<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abreviations</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference documentation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Recruitment of professors</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Recruitment of students</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. An inclusive culture</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Monitoring of doctoral and postdoctoral trajectories</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Enhancement of career prospects</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Creating a working environment conducive to equality</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Measures targeted specifically at administrative and technical staff</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Monitoring &amp; Reporting</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abreviations

ACIDE: Association of EPFL Research Scientists and Lecturers
AGEpoly: EPFL Students’ Association
CEPF: ETH Board
Commission APE: Commission for on-campus daycare solutions UniL/EPFL
CDH: College of Humanities
DAF: Educational Affairs
CAPE: Teaching Support Centre
DRH: Human Resources Delegate
DSPS: Safety, Prevention and Health Domain
EGA: Equal Opportunities Office
Equality task force CEPF: Equality Task Force of the ETH Board
GEC: General Counsel
OGIF: Organisation and Management of Information Systems for Education
PATT: Assistant Professor Tenure Track
P-SG: General Secretariat of the Presidency
RH: Human Resources
SAE: Student Affairs Service
SPE: Study Programmes Promotion Service
SPS: Science Outreach Department
STS: Staff Training Service
VPRHO: Vice Presidency for Human Resources and Operations
VPE: Vice Presidency for Education
VPR: Vice Presidency for Education
WISH: Fondation EPFL-WISH (Women in Science and Humanities)
WPF: ETH Women Professors Forum

Reference documentation

Federal Council Dispatch on the promotion of education, research and innovation for the period from 2017-2020 (ERI Dispatch 2017-20)

The ETH Board’s Strategic Plan 2017-20 for the ETH domain (Objective 8: Staff policy)

EPFL Gender Monitoring Report 2015-16

EPFL Development Plan 2017-20 (draft)*

*EPFL Development Plan 2017-20

6.1.2 Promotion of equal opportunities and respect for diversity

By 2020, EPFL will have developed and put in place a systematic approach to equality promotion. It will also step up cooperation between the Equality Office and other services, in particular Human Resources, the Registrar’s Office and Faculty Affairs. It will also act to ensure greater faculty involvement.

The aims of EPFL’s Equal Opportunities Action Plan 2017-2020 are to improve:

› equality at faculty level (recruitment, conditions of service and promotions), as well as the career prospects of female doctoral and postdoctoral students;
› conditions conducive to a better work-life balance (consolidation of its childcare service both on campus and at its cantonal outposts, and the anticipation of future needs; raising awareness among staff and line managers of the flexible working arrangements open to EPFL employees and providing them with the necessary tools and information to this end; support policy for researchers who are part of a dual-career couple; measures tailored to the specific needs of each faculty);
› equality within the administrative and technical staff, especially in terms of career prospects, wage equality, management recruitment and technical apprenticeships;
› student recruitment and perception of EPFL and its research fields.

In order to achieve these objectives, particularly the recruitment of professors, support for young academics and equality promotion among administrative and technical staff, the Faculties and principal units will jointly devise an equality action plan, articulate their specific needs, define their objectives and identify measures they wish to adopt.

The documents cited above are accessible via the online version of the Equal Opportunities Action Plan: http://equality.epfl.ch
Introduction

The ‘Equal Opportunities Action Plan’ sets out the objectives that EPFL intends to pursue over the coming years to promote equality between men and women, and details the measures that it will take to achieve these goals. The present document forms an integral part of EPFL Development Plan 2017-20.

The aim of the present Action Plan is to foster a coordinated and focused approach to gender equality promotion, and to support the sharing and adoption of best practices not only within EPFL but also with like-minded institutions in Switzerland and abroad.

The measures were developed in collaboration with the units which will be responsible for implementing them. Throughout the implementation phase, dialogue will be maintained with the faculties and sections with a view to tailoring strategies to their specific needs.

As well as addressing the outcomes and challenges identified by EPFL’s 2015-16 Gender Monitoring report, the measures were developed in line with the objectives that the Federal Council has set for the ETH Domain (Objective 10: Working conditions, equal opportunities and young scientific talent, set out in the FRI 2017-20 Dispatch), and with those listed in the Strategic Plan of the ETH Board (Objective 8: Staff policy).

EPFL Steering Committee reviewed the present Action Plan before submitting it to EPFL management, who discussed and approved it during their meeting of 3 October 2016. The Equality Office and the Equality Steering Committee, under the auspices of EPFL President, will be in charge of coordinating the implementation process and will work with the units responsible for executing the measures set out in the Action Plan.

Account shall be taken of future developments and changes, such as the arrival of the new EPFL President on 1 January 2017. Any amendments to the Action Plan, new measures or waivers shall be documented in annual reports.
1. Recruitment of professors

According to EPFL’s 2015-16 Gender Monitoring report, equal opportunities have improved as the result of its professorial advancement strategy, which is modelled on the tenure track system. In 2015, women accounted for 30% of all EPFL tenure-track assistant professors (PATT), a share that reaches, and even surpasses, the goal set by the ETH Board. Nonetheless, the percentage of women who are full or associate professors at EPFL is still too low.

In order to rectify this situation, we need to build on the momentum which the tenure-track system has generated, and step up efforts to recruit female intermediate-level and senior professors.

OUR ACTIONS 2017-20

› Develop a set of best recruitment practices for the faculties to follow. These practices will promote equal opportunities and improve the hiring of female professors.
› Back measures to raise awareness of the subject.

1.1. COMMON STANDARDS

The way in which the hiring process is organised and conducted has a major bearing on the recruitment outcome (Bohnet 2016). The identification of good practices and a discussion on the development of common standards for all parts of EPFL will further strengthen the recruitment-related initiatives undertaken by the individual faculties.

1.2. FACULTY INITIATIVES

Each EPFL faculty shall define its strategy and targets with regard to increasing its share of female professors. In doing so, the faculties shall apply existing good practices, as discussed at EPFL level, to ensure a level playing field and improve diversity in the recruitment of professorial staff.

1.3. RECRUITMENT MONITORING AND PROMOTIONS

Faculty-level recruitment and promotion shall be subject to monitoring. The findings, once consolidated at EPFL level, will be incorporated in the Gender Monitoring report.

1.4. ANALYSIS OF WAGE EQUALITY AT FACULTY LEVEL

Faculty staff shall be incorporated in the ‘equal salary’ analysis (see 7.6.).
2. Recruitment of students

The perception of technical fields and the image commonly associated with them continue to put off many bright young women from opting for one of these fields of study. This phenomenon is particularly pronounced in Switzerland, and is already perceptible at upper-secondary level. The PISA survey found that 15-year-old girls tended to lack confidence in their math skills (CE 2015; OECD 2015). At EPFL, this is reflected in its particularly low percentage of young Swiss-educated women enrolled in its study programmes, especially engineering. Of course, supporting and encouraging young girls and women is important, but these efforts alone will not redress the balance. Measures should be broader in scope and directly influence female representation in technical disciplines.

Experience shows that it is possible to change perceptions and attract more young women into technical fields. Here, EPFL has a head start: its reputation, the positive image of its research community, coupled with the growing diversity of its programmes and research interests. It is this diversity which offers EPFL an opportunity to break down the gendered perception of technical subjects by leveraging its expertise and proactive outreach efforts.

OUR ACTIONS 2017-20

› Devise, together with its faculties and sections, recruitment strategies aimed specifically at prospective female students.
› Promote analysis and communication so as to gain a better insight of the stereotypes associated with engineering professions and use this knowledge to break down these stereotypes.
› To develop incentive and support measures for young women at upper-secondary level.
› To continue with its information, training and awareness-raising efforts targeted specifically at young girls and their parents.
2.1. DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIES WITH THE SECTIONS AND FACULTIES

Faculties with a share of female students below 30% shall be required to develop strategies and identify opportunities/measures that could help attract more young women to their study programmes as well as challenge the perception which young people, their parents and teachers have with regard to these fields.

2.2. DEVELOPMENT OF GENDER-INCLUSIVE CURRICULA

The design and presentation (branding) of curricula is a determining factor in the recruitment of more female students to technical and engineering disciplines. EPFL shall take on board the findings in this area when developing study programmes for these fields.

2.3. INFORMATION AND SUPPORT FOR UPPER-SECONDARY STUDENTS

If more girls are to choose to study a technical discipline at university level, two conditions must first be met: they must manifest an interest and aptitude for science and engineering already early on in their upper-secondary education (first and second years), and they must have a non-stereotyped and positive perception of these disciplines. The Study Programmes Promotion Service (SPE) takes into account these aspects in its information and promotion activities, as well as in cooperation projects with High schools (Gymnases). Events that enable female upper-secondary students to meet and talk to female scientists, a ‘hands-on’ summer school, and support for prospective students with regard to the writing of their Matura projects will also be organised.

2.4. MATHS COURSES FOR YOUNG WOMEN AT SECONDARY LEVEL

The low share of female secondary-school students who opt to study physics/applied maths and advanced maths is one of the main impediments to raising the female ratio in technical disciplines. EPFL will develop a new maths service specifically designed to encourage young women in secondary education to continue with their advanced maths studies. It will include a weekly class over two semesters and discussions with the students themselves. The service shall be subject to an impact evaluation.

2.5. PURSUIT OF MEASURES TARGETED AT SCHOOL-GIRLS, THEIR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

EPFL’s Science Outreach Department has become renowned for its expertise in motivating young people, particularly girls, to study sciences. It shall continue these activities as well as its information and awareness-raising efforts targeted specifically at parents and teachers.
3. An inclusive culture

Student recruitment efforts shall be supported by a teaching and learning culture that is stimulating, exacting, inclusive and respectful. This principle already informs the approach adopted by EPFL.

**OUR ACTIONS 2017-20**

- Give students the opportunity to familiarise themselves with equality and diversity issues in general, and more specifically with regard to their chosen field of study and future career.
- Give teaching staff the opportunity to develop their diversity skills.
- Take action to foster a culture of respect and inclusion and prevent on-campus harassment.
- Continue its gender-based cohort analyses of the success and subsequent career trajectories of EPFL graduates.

**3.1. DIVERSITY TRAINING FOR TEACHING STAFF AND DOCTORAL STUDENTS**

The Teaching Support Centre (CAPE) shall expand its services to include special training courses for doctoral students and teaching staff, aimed at improving their understanding of diversity and equality issues as well as their communication and teaching skills. Diversity training shall become an integral part of teacher education in general. A diversity and communication training course will be devised specifically with doctoral students in mind. Conferences shall also be organised.

*DAF: Educational Affairs – CAPE: Teaching Support Centre – EGA: Equal Opportunities Office*
3.2. GENDER, DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

The Social and Human Sciences (SHS) Teaching Programme, which is coordinated by the College of Humanities (CDH), shall develop new courses for students that deal specifically with the subjects of gender, diversity and equality, and examine the relevance of these issues to the students’ chosen discipline and future career. These efforts shall be further supported by exchanges with teaching staff and conferences involving renowned keynote speakers.

3.3. TRAINING COURSES FOR STUDENT COACHES

A coaching service provided by experienced students is available to new EPFL students. The Student Affairs Department (SAE) equips student coaches and ‘super-coaches’ with the necessary skills to perform this work. In future, the course provided by the SAE shall also include a ‘Understanding the challenges of diversity’ module.

3.4. 'RESPECT' PROJECT – STUDENT-SPECIFIC COMPONENT

EPFL shall launch ‘Respect’, a project designed to foster a culture of respect and inclusion and prevent discriminatory behaviour of any kind. It will include ensuring that EPFL is suitably organised and has the processes at its disposal to respond in a consistent and structured manner to situations of distress, conflict, inequality, irregularities, harassment and/or threats. An information and awareness-raising campaign shall accompany the project. Students are also part of the project’s target audience.

3.5. ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS’ CAREER TRAJECTORIES

The statistical gender-based analysis of students’ career trajectories shall continue over the coming years. However, its scope should be extended to take into account other factors such as social background (e.g., disadvantaged backgrounds) and nationality. This information should enable EPFL to determine the impact its revised (propaedeutic) syllabi has on success rates by gender and by social background. Once the findings have been discussed, supplementary analyses shall be undertaken and measures proposed.
4. Monitoring of doctoral and postdoctoral trajectories

Thanks to the international recruitment of doctoral students, the percentage of female doctoral students at EPFL is now higher than that of female Bachelor and Master students. At postdoc level, the percentage of women at EPFL has risen steadily but remains lower than the share of female doctoral students. In keeping with its commitment to guarantee equal opportunities for women and men, EPFL shall continue to prioritise the recruitment of the brightest doctoral and postdoctoral students over the 2017-20 period.

**OUR ACTIONS 2017-20**

- Identify the perceptions, wishes and needs of the target public with regard to their career prospects and plans. Where necessary, it shall introduce measures to guarantee equality of opportunity at doctoral and postdoctoral level.

4.1. **STUDY DESIGN FOR THE ANALYSIS AND MONITORING OF DOCTORAL AND POSTDOCTORAL TRAJECTORIES.**

Over the last few years, a number of studies have examined the career trajectories of doctoral students (study led by Prof. Franciska Krings, Unil) and the career prospects of doctoral graduates (Conti and Visentin, 2015), including students and graduates from EPFL. The Life Sciences Postdoctoral Association (SV) also conducted its own survey in 2013. EPFL shall draw on the findings of these surveys to develop an approach which analyses and monitors the trajectories of doctoral and postdoctoral students.

5. Enhancement of career prospects

Surveys by the Federal Statistics office (FSO) and EPFL Career Centre have found that there are hardly significant differences in the labour market entry of female and male Master and doctoral graduates from EPFL. Nevertheless, the professional prospects of female graduates diverge still considerably from their male peers, and this regardless of whether they opt for an academic or non-academic career. (Conti and Visentin 2015; Umbach-Daniel 2013).

EPFL shall run special networking, mentoring, training and coaching programmes with a view to supporting the career development of its female undergraduates, doctoral and postdoc students. These services shall be provided alongside the existing services offered by the doctoral schools, the Career Centre and the Staff Training Service, which aim to enhance not only academic careers, but also, and primarily, the non-academic career prospects of EPFL graduates and PhD holders.

**OUR ACTIONS 2017-20**

- Pursue its existing measures to ensure equal opportunities in relation to academic careers (mentoring, training courses and coaching) in synergy and complementarity with existing services.
- Extend the scope of its action to other careers (industry, entrepreneurship).
5.1. ‘LUNCH EVENTS’ – NETWORKING WITH ROLE MODELS

Lunch events will provide an opportunity for students to gather information and network with ‘role models’ from academia, industry and business. Together with internal and external partners, EPFL shall hold a dozen lunch events each year.

5.2. FLP PROGRAMME: COACHING, TRAINING AND MENTORING

The Fix the Leaky Pipeline programme, supported by the ETH Domain, offers young female scientists (PhD students, Postdocs and others) the opportunity to reflect on their professional situations, develop a strategy for embarking or continuing on their career paths. To support them through this process, the programme offers coaching, training and mentoring services. In addition, EPFL plans to prioritise a pilot ‘peer-mentoring’ project, which will run alongside the ‘one-on-one’ mentoring service offered by the Réseau romand (RRM, see below).

5.3. RÉSEAU ROMAND DE MENTORING POUR FEMMES (RRM)

The RRM offers one-to-one mentoring for female students who are coming to the end of their doctoral studies or postdoc and would like to pursue an academic career. According to a summary assessment, 33 participants from EPFL availed of this service between 2001 and 2014; 7 are now professors, 16 have embarked on a scientific career, and 10 now work outside the research field. EPFL shall continue to participate in the RRM programme.

5.4. REGARD WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

In 2016 EPFL joined the REGARD workshop programme, which is run by the equality departments of the universities of Western Switzerland. REGARD offers workshops which help young female academics develop their cross-functional skills. The programme is designed around the identified needs of the target audience. A survey of EPFL participants will be carried out in late 2017.

5.5. ‘GETTING YOUR THESIS OFF TO A GOOD START’ & ‘BEYOND THE DOCTORATE’

The guides ‘Getting your thesis off to a good start’ and ‘Beyond the doctorate’ by the Equality Offices of the universities of Western Switzerland and the TriangleAzur universities (Neuchâtel, Lausanne and Geneva) provide information on doctoral and postdoctoral careers, and address the issue of equality with a cross-disciplinary approach. EPFL shall be actively involved in the revision and re-issue of both guides.
6. Creating a working environment conducive to equality

Not only is the provision of an equality-friendly working environment part of the legal mandate of EPFL, it also enables the higher education provider to help its employees strike a better work-life balance, which in turn further enhances the attractiveness of EPFL as a research institution and seat of learning.

OUR ACTIONS 2017-20

› Increase the number of childcare places available in its day nurseries.
› Consolidate information aimed at (future) parents.
› Raise awareness among line managers.
› Assess recent measures and identify areas where additional action could be taken.
› Develop welcome services that also address issues specific to dual-career couples.
› Examine the possibility of introducing an ‘equal salary’ accreditation procedure.
6.1. EXPANSION OF ON-CAMPUS DAY NURSERY PROVISION

In response to the report issued by the Committee on Day Nursery on the UniL-EPFL Campus (Commission Accueil de le Petite Enfance - APE) on childcare needs and prospects by 2020, EPFL shall increase the capacity of the day nursery on the Lausanne campus; its existing approach in relation to its cantonal outposts shall continue. The expansion of daycare provision and demand shall be tracked and assessed at regular intervals.

6.2. PARENTS@EPFL: INFORMATION AND ADVICE FOR (FUTURE) PARENTS

As part of its efforts to facilitate a better work-life balance for its staff and in the interests of equality, EPFL shall produce a ‘Parents@EPFL’ brochure (electronic and print edition). This document will be enhanced by information sessions for (future) parents.

6.3. EQUALITY AWARENESS TRAINING FOR LINE MANAGERS

EPFL shall devise an equality awareness training module specifically for line managers and make it an integral component of On-boarding measures for managers and professors. It is also planned to develop an e-learning module which deals with the different dimensions of equal opportunities.

6.4. REVIEW OF MEASURES TAKEN AND IDENTIFYING IMPROVEMENT POTENTIAL

In 2015, EPFL set up a fund which covers maternity leave-related salary costs. As a result, each unit has funds at its disposal to finance a replacement for the staff member concerned, a maternity leave extension or to relieve the person of certain duties when they return to the workplace (e.g. no teaching duties for one semester etc.). EPFL shall monitor the new replacement and relief system and evaluate its impact. EPFL has also recently introduced other measures, such as teleworking directives and the provision of an emergency childcare service. As well as an assessment of these measures, EPFL plans to carry out a user satisfaction survey. From the findings, EPFL will be able to identify what action it needs to take to improve these arrangements.

6.5. DUAL-CAREER SUPPORT

EPFL currently takes a case-by-case approach to dual-career support. However, a Swiss survey from 2011 found that many EPFL researchers felt that they needed more targeted help (Bass, 2012). EPFL is keenly aware that dual-career issues are a particular concern for researchers. Therefore, it shall adopt principles that take account of these needs and clarify responsibilities for dual-career support provisions. The planned ‘welcome services’ will be one such instrument.

6.6. EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITY OF WAGE EQUALITY CERTIFICATION

In 2015, EPFL analysed wage equality using the Logib method. It shall repeat this exercise, but will include faculty staff (professors) for the first time. In the interests of quality assurance with regard to RH wage policy-related procedures, and a view to consolidating its status as a model equal opportunities employer, EPFL shall also explore the possibility of certification.

---

**Table:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Implementation as per comprehensive plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Measures implemented as planned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Measures defined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Monitoring under way</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Footnotes:**

7. Measures targeted specifically at administrative and technical staff

One of the priorities that the ETH Board has set itself is to increase the number of women in management positions. Although their share is rising, the rate is slow.

**OUR ACTIONS 2017-20**

- Undertake a proactive search for female applicants to fill vacant management positions.

**7.1. PROACTIVE SEARCH FOR SUITABLE FEMALE APPLICANTS TO FILL MANAGEMENT POSITIONS**

HR will identify and adopt proactive measures to attract women to apply for advertised management/higher management positions. Its strategy shall also include measures designed to spot and develop the talents of female members of EPFL staff.
Another aspect which emerged from the 2015-16 Gender Monitoring report concerns apprenticeships. In Switzerland, gender differences in terms of the choice of vocational training options remain extremely pronounced (FSO 2015; Imdorf 2005); this phenomenon is also apparent at EPFL. Young women make up a very small minority of EPFL technical apprentice staff (18% in 2015); they are even completely absent in certain occupations (IT, physics laboratory technicians etc.). Only a tiny minority of men undertake a commercial apprenticeship at EPFL (4% in 2015).

**OUR ACTIONS 2017-20**

› Review its apprentice recruitment procedure and examine its pool of possible candidates with a view to identifying measures that will promote greater gender diversity in vocational occupations.

› Make apprentice instructors aware of this issue.

› Inform young people of the opportunities open to them in these different fields.

**7.2. ENCOURAGE GREATER DIVERSITY IN APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING**

A working group comprising HR staff with responsibility for EPFL apprentices, the equality delegate and instructors shall examine EPFL’s apprentice recruitment strategy and selection procedure, with a view to identifying measures to encourage greater applicant diversity and greater gender diversity in certain vocational occupations.

EPFL shall organise a one-day diversity and equality training session for its vocational trainers. This course shall also benefit from the input of an external expert.
8. Monitoring & Reporting

8.1. USE MONITORING, REPORTING AND BENCHMARKING TOOLS TO ADVANCE EQUALITY

EPFL’s biennial Gender Monitoring report tracks developments in the share of women and men at different stages of their academic career within EPFL and its faculties. It measures the progress that EPFL has made in relation to equal representation, and its findings make it possible to set needs-based objectives and devise measures to remedy any shortcomings. The next Gender Monitoring report (2018) shall include an interim review of the present Action Plan.

Together with annual reports and thematic analyses, the biennial Gender Monitoring report plays a pivotal role in the management of EPFL’s equality policy.

EPFL is part of an international benchmarking project for universities of applied sciences. It intends to incorporate indicators from this benchmarking tool in its next Gender Monitoring report.
References


IMPRESSUM
Editorial: Equal Opportunities Office
Photos: Alain Herzog (p. 5, 8, 12, 16, 18, 26, 28, 30)
Helene Fueger (p. 22)
Layout: karakter Graphic Design
© EPFL 2017