

Gender Equality Plan 2022



University of Belgrade
FACULTY OF
GEOGRAPHY

University of Belgrade – Faculty of Geography

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Context

The new Framework Program for Research and Innovation for the period 2021–2027, Horizon Europe, has introduced new provisions to strengthen gender equality in European organizations at a systemic level. In particular, for all research institutions and higher education institutions, the adoption of a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) has become a necessary requirement to access the funding from the Horizon research program Europe.

The action of the European Commission is part of the EU strategy for the equality of gender 2020–2025. Research institutions and higher education institutions are required to adopt the Gender Equality Plan by the European Commission in order to participate in all Horizon Europe calls expiring in 2022 and beyond. Once submitted, the project proposal for funding is evaluated, and the partners of the consortium have time to confirm that they have had adopted the GEP until they sign the Grant Agreement. The implementation of the GEP does not affect the evaluation of the project, but it is mandatory at the time of signing the Grant Agreement.

The participation of all stakeholders is recommended in the process of drafting and implementing the GEP. The participatory process for the drafting and implementation of the GEP is relevant in order to overcome obstacles and resistances. In particular, the European Commission requires the involvement of the Rector/Rector or the Director of the institution, Director/General Manager, school principals, Directors/Directors of Departments, teaching and research staff, technical administrative staff, students, Human Resources Office.

When proposing projects for Horizon Europe the European Commission requests a self-declaration submitted in the form of an online

questionnaire that lists the four mandatory process-related GEP requirements as well as the five recommended subject areas.

The following four requirements are the minimal building blocks:

- The GEP must be a public document approved and signed by the bodies at the top of the institution and published on the institution's website in accordance with the data protection legislation;
- specific human and financial resources must be dedicated for the design, implementation and monitoring of the GEP, including funding for job positions dedicated to the issue of equality or groups responsible for gender equality;
- the GEP must include provisions for data collection and monitoring, evenly distributed by gender and related to students and teaching staff, researchers and IT technicians, administrative staff and librarians; an updated annual report with indicators must be prepared and available on the institution's site;
- the GEP must be supported by training and capacity building. In particular, the training of staff and decision makers on the issues of gender and equal opportunities.

The European Commission indicates the following five minimum priority areas of intervention to which specific measures should be dedicated:

1. Work-life balance and culture of the organization;
2. Gender balance in top positions and in decision-making bodies;
3. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression;
4. Gender studies in research; and in teaching programs;
5. Addressing gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.

The University of Belgrade (UB) is a top-class research and higher education institution in Serbia. Along with teaching activities, with more than 150 programs at the undergraduate level and a large number of highly specialized graduate-level programs, the UB is a leader in scientific research in both Serbia and the neighbouring countries. The University of Belgrade consists of 31 faculties and 13 research institutes.

University of Belgrade - Faculty of Geography (hereinafter referred to as the UB-GEF) is a scientific and research institution dedicated to academic excellence. The UB-GEF was founded in 1893. It is a member

of UB and a leading accredited faculty in Serbia in the field of geosciences, with more than 1,500 students at 3 levels of studies: undergraduate, master, and doctoral studies.

The National Entity for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education and the Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Serbia have concluded that the UB-GEF and its study programs on undergraduate (5 study programs), master (6 study programs) and doctoral studies (1 study program) meet the requirements, and have issued a Certificate of Accreditation.

By offering top-quality education and research, the UB-GEF contributes to creation and transfer of knowledge, education, scientific and technological development, innovation, and intellectual growth of a multicultural society in which it is situated. Bearing in mind that equality, as a founding stone, is incorporated in the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, it should be a framework of reference that directs the aspirations and behaviours and should be incorporated into the university life. The strong commitment towards gender equality must be present in every field of action: creation and transfer of knowledge.

The UB-GEF's mission is to provide education on a highest level, not only in terms of intellectual development, but as well in terms of personal and ethical development. All faculty activities are aimed at overall development and improvement of the basic human rights and freedoms.

This Gender Equality Plan (acronym GEP) 2022-2025 integrates gender policies outlined in the strategic plan of the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Geography.

The Gender Equality at The UB-GEF relies on a national legal framework:

- The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia (2006),
- Law on Prohibition of Discrimination (2009),
- Law on Gender Equality (2021),
- Law on the Protector of Citizens (2021),
- National Gender Equality Strategy for the period of 2021-2030,
- National Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 – Women, Peace and Security in the Republic of Serbia (2017-2020).

There are also documents adopted by UB and the UB-GEF relating to gender equality:

- Statute of the University of Belgrade,
- Regulation Act on prevention and protection against sexual harassment at the University of Belgrade,
- Regulation Act on the manner and procedures of acquiring the title and employment of teachers at the University of Belgrade,
- Regulation Act on student enrolment at the University of Belgrade,
- Regulation Act on exams and grading

Activities of the UB-GEF have been established based on the Strategy on Scientific and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016 – 2020 - “Research for Innovation”, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia. The Strategy itself contains the following goal regarding gender equality: “Gender and minority equality will be established at all levels of decision making and gender budgeting will be implemented according to the Guidelines for gender budgeting at the national level in the Republic of Serbia, provided by the Coordination Body for Gender Equality of the Government of Serbia” (National Gender Equality Strategy, 2016).

In addition to the national legal framework for the promotion of gender equality, the UB-GEF also relies on international documents regulating the field of higher education (The European Charter for Researchers and The Code of Conduct for Recruitment), declaring its commitment to the principles proclaimed in these documents. The UB-GEF strives to fully implement the recommendations adopted by the European Commission, with special emphasis on achieving gender equality among employees at all levels, including mentoring and institution management (The European Charter for Researchers, 2005).

General policy

The UB-GEF shall be a workplace of equal opportunities, where all employees regardless of age, gender, religious or other beliefs, ethnicity, disabilities, transgender identity or sexual orientation are able to thrive and progress professionally. In planning and decision making, the UB-GEF shall consider the effects on equality and diversity.

Gender equality is also an important part of the systematic efforts to improve the UB-GEF work environment. The work to promote equal rights and opportunities shall take place in cooperation with the employees.

No one at the UB-GEF should feel discriminated and the UB-GEF shall facilitate the employees' work-life balance. The possibility to choose work tasks shall be equal for all employees.

The UB-GEF has its organizational policy, regulations and procedures clearly outlined and explained in the 'Statute of the UB-GEF'. The Statute is an official document that regulates internal policies, practices, and procedures relating to general management, organization, operations, and other relevant aspects. The Statute is reviewed periodically, and necessary changes are introduced in order to reflect important developments. This document constitutes the cornerstone of the UB-GEF's commitment to building a supportive and inclusive work environment.

The policy of the UB-GEF is to provide equal employment opportunities to all employees; to prohibit discrimination in employment because of race, ethnicity, colour, religion, national origin, gender identity, gender and sexual orientation, marital status, political affiliation, age or handicap; and to enable gender equality. This policy sets the basis for the Gender Equality Plan.

There is zero tolerance toward sexual harassment, gender-based and discrimination-based violence and in case of occurrence, disciplinary actions, including termination of employment, will be taken. If needed, legal action will also be taken according to the respective legislation in Serbia (Regulation Act on Prevention and Protection against Sexual Harassment at the University of Belgrade (July 8, 2021, "Gazette of the University of Belgrade", No. 227)).

At the UB-GEF, compensation is determined based on the employee's seniority rank or level within the organization, their qualifications, education and training, professional experience, years of work experience, salary history and their demonstrated commitment to the organization. So far, such policy, regulations and procedures have contributed to the establishment and consolidation of a healthy organizational culture, where gender equality is viewed as an asset. In order to maintain such standards, and progress simultaneously, the organization

invested in the preparation of the Gender Equality Plan.

This Gender Equality Plan is considered as an important instrument in ensuring a gender-balanced work environment, and is structured in line with the European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy considerations: (1) work-life balance and organizational culture; (2) gender balance in leadership and decision-making; (3) gender equality in recruitment and career progression; (4) integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content; (5) measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment.

The UB-GEF is committed to taking the necessary actions in order to create structural changes, and achieve and maintain a high level of gender equality at all levels and in all areas of work and research by implementing the following measures:

- building institutional capacity to identify and maintain relevant data, as well as establishing systematic procedures and information systems to improve data collection and address data gaps,
- strengthening the visibility of gender equality and raising awareness of the importance and benefits of adequate gender balance at all levels,
- promoting gender diversity within academic structures, with a strong emphasis on greater participation of women in decision-making bodies and decision-making processes, in accordance with institutional, national and other regulatory frameworks.

Work-Life Balance and Organizational Culture

The UB-GEF acknowledges the importance of work-life balance and strives to maintain it. Support of professional and personal growth is fundamental and is regulated as follows:

Workload Management

Based on the workload terms for each position, detailed terms have been developed for each the UB-GEF staff. These terms are clearly communicated by the management, and upon confirmation and endorsement by each employee, they are included in the employment contract. The workload and work performance are monitored

regularly by the management (Dean, Vice Deans, Head of department, Council Chair) and registered in monthly reports. Based on this practice, balanced workload is ensured as follows:

- The management assesses and ensures that workload is distributed in a balanced way, and in line with what has been agreed with the employee.
- The employee is offered the possibility to raise any concerns to the management, including: Dean, Vice Deans, Head of department, Council Chair. This happens in the following ways: (1) pre-set: once a month, during the meeting of the Dean's Collegium, Teaching-Scientific Council and the meeting of the departments; (2) on need-basis: when the employee raises the concern to the management.

In order to plan the workload, the Collegium and department meetings are held regularly (annual and midterm meetings). The UB-GEF staff, organised into departments and services, work on joint work plans, with clearly assigned tasks. The plans are introduced to the organisation, discussed and then endorsed. The agreed plans, are monitored regularly.

Flexibility in working time and place arrangements

The working time and use of premises (including all necessary equipment) are regulated in the 'Regulation Act on procedure of the UB-GEF and in the 'Regulation Act on organization and systematization of work of the UB-GEF, however, the UB-GEF has shown, and will continue to show flexibility to suit personal circumstances of individual employees, or overall circumstances that apply to all staff. More specifically, the UB-GEF has shown flexibility, and commits to continuing to do so in the following situations:

- Work and Study (Master or PhD, or post-doctoral studies) for temporary, jointly agreed, and defined periods of time; in case of an authorized training course or study that is related directly to the UB-GEF (in Serbia or abroad). a leave may be granted, the salary will be paid in accordance with the established procedure. For longer periods, a special arrangement will be made. In case of part time courses in Serbia, time-off is given during regular working hours, if applicable. Study time outside the reg-

ular working hours will not be compensated. For a long period of studies (a sabbatical), a study-leave contract is signed and the regular salary will be paid for a maximum period of 12 months. In case of training courses related to an employee's personal needs, the employee shall use their free time to attend such courses. In special cases it is possible to move these within the official working hours for reasons of attending classes or courses, but the employee will have to work extra time to compensate for the lost time. The UB-GEF allows the employee to sit for official exams during official working hours.

- Serious health issues of the employees or of depending family members: a sick leave may be used for medical reasons only when a staff member, their spouse, minor child and immediate dependant is affected. The number of days/hours off due to illness will be registered by Faculty services. All leaves due to illness should be reported to the UB-GEF Legal Services not later than 9:00 AM of the first day of absence. A certified medical document must be submitted to the UB-GEF Financial Services. Payment of salary applicable during a sick leave is according to the Serbian law. Days of paid sick leave for full-time staff must be certified by a medical document. Staff on sick leave shall continue to accrue annual leave and still be subject to maximum annual leave limits.
- Outbreaks of pandemics, or similar situations, affecting the health, and safety of employees; in case of pandemics, or similar situations, affecting the health and safety of employees, the UB-GEF shall implement the respective laws and regulations set by the Serbian government or the respective local government. In absence of such regulations, or as a supplement to them, the UB-GEF's management will consider the issuance of specific regulations for the employees, in accordance with the risk of the situation and respecting the work-life balance.
- And any other situations with serious implications.

Professional Development

Training is considered as very important for the professional development of the UB-GEF employees, and we distinguish the following

two types of training: 1) Training that is directly related to the UB-GEF needs and activities, and 2) Training that primarily benefits the employee as an individual.

Training that is directly related to organizational activities is encouraged and sponsored by the UB-GEF through investing in research and training, according to the 'Regulation Act on procedure of the UB-GEF'. For courses that are paid for by the UB-GEF, a certificate of completion of the course is requested. In cases when the certificate is not provided, the employee has the obligation to return the money allocated for the course to the UB-GEF. Special cases are discussed with the Dean's Collegium.

Parental Leave Policy

The University of Belgrade – Faculty of Geography shall facilitate all employees to combine work and family life and encourage all parents to make use of their right to parental leave. There shall be no doubt that University of Belgrade – Faculty of Geography has a positive attitude towards all employees going on a parental leave.

The UB-GEF grants maternity leave to all employees who request it for up to a maximum of (one) year, according to the Serbian Labour Law. The employee is requested to give a sufficient advance notice of the impending delivery date to the supervisor, so that appropriate replacement may be arranged.

During a maternity leave, the payment to the employee will be provided by Secretariat for Social Protection of the City of Belgrade. If necessary, according to the 'Regulation Act on procedure of the UB-GEF, the UB-GEF will provide funds for assistance.

Gender balance in leadership, management and decision-making

The organizational structure of UB-GEF is as follows.

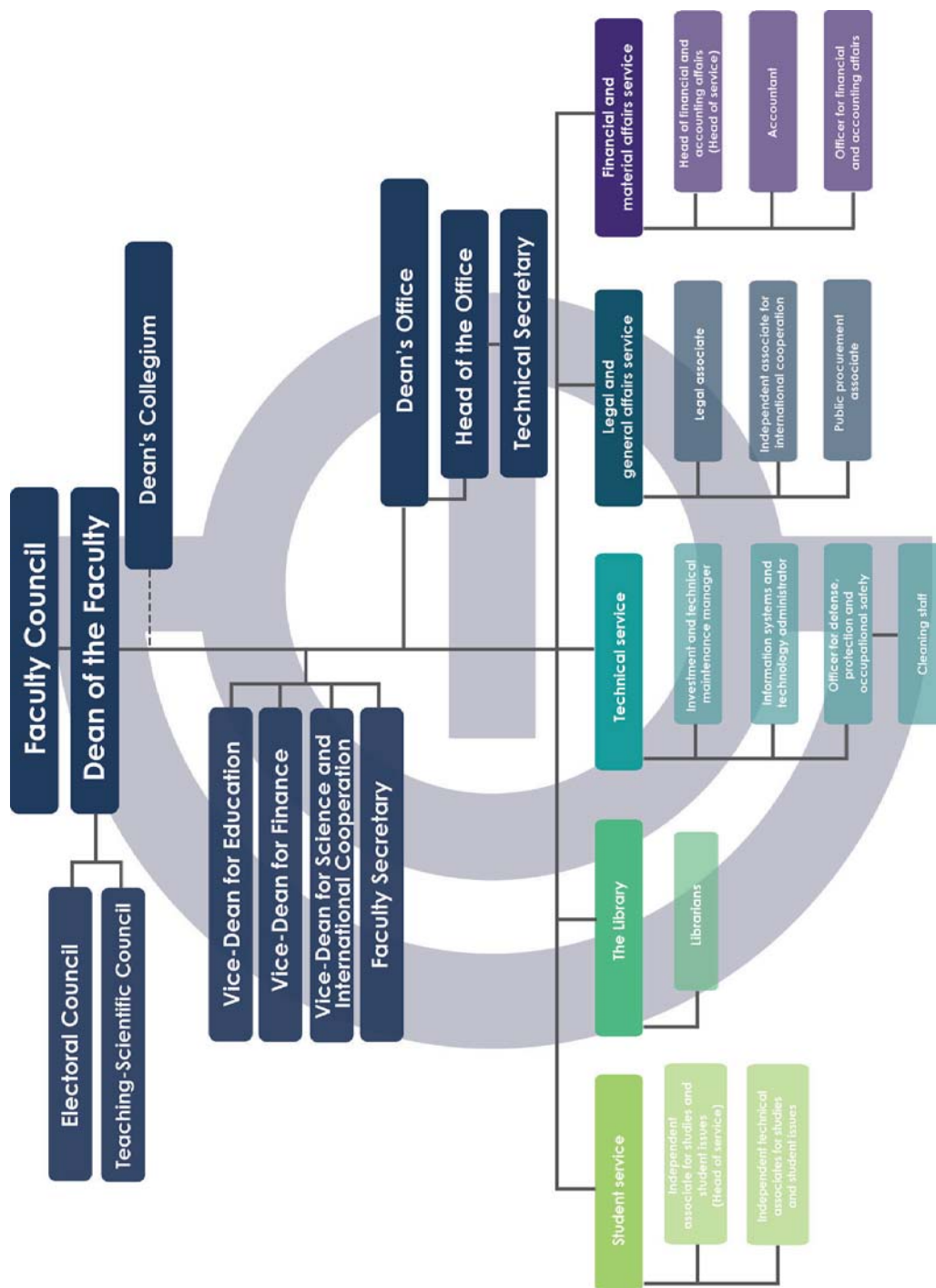
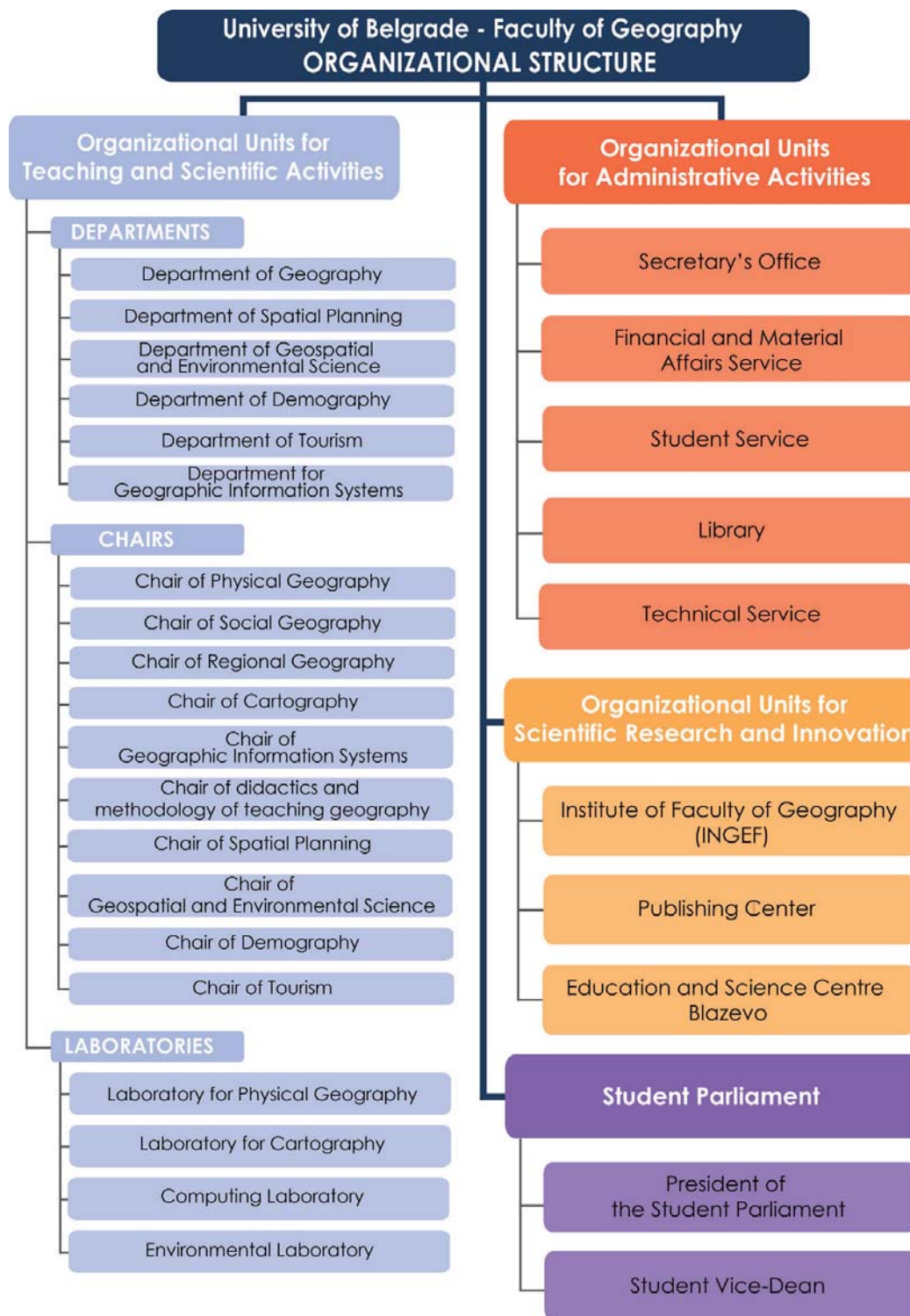


Figure 1: Management and Administration

Figure 2: Departments and Services

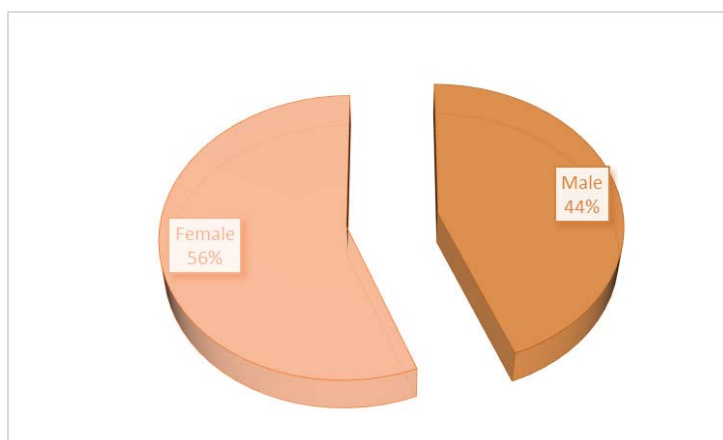


At the UB-GEF we have strived for a 50-50 gender representation ratio, which is reflected at the following levels:

- Faculty Council;
- Dean's Collegium (Dean and Vice Deans);
- Teaching-Scientific Council;
- Heads of Departments, including Faculty services.

At the time of the most recent revision of this plan (2022), the ratio average was 44% men, and 56% women. The UB-GEF is committed to maintaining a ratio of no lower than 50% of women in the management and decision-making positions, as well as in the project teams.

Figure 3: The gender structure of all employees 2022



Faculty Council, Dean's Collegium, Heads of Departments are the management and decision-making structures, with clearly regulated functions and competences defined by the 'Statute of the UB-GEF'.

Gender representation ratio indicators as per January 2022 are:

- Faculty Council: 52% are women;
- Dean's Collegium: 50% are women;
- Teaching-Scientific Council: 50% are women;
- Heads of Departments, including Faculty services: 60% are women.

Figure 4: The gender structure of Faculty Council 2022

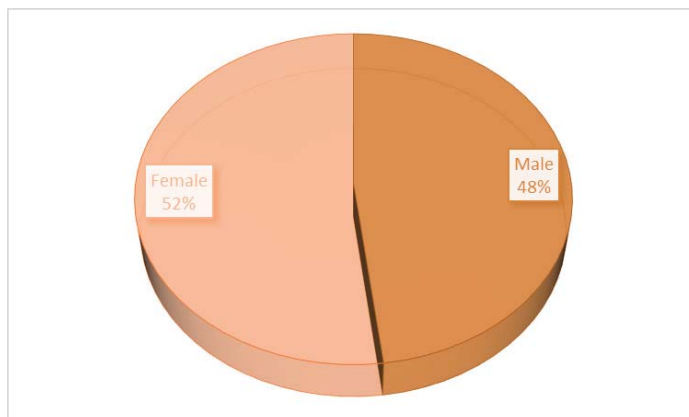


Figure 5: The gender structure of Dean's Collegium 2022

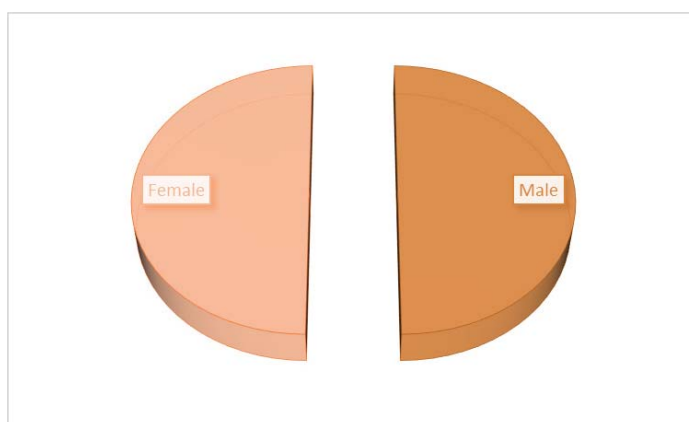


Figure 6: The gender structure of Teaching-Scientific Council 2022

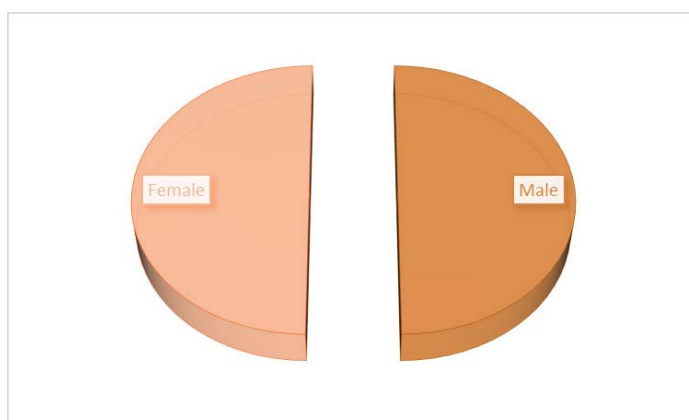


Figure 7: The gender structure of Heads of Departments, including Faculty services 2022

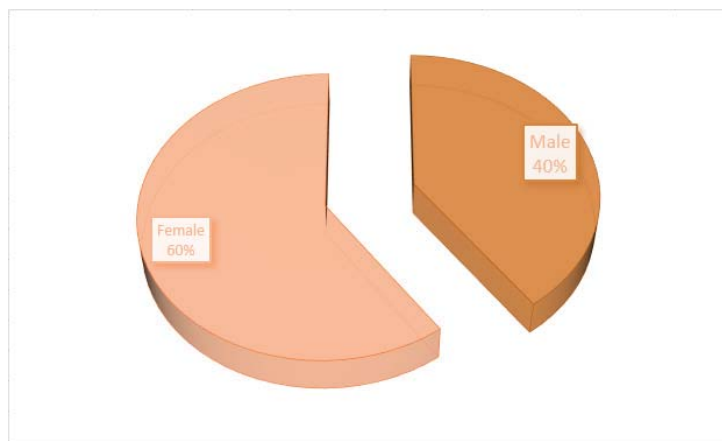
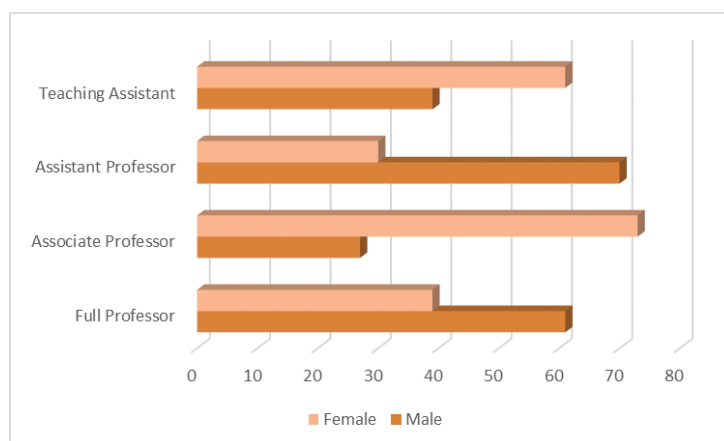


Figure 8: The gender structure of Teaching staff by positions – 2022



The mid-term target is to maintain a ratio of no lower than 50% of women in management and decision-making positions, as well as in the project teams.

Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Progression

The recruitment policy and process are clearly outlined in the 'Statute of the UB-GEF' and 'Regulation Act on procedure of the UB-GEF'. Assessments based on skills and experience shall form the basis for recruitment and promotion. A gender balance is to be pursued with the aim of both genders being represented with at least 40 %.

In the event of vacant position announcements, the responsible service will prepare a job description and submit them to the Dean of the Faculty in order to announce these vacancies on the official website of the University and with the National Employment Service. All staff recruitment is discrimination-free and any advertising is gender-neutral. All vacancies are advertised in accordance with the laws guaranteeing:

1. The UB-GEF is an equal rights and opportunities employer.
2. All applications will be treated with strict confidentiality in compliance with the 'Law on Personal Data Protection ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", No. 87/2018)'.

The evaluation of a candidate's skills and qualifications is a process led either by the Dean of the Faculty and/or by a Committee, depending on the employees' position within the institution.

The first pre-selection is made on an application basis (CV + supportive documentation), by a committee of at least three persons. If no qualified candidates apply, the job will be re-advertised for an additional period.

In the case of a vacancy for a teaching position, in order to ensure objectivity, at least one member of the committee should not be employed in the institution. The report prepared by the committee, shall be adopted by the Teaching-Scientific Council, in accordance with the 'Statute of the UB-GEF'.

In the case of a vacancy for a non-teaching position, following the preselection of a suitable application in line with the announcement, the recruitment process proceeds with the interviewing procedure, which consists of: (a) written test; (b) oral interview.

The gender ratio of the applications is conditioned by the market offer, however, the institution is at all times aware and responsible for ensuring:

- a fair, non-discriminatory and balanced process;
- recruitment in line with the overall gender equality plan provisions.

Integration of the Gender Dimension into Research and Teaching Content

Research constitutes a core component in the UB-GEF's activity. It is conducted either as a flagship organizational commitment, or as part of specific donor-funded projects.

In both instances, the gender dimension is integrated in the following ways:

- In the case of the institution's own flagship organisational projects, in addition to the fact that teams are gender balanced, depending on the typology of (research) projects, gender considerations are integrated including in: research design, data collection, research analysis, etc.
- In the case of donor-funded projects, gender considerations are (a) either already integrated in design or (b) integrated by the implementing team, following a simple assessment. When already part of the project, the team(s) are qualified to implement and monitor the required assignment in full compliance with the scope of work.
- In the event that the gender considerations are vague or absent, the team conducts a simple assessment. Some sample questions used as part of the assessment are:
 - ◊ Are the consultations organised with the stakeholders conducted in a participatory way?
 - ◊ Are the gender statistics available for the work at hand?
 - ◊ Are the gender aspects included in the monitoring and reporting?
 - ◊ Does the external communication strategy/approach challenge the gender perceptions?

Sexual harassment

According to 'Regulation Act on prevention and protection against sexual harassment at the University of Belgrade', harassment is defined as unwanted behaviour based on gender, or unwanted behaviour of sexual nature that violates the employee's integrity. Examples

of harassment are degrading comments or jokes, groping or other unwanted touching, unwanted sexual insinuations; glances and gestures, making a person invisible, not taking the person seriously, withholding of information etc.

An employer is obligated to prevent sexual harassment regardless of whether it occurs at the workplace or not. This means that the employer shall have both a policy against sexual harassment and an action/contingency plan for how the occurrence of sexual harassment shall be handled and how an eventual report shall be investigated. There is a policy and contingency plan regarding this at the UB-GEF: At University of Belgrade – Faculty of Geography there is zero tolerance against any forms of sexual harassment or harassment based on gender, ethnicity or religion.

Action and contingency plan: there is one designated contact/support person at the UB-GEF with the task of acting in case an employee is experiencing harassment at the workplace (sexual harassment, harassment related to gender, ethnicity, religion or other beliefs). Currently, these are the responsibilities of the Commissioner for Equality. If a report is made it shall be investigated internally before further measures are taken. If the employee wants procedure to be continued, the Commissioner for Equality shall act accordingly to 'Regulation Act on prevention and protection against sexual harassment at the University of Belgrade'.

A possible measure could imply a conversation between the person who feels harassed and the harasser under the direction of the support person, or the support person could have a conversation with the harasser, with the aim of stopping the harassment immediately. If the harassment does not stop, the next step is a formal report. No measures can be taken without consulting the person who feels harassed.

Harassment of any kind, including gender-based violence, sexual harassment and any such behaviour, is strongly objected to, and prohibited at the UB-GEF. In case of occurrence, whether observed or reported, it will result in disciplinary actions, including termination of employment and legal actions if relevant.

The UB-GEF prohibits accessing pornographic, sexually explicit, racist, or otherwise abusive web sites, newsgroups, or chat rooms or sending e-mail with such content.

Salaries

Salaries are based on general criteria such as levels of qualifications, functions/roles and responsibilities within the UB-GEF and knowledge and experience relevant to the UB-GEF. The salary revision process shall be equal for all employees.

It is stated in 'Regulation Act on elements for determining salaries, method of determining and paying salaries and other incomes to employees at the UB-GEF, that the salaries are calculated individually based on the complexity and scope of work, as well as the ability of the employee to help the UB-GEF to achieve its goals. Each staff category will be evaluated on its own criteria and on the expectations for each category, which can be found in 'Regulation Act on organization and systematization of work of the UB-GEF.

Salaries are based on general criteria such as roles and responsibilities within the UB-GEF and knowledge and experience relevant to the UB-GEF. The salaries are evaluated each year and the evaluation is based on quantitative and qualitative evaluation criteria described in a document, which is revised and presented to the staff before each year's salary revision.

Implementation of the Gender Equality Plan Actions to maintain and improve gender equality at University of Belgrade – Faculty of Geography

There is an annual work environment survey at the UB-GEF that is followed up with actions to improve work environment. In addition to those actions, the management team continuously works with the Commission for quality assurance at the Faculty to help secure equal opportunities for all staff at the UB-GEF.

The following steps are taken for the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan:

1. The approval of the GEP by the Dean's Collegium and Faculty Council.
2. The appointment of the GE Focal Point. The GE Focal Point will monitor the achievement of the above policies and tasks and will report to the Faculty Council as follows: (1) pre-set based

- on a template: once a month, during the meeting of the Dean's Collegium, Teaching-Scientific Council and the meeting of the departments; (2) on need-basis: anytime a related problem or concern arises.
3. The publication of GEP: GEP is easily accessible online, in the webpage of the UB-GEF, in the Serbian and English language.
 4. Whenever documents, guidelines, policies and plans and other similar administrative supporting documents are updated, they will also be assessed from a gender equality and equal treatment perspective, and changed accordingly, if necessary, before any decisions are made.

Faculty Council Chair:

Professor Dejan Šabić

