

Gender Strategy 2017–2020

Strategy for Gender Balance and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

The ETH Domain aims to improve the gender balance among its members by increasing the share of women in education and in research, as well as in management positions¹. Ensuring equal opportunities for women and men within the ETH Domain is a prerequisite for achieving this objective.

This document outlines an overarching strategy to foster gender balance and equal opportunities for women and men within the ETH Domain. While the broader concept of diversity is important to the ETH Domain as well, this strategy focuses on the gender dimension only in order to adopt an efficient and targeted approach. It includes general principles and consists of five focus areas. Measures required for achieving the objectives laid down here may differ from one institution to another. Therefore, the individual ETH Domain institutions are responsible for implementing the present strategy through adequate actions that match their respective situation.

Improving gender balance and equal opportunities for women and men requires incorporating as much knowledge as possible regarding the effectiveness, the impact and the secondary effects of potential measures. The ETH Domain institutions collaborate in the assessment of measures practised within the ETH Domain, in Switzerland or in other countries, particularly within universities and research institutes but also within partner companies. The institutions also consider relevant insights from scientific literature and recommendations in order to identify measures with high potential to support the ETH Domain in reaching its goals. The Domain's Working Group on "Equal Opportunities" facilitates the exchange and fosters collaboration between the ETH Domain institutions, while the ETH Board meets its role as a strategic management and supervisory body by monitoring gender balance and equal opportunities for women and men throughout the ETH Domain.

The present strategy concerns all members of the ETH Domain, women and men, including students, employees in technical or administrative positions, and employees in scientific or management positions.

Focus Area 1: Strong anchorage of equal opportunities in the institutions

A strong institutional anchorage and commitment of the top management level is a central factor for the implementation and effectiveness of gender balance and equal opportunity policies. The responsibility for implementing such policies lies with the Presidents or Directors and the Executive Boards of the respective institutions and with the heads of their sub-entities (e.g. faculties, departments, administration) according to the institutions' individual structure. The development and implementation of equal opportunity policies in the ETH Domain institutions is supported by professional structures, as well as by staff linked to the Presidents or Directors, respectively.

Implementing a strategy on gender balance and equal opportunities for women and men requires goals, implementation measures and monitoring instruments. All ETH Domain institutions formulate their own specific Gender Action Plans (GAPs) based on the focus areas outlined in the present document.

An appropriate financial commitment is essential for strengthening existing efforts or launching new instruments on the level of the individual institutions. Therefore, the Strategic Planning of the ETH Board for the ETH Domain for the period of 2017–2020 stipulates that the member institutions will continue to spend at least 0.4% of the annual Federal financial contribution for implementing measures supporting the promotion of equal opportunities. The financial resources should be used to foster gender balance and equal opportunities for women and men in a broad sense. The respective measures should be diverse and well balanced. Supporting childcare facilities should only account for a small proportion of these measures.

Focus Area 2: Awareness of gender stereotypes and biases, respectful conduct and communication

Gender stereotypes are an impediment to gender balance and equal opportunities. All ETH Domain institutions take action to enhance awareness among their members regarding stereotypes and their impacts. They implement measures to systematically identify these stereotypes;

¹ Federal Council's strategic objectives for the ETH Domain and the ETH Board's Strategic Planning 2017–2020

these measures may include workshops, lectures, online tools, etc. The ETH Domain institutions are also committed to detecting internal structural gender biases. Also, they ensure equal treatment regarding salary conditions and access to resources. All institutions implement a code of conduct, emphasising mutual respect and absence of discrimination, bullying, mobbing, threats, violence and sexual harassment, as key elements. The institutions train their members to comply with these principles and take measures against inappropriate behaviour.

Finally, the institutions of the ETH Domain integrate gender balance and equal opportunities for women and men into their various communication activities. They specifically endeavour to ensure an appropriate representation of women and men at public events and in representative situations. The institutions of the ETH Domain communicate in gender-impartial language.

Information on the institutions' equal opportunities strategy, action plans and measures is easily accessible and is part of the information packages for employees and students.

Focus Area 3: Career development for women at all stages

Based on monitoring and benchmarking, each institution defines indicative targets and specific measures for the advancement of women's careers in academia, administration and technical professions.

ETH Zurich and EPFL take appropriate measures to ensure that more women enrol in their Bachelor's and Master's programmes in fields of current underrepresentation. To this end, they also cooperate with secondary and teacher training institutions and other stakeholders active in the promotion of science outreach and education. They actively support female and male students throughout their studies in order to ensure equal chances for success.

The ETH Domain institutions take measures to attract the most talented female and male students and researchers, and to allow them to strive and excel on an equal footing. They develop strategies to increase the share of women at doctoral and postdoc levels and take specific action to foster female academic leadership. The institutions support measures such as mentoring, training and coaching intended to guide students towards academic, industrial and entrepreneurial careers.

Achieving a significant increase in the number of female professors and senior scientists, and improving career perspectives for women requires actions by all institutions, faculties or departments. As a basic standard, these actions should include the proactive search for female candidates, training for the hiring committee members to mitigate

unconscious biases at all levels within the institutions, and proactive efforts to retain female faculty.

The ETH Domain institutions and the ETH Board strive for an appropriate gender balance for management positions (lower, middle and upper management), decision-making bodies at various levels (such as committees for research, strategy, hiring or tenure track evaluation), as well as in highly segregated sectors of the technical and administrative staff, including apprentices. The institutions regularly assess the gender balance in recruitment and promotion procedures, as well as in access to, and take-up of, staff development measures.

The institutions of the ETH Domain also address dual career issues and implement adequate measures to reconcile an academic career and family-related tasks which are relevant to the career promotion of women and men. Similarly, instruments for compensation for maternity leave or family-related absences are in place (such as a "stop the clock scheme" for tenure track positions or contract prolongation opportunities for doctoral and postdoc researchers).

Focus Area 4: Conditions for a good life domain balance

The institutions of the ETH Domain and the ETH Board provide work conditions supporting a good "life domain balance", which represents a more encompassing concept in comparison with the notion of work-life balance. The balance should be conducive to equal opportunities for women and men.

Day nurseries and childcare facilities for specific occasions (like emergency childcare, holiday activities, or childcare solutions for conferences) are further developed, based on the assessment of employees' and students' needs. Similar process applies for developing framework conditions to support care of the elderly, or enhanced care requirements of family members.

Solutions for work flexibility are promoted for women and men. Professors and leaders are alerted to the relevance of work flexibility and family-friendliness in achieving excellence in their respective institutions. Support and incentives to ensure the compatibility of work flexibility and family-friendliness with the institutions' excellence goals are provided. The institutions of the ETH Domain provide employees and students with information and counselling so that they are aware of the wide availability of family-friendly work and study conditions.

Focus Area 5: Gender issues in research and teaching

The ETH Domain institutions take measures to ensure that gender-related aspects are taken into account in research projects, large research programmes and in (institutional) evaluations. They engage to train people involved in teaching, assessment and curriculum development to be aware of potential gender differences in learning strategies and perceived self-efficacy, as well as of their impact on examination methods. The measures adopted ideally build on research, innovative approaches and best-practice examples.

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