in social equality from other faculties of the university. If necessary, they will be attracted and external experts from research institutions and NGOs researching gender equality issues. The inclusion of experts in the composition of the center will respect the principle of gender equality of its representatives.

The Center will operate on a permanent basis, presenting a work plan and reporting to the Commission on Gender Equality at the beginning of each semester.

The financing of the work of the Center will be carried out on the basis of the existing regulations in SWU for financing the educational, research and applied centers established at the University.

The plan covers the period 2021-2024.

The tasks set in the Plan will be implemented in two stages.

First stage: until April 2023. Second stage - until the end of 2024

At the first stage, until the end of the project, there will be:

- the main institutional changes are set;
- the main mechanisms for achieving a greater degree of gender equality have been put in place;

- prepared the main stakeholders and institutional actors that will carry out the specific activities.

In the second stage, after the end of the project, this institutionalized system will take care of maintaining and improving the mechanisms for ensuring gender equality.

Within each stage, work plans with a scope of one semester will be developed, which will specify and adapt in accordance with the changing conditions the current general (conceptual) plan. The plans will be based on a specially developed, based on the requirements of the European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 and Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans, methodology for conducting empirical research to collect and process data that will serve to improve the application of the global GEP at the university. Technology for systematic receipt of information from the authorized university units (Department of University Personnel, Department of Information Security, Department of Financial and Accounting) related to the representation of different genders in the university staff will also be adopted.

Within the semester plans, a special place will be given to conducting trainings for raising the awareness and qualification of the university staff - management, lecturers, administration, doctoral students and students. These trainings will examine the state and policies for gender equality in SWU and the nature and tasks of the GEP of the University. The trainings will be conducted by gender equality experts - members of the SWU team under the SPEAR project, members of the Center for Research and raising the qualification of University Staff on Gender Equality, professors from other faculties of SWU and external experts.

In order to achieve the set goal, according to which the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) of SWU must propose a conceptual vision and practical measures for systematization, institutionalization and improvement of gender equality policies in SWU "Neofit Rilski" and taking into account the fundamental principles set out in the „European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025“ and the „Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans“, SWU GEP includes four main areas for understanding, systematizing, institutionalizing and implementing gender equality policy in SWU " Neofit Rilski":

1. Creating a system for management and development of the environment, affirming and developing gender equality;
2. Institutional support for achieving gender equality in research and teaching;
3. Combining personal and professional life;
4. Conducting systematic research on the status and trends in gender equality in SWU.

In each of these areas, specific tasks have been formulated - a total of 22 in number, which outline the content of the activities and determine the deadlines and indicators for evaluating the results of the implementation of the gender equality plan in SWU.

SWU's GEP identifies the stakeholders, responsible entities and contractors that will be involved in its implementation in the life of the University. It is the first, initial plan, creating the framework for the development of further plans, which will further develop and improve the policies for gender equality in SWU.

The plan, in order to be realistic and not to provoke excessive resistance, is in line with the current needs and capabilities of SWU, as well as with the existing public understandings and attitudes at the university, in the region and in the country, but at the same time is aimed at achieving the required European standards on gender equality in higher education and research.

1. ESTABLISHMENT OF A SYSTEM FOR MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT, AFFIRMING AND DEVELOPING GENDER EQUALITY				
TASK	IMPLEMENTATION	RESULTS	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND CONTROL	DEADLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION
1. Building a system for institutionalization of activities to ensure gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a Commission for Gender Equality, assisting in the implementation of the plan • Establishment of a Center for Research and raising the qualification of University Staff on Gender Equality 	Institutionalized system for ensuring gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rector's leadership • Dean's leadership • Heads of other structures • Team members • Commission • Center 	Second semester 2021 - first semester 2022
2. Implementation of actions leading to institutional visibility in the promotion and implementation of gender equality policies in universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt university regulations and practices to implement the gender equality plan • Dissemination of our achievements in the institutionalization of activities to ensure gender equality 	Links have been established with academic and public institutions, through which information on the establishment of an institutional system for gender equality in SWU has been transmitted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team members • Commission • Center 	Second semester 2021 - second semester 2023
3. Further development of the institutional culture of gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of training for managers at different levels on policies and implementation of the plan • Improving public communication and 	Progress and maintenance of the desired state of gender equality in all areas of the university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Relations Office • Team members • Commission 	First and second period

	<p>organizing campaigns inside and outside the institution to celebrate anniversaries and promote gender equality (websites, social networks and the like)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison with stakeholders from governmental and non-governmental organizations to implement the plan 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center 	
4. Improving the system of employment and career development in terms of its sensitivity to gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observance of gender diversity in the appointment of members of competition commissions • Respect for gender diversity in the recruitment and promotion of staff • Monitoring recruitment and promotion processes through data analysis and proposing additional activities to eliminate gender inequalities 	Equal gender distribution in university bodies, among teaching and non-teaching staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rector's leadership • Dean's leadership • Heads of other structures • Human Resources Department • Team members • Commission • Center 	First and second period
5. Assisting in overcoming stereotypes, prejudices and practices related to gender inequality when occupying hierarchical positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the representation of women in management positions • Promoting good practices showing the successful work of women in management positions at the university • Conducting seminars to improve knowledge of existing stereotypes and prejudices and practices related to gender inequality 	Existence of a policy of equality between women and men in decision-making bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rector's leadership • Dean's leadership • Heads of other structures • Ethics Committee • Team members • Commission • Center 	First and second period
6. Sensitivity to all forms of violence in the workplace (including sexual harassment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting awareness-raising activities on gender-based violence • Analysis of data in this regard in the reports of the Ethics Committee 	A system is set up to periodically inform university staff about gender-based violence and the measures taken to overcome it at the university.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Council • Ethics Committee • Team members • Commission • Center 	First and second period

7. Improving gender equality regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulting stakeholders • Regular control over the regulations of the university. Periodic review of all university documents from the point of view of gender equality • Information on European and other regulations with a view to comparison and improvement 	Creation of university rules and documents, taking into account the perspectives and requirements for gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rector's leadership • Dean's leadership • Quality Department • Team members • Commission • Center 	First and second period
8. Inclusion of gender equality as an integral part of university ethics policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of the Chairman of the Ethics Commission of SWU in the composition of the Commission for Gender Equality. • Conducting regular joint meetings of the Commission for Gender Equality and the Ethics Commission to discuss policies for institutionalization of gender equality in SWU • If necessary, a joint discussion by the Commission on Gender Equality and the Ethics Committee on issues identified by the Commission on Gender Equality in the practice of gender equality at the university. 	Built synergy on gender issues of the Commission for Gender Equality and the Ethics Committee at SWU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics Committee • Team members • Commission • Center 	First and second period

2. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY IN SCIENTIFIC AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES

TASK	IMPLEMENTATION	RESULTS	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND CONTROL	
1. Creating conditions for improving gender equality in scientific and educational activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing practices for gender equality in the appointment of university lecturers • Observance of the principles of gender diversity in the selection of members of the evaluation committees for research projects in the field of science 	Better indicators of gender equality in research and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rector's leadership • Dean's leadership • Team members • Commission • Center 	First and second period

<p>2. To develop gender equality in science and education policy-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting and conducting campaigns that highlight the benefits of gender diversity in research • Creating and promoting profiles of women with successful careers - for example, former students and PhD students from the university who are developing in the scientific field • Stimulating mixed project teams - achieving gender balance 	<p>Equal participation of managerial positions in research projects, scientific forums and holding academic positions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rector's leadership • Dean's leadership • Public Relations Office • Career center • Team members • Commission • Center 	<p>First and second period</p>
<p>3. Promoting research on topics related to gender equality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of systematic training in the Center for advanced training of lecturers, doctoral students and students who emphasize gender perspectives • Institutional recognition for the successful integration of the issue of gender equality, for example by awarding student or doctoral theses that interpret the topic • Encouraging scientific production of lecturers on gender-related topics 	<p>Larger number of student term papers and dissertations, topics for dissertations, scientific publications of lecturers dealing with gender issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors of doctoral students • Team members • Commission • Center 	<p>First and second period</p>
<p>4. Creating institutional conditions to increase representation of women in scientific fields where they are less represented</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and analysis of the reasons for the under-representation of women in some areas: digital technologies, data analysis, blue and green technologies, energy research, climate change and other similar • Conducting educational and motivational activities for students in areas where women are underrepresented • Introduction of specific programs to support women in applying for research projects in these areas 	<p>Improved gender representation in scientific fields where women are underrepresented</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Relations Office • Team members • Commission • Center 	<p>First and second period</p>
<p>5. Creating institutional conditions to increase representation of men in the social sciences and humanities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and analysis of the reasons for the under-representation of men in these sciences • Conducting educational and motivational activities for pupils and students in areas where men are underrepresented: pedagogy and education, philology, administration, 	<p>More balanced representation of men and women in the social sciences and humanities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Relations Office • Career center • Team members • Commission • Center 	<p>First and second period</p>

	<p>tourism and the like.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of specific programs to support men in applying for research projects in these areas 			
6. Promoting women's success in science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting women's scientific contributions by naming classrooms after them • Naming centers and laboratories after successful women in science • Reports on scientific achievements of women at scientific forums • Celebrating holidays related to women's presence in science and education - in scientific forums, social networks, media • Marking various activities /for example of non-governmental organizations/ related to the female presence in science and education - in scientific forums, social networks 	Greater visibility of women's scientific results in the learning process and public space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Relations Office • Career center • Team members • Commission • Center 	First and second period
7. Increasing the media presence on the topic of gender equality in science and the educational process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the number of stakeholders in the media who will help to promote the topic • Communicating with the media on events and practices related to the topic of gender equality 	Published materials or participation in programs on the topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Relations Office • Team members • Commission • Center 	First and second period
8. Institutional support for the integration of the idea of gender equality in curricula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of guidelines and seminars for lecturers on how to integrate gender issues into training courses and programs • Creation of general educational materials suitable for courses at all academic levels: bachelor, doctoral and postgraduate qualification • Introduction of the topic in already established training courses • Introduction of new training courses, more clearly focused on the topic • Discuss the importance of the topic of departmental and faculty councils • Discussion of the topic in the work of scientific centers, scientific forums 	Increased number of training courses and dissertations that touch on the topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team members • Commission • Center 	First and second period

3. COMBINING PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

TASK	IMPLEMENTATION	RESULTS	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND CONTROL	
1. Improving the working environment in the direction of balancing professional and personal commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce, where possible, flexible working conditions (eg flexible working hours) to fulfill professional commitments in line with personal commitments • Stimulation of remote forms of work 	Increased satisfaction with the working environment of the employees and students at the university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rector's leadership • Dean's leadership • Heads of other structures • Team members • Commission • Center 	First and second period
2. To work for services that stimulate the achievement equal careers and development for women and men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a network of allies in the community to support staff and students • Providing controlled spaces in the university, where the children of employees and teachers can stay temporarily (playrooms, classrooms for younger children and the like) 	More users of social services that strive for gender equality in career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rector's leadership • Dean's leadership • Heads of other structures • Team members • Commission • Center 	First period
3. Increasing the authority of the modern man and stimulating responsible fatherhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting events (trainings, information days) by the Center for teachers, staff, PhD students and students to promote understanding of the new role models of different genders in the modern world • Encouraging men to use maternity leave, to take sick leave instead of the mother, to work remotely if possible as a form of assistance in raising children. 	New attitudes and implementation of actions leading to changing the existing stereotypes about the role of the different sexes in the family and professional activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team members • Commission • Center 	First and second period

4. PROVIDING THE NECESSARY INFORMATION ABOUT THE STATUS AND

TRENDS ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY IN SWU

TASK	IMPLEMENTATION	RESULTS	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND CONTROL	
1. Maintain an up-to-date database on gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity of the Center for collection of data on gender equality • Establishment of procedures for systematic collection of quantitative and qualitative data related to gender in digital form 	Built database: a) based on quantitative and qualitative research on gender equality at the University; b) containing initial information on the state of gender equality in SWU; c) following the rhythm of changes in gender equality in the process of application of GEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The departments involved in data collection • Team members • Commission • Center 	First and second period
2. Establishment of an institutional system for collecting data on the attitude of students, doctoral students and employees towards gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey of students to what extent the topic is set in the training and their opinion about the state of affairs • Survey of teachers to what extent the topic is set in the training and their opinion about the state of affairs • Research of teaching materials for pupils and students from the point of view of hidden gender discrimination 	Built database for the attitude of students, PhD students and staff towards gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The departments involved in data collection • Team members • Commission • Center 	First and second period
3. Systematic informing the community inside and outside the university about the available data on gender equality at the university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of reports • Periodic dissemination of data - through the site, press releases, etc. • Dissemination of data on the progress in the implementation of the plan 	Increased awareness of the staff of the university, the city, the country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team members • Commission • enter 	First and second period

The draft plan was approved by the Academic Council of SWU "Neofit Rilski.



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