

GENDER AND EQUALITY PLAN

2022

TILBURG UNIVERSITY

December 2021

## 1. What is it about and why is it important?

Tilburg University is committed to ensuring that every *individual* has equal opportunities to contribute to the university community, and that talents are seen, recognized, and utilized. The core values Caring, Curious, Connected, and Courageous underlie this.

An inclusive *organization* makes full use of the diverse talents and abilities of employees and students. In an inclusive environment, everyone is given their due, regardless of stage of life, gender, origin, culture, religion, or disability. Everyone is respected. There is no room for transgressive behavior, such as discrimination, racism, sexual intimidation, and bullying. Differences are sought out, valued, and deployed.

For a *university* as an institution of scientific education and research, it is of great importance that the input in the discourse takes place from as many angles as possible and that bias concerning gender, culture, or nationality is confronted. Diverse teams perform better. Inclusiveness and diversity contribute significantly to the quality of research, education, and the social contribution that Tilburg University wants to make and to the diversity of thought.

Gender policy \*, inclusiveness, and diversity are, therefore, important both to the individual, the university community, and the quality of education and research as well as from a societal point of view. They are in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, in particular gender equality (SDG 5) but also reducing inequalities (SDG 10) and promoting a peaceful and inclusive society (SDG 16).

Tilburg University is working on a culture in which gender equality, diversity, and inclusion are self-evident and can be found in the composition of the staff, in the academic discourse, and the organizational culture.

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\* Definitions can be found in Annex 1

## 2. What Has Been Done and Achieved So Far?

### *Until 2018*

Tilburg University has been implementing a gender policy for many years, mainly aimed at increasing the proportion of female scientists in the higher ranks and of women in management and board positions. This was expressed, for instance, in the Philip Eijlander Diversity Program, which made chairs and associate professor positions available to women.

Targets have been set to increase the percentage of women in senior positions. In addition, attention was paid to reducing the closed circuits in recruitment and in the evaluation for promotions by making committees more diverse. In the Academic Leadership Program, a module was dedicated to gender awareness. The diversity policy was also expressed, for example, by offering people with a distance to the labor market the opportunity to obtain permanent employment (action plan for the implementation of the Participation Act) and by offering scholarships to refugees.

### *2018–2021*

For the period 2018–2021, a Gender & Diversity Roadmap has been drawn up. This is in line with the TiU Strategy for this period. The Roadmap puts a strong focus on gender equality, diversity, and inclusiveness.

We have a culture of openness and inclusion. We work together on the basis of trust and responsibility. At the same time, we unite people of all nationalities and backgrounds who work together to achieve our common goals. We embrace this diversity and stimulate integration. In the coming years, we will focus strongly on inclusion and the creation of equal opportunities for all of our staff and students. (TiU Strategy 2018–2021, p.34)

The Roadmap notes that much has been done but not all targets have been met. In particular, the proportion of female full and associate professors is below target. Furthermore, the differences in remuneration between men and women have not been bridged. Research is being conducted into this.

New targets have been set for the period up to and including 2021 for the proportion of women on boards and in management, on advisory committees, and on longlists for prizes, awards, and events.

There will be new targets, now per School, taking into account the scientific field, for the proportion of female full and associate professors and targets for promotions.

In the field of gender equality and diversity, the Roadmap presents an ambitious plan based on four pillars:

- Recruitment and promotion
- Training
- Visibility
- Work-life balance

In addition, targets have been set in the field of international, cultural, and ethnic diversity and with regard to the Participation Act and opportunities for refugees.

In May 2021, a statistical and policy-based monitoring of the targets was drawn up. The proportion of female full and associate professors has increased, but by the end of 2020 the original targets were not achieved: 20.5% of full professors and 30% of associate professors are women.

In addition, a whole range of university-wide policies that focus on gender policy, inclusion, and diversity are discussed:

- selection committees contain at least 33% women;
- participation in career strategy program by women;
- research support scheme after maternity leave;
- TIDE meetings (Tilburg University Network For Inclusion, Diversity and Equality)
- safe working environment: Active Bystander and Cross-cultural Competencies & Intercultural Communication courses;
- transparency in remuneration policy.

Schools have formulated corresponding objectives.

In the fall of 2010, at the initiative of the VSNU, new targets were set for 2025. TiU joined the VSNU-target of 28% female full professors. The following distribution per School was established: TLS 30%, TSB 37%, TiSEM 21%, TSHD 45%, and TST 25%. The target for female associate professors remains unchanged (40%).

Achieving the 2025 targets will require the commitment of the Schools. Career planning and strategic workforce planning are important tools in this regard. In the spring of 2021, the Deans discussed this in two sessions. For each School, action plans were drawn up to achieve the targets.

### **3. Starting Points for Further Policy**

In the new Tilburg University strategy, the policy in the field of diversity and inclusion is continued and further expanded: "In addition to gender, it concerns characteristics such as nationality, ethnicity, color, sexual orientation, social background, age, people with special needs, and religion or philosophy of life" (p.14).

Tilburg University's Gender Equality Plan follows the EU guidelines that are required for these plans to be eligible for funding of research proposals under the Horizon Europe framework program.

The EU gives four mandatory, process-related requirements and five recommended thematic areas.

Further guidelines are given in the 'Guide for Drawing up Gender Equality Plans' drawn up by the Advisory Committee for Diversity and Inclusiveness in Higher Education and Research, commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

This committee has formulated three principles that must be taken into account when drawing up gender diversity policy.

This is based on an intersectional approach to diversity in which characteristics such as nationality, ethnicity, orientation, social background, age, religion and philosophy of life, and special needs play a role.

The basis is that there must be a solid organization within which the plans can be implemented: sufficient resources must be available and clear goals must be set. The other three points concern figures, institutions, and knowledge & skills.

### 1 *Figures*

These are measures that increase (gender) diversity: quantitative representations. Actions are mainly aimed at the inflow and promotion of (gender) diverse talent. Figures are important: when there is more diversity, individual distinguishing characteristics stand out less because of the pluriformity in the team or group.

### 2 *Institutions*

These are measures aimed at reforming structural processes and the university culture towards becoming an inclusive organization. Measures to improve numbers are important but only if there is also work on an inclusive *structure* and *culture* of the organization.<sup>1</sup> Otherwise, the “revolving door effect” occurs: succeeding in attracting underrepresented groups but failing to retain them.

The way in which universities are *structured* can lead to inequalities between different groups. There are small but significant and systematic differences between men and women in the distribution of work tasks, availability of resources, outcomes of negotiations on employment conditions, lack of transparency in recruitment and selection, and difference in temporary versus permanent contracts. The cumulative effect over a whole career can lead to major inequalities.<sup>2</sup>

The academic world has a hierarchical and competitive *culture*. This can lead to a cold climate and a breeding ground for exclusion or isolation of groups, discrimination, and social insecurity.<sup>3</sup> Also, the image of “the ideal academic”—white, male, energetic and always available, healthy and without care responsibilities—does not contribute to an inclusive culture with equal opportunities for different groups of academics.<sup>4</sup> Studies show implicit bias in evaluations of both research and education. This can have a significant impact on promotion prospects.<sup>5</sup>

### 3 *Knowledge and skills*

These are measures aimed at integrating knowledge about social categories such as gender and ethnicity into research and education. Studies point out the exclusion of groups and perspectives in the content of research. Studies further show that not taking gender differences into account when designing and implementing a research project can lead to costly mistakes. When social groups have structurally limited access to science, this affects the production of knowledge. Reflecting on how knowledge production in one's own field is affected by such processes of exclusion should be a core feature of any academic practice. This also applies to educational practice: the gender and diversity & inclusiveness (D&I) dimension should be better integrated in the educational curriculum.<sup>6</sup>

All three principles require attention and action. They will be discussed in Section 5

### *Summary:*

From the core values of the university, TiU attaches great importance to (gender) diversity and inclusion. This allows everyone to come into his or her own, use their talents, and contribute to the organization. By working together, through the diversity of teams, by nurturing education and research from multiple perspectives and angles, talents flourish, we gain insight into our bias, we broaden themes, we enrich our knowledge, and we create diversity of thought and the international classroom.

It is, therefore, a matter of formulating objectives (figures), recognizing and eliminating structural and cultural bias, and paying attention to gender, diversity and inclusiveness in the organization (institutions) and the content of education and research (knowledge and skills).

The gender and diversity policy formulated below is not new. It is about providing continuity and intensifying what is happening to present the activities in coherence and to make the connection with the new strategic planning period.

## **4. Scope, Challenges, and Objectives**

### **4.1 Scope**

This plan covers the following themes.

- Gender policies to promote retention and advancement of female scientists and to provide role models for female students;
- Diversity & inclusiveness to increase diversity of people and perspectives;
- Projects for refugees to contribute to building a future for newcomers;
- Social safety to ensure we can work together socially and professionally in an open, inclusive, and safe way.

We believe it is important that people with special needs can participate in the labor market. Together with the Schools and Divisions, we create tailor-made jobs for them. We offer appropriate guidance and support. The implementation of the Jobs Agreement (*Banenafspraken*) is well organized within the university and falls outside the scope of this plan.

### **4.2 Challenges and objectives**

D&I contributes to raising the level of academic knowledge and quality. Six challenges and objectives are central to this strategic period.

#### *1. Representation of underrepresented groups*

Several groups are strongly underrepresented in our community.

Objective: We stimulate national and international (gender) diverse talent in leadership positions and within the student and staff population. We aim to i) reflect the diversity of students among staff; ii) broaden perspectives in education and research and iii) enrich the scientific discourse.

## 2. *Inclusive policies*

Because there is not enough diversity in decision-making positions yet, the ideas and views of underrepresented groups may not be taken into account sufficiently.

Objective: We promote an inclusive organizational culture where all staff and students can be themselves and contribute fully to the team and to the social and professional dialogue in the university community. We promote a diverse composition of participation bodies, steering committees, committees, and working groups so that policy and decision making are achieved in an inclusive manner.

## 3. *Research and innovation*

Our scientists are ready with new proposals and ideas. There are preconditions for scientific quality, interdisciplinarity, and grant possibilities.

Objective 1: We promote inclusive research throughout the research & innovation cycle and involve all our scientists. Tilburg University as a knowledge institute is committed to:

1. (gender) diversity in all scientific positions;
2. integrating gender and D&I dimensions in research and innovation;
3. (gender) diversity in research teams, review panels, and expert groups.

These three elements are also criteria used by the European Commission to assess research proposals.

Objective 2: We promote (interdisciplinary) collaboration of researchers on the themes of gender, diversity, and inclusion as well as collaboration of researchers and policy officers on this theme.

## 4. *Education*

Students need a good match with range of education offered. Lecturers are increasingly confronted with diversity issues and are looking for ways to deal with them.

Objective: We promote accessible education, an inclusive curriculum, and inclusive educational didactics that are sensitive to the needs of different groups of students. Inclusive education considers the needs, talents, and aspirations of all students and the accessibility of the physical and digital learning environment.

## 5. *Polarization*

The themes of gender equality, diversity, and inclusion have great social relevance, but also lead to heated and polarized debates in society and at Tilburg University. This applies in particular to the formulation of strong opinions on charged topics such as racism and sexism.

Objective: D&I expertise contributes to interpretation and meaning and to the emancipatory character of the university and is used to conduct a carefully prepared dialogue.

## 6. *Bias*

Qualities of people from one's own group are more likely to be seen and recognized than the same qualities of someone from another group. It is important that people realize that they are not as neutral as they think they are. The filter is not objective but masculine and is focused on their own group. Despite equal rights, we do not all have equal opportunities. The inequality of opportunity reveals itself not only in demographic characteristics, such as nationality and ethnicity but also in class and education. The bias can arise because criteria for persons from

the inner group are applied more flexibly, because processes are primarily designed based on the person's own circle, or because people with a good network get in more easily.

It sometimes proves difficult for people who do not experience inequality themselves to empathize with people who do. We also see this in the university community. It requires a carefully prepared dialogue based on the ideas of Connected Leading and on, for example, knowledge of the specific inclusion and exclusion mechanisms at play.

Objective: We counteract institutional inequality by designing our processes in such a way that they are open, transparent, neutral, and inclusive. We counteract subconscious bias about people from non-dominant groups and work to recognize privilege.

## 5. What are the ambitions?

### 5.1 Targets

The policy regarding the target figures remains unchanged from what was agreed with the VSNU at the end of 2020 and agreed internally in consultation with the Schools.

#### 5.1.1 Targets of female full professors

More than 50% of students and PhD researchers are women, but with every step on the academic career ladder, we lose female talent. By the end of 2020, only 22.5% of the full professors are women. TiU aims for 28% by the end of 2025. The scouting, recognition, and retention of gender-diverse talent will be fully embedded in the core processes of strategic human resource planning. VSNU and LNVH monitor the target figures for female full professors at Dutch universities.

TiU	TLS	TSB	TiSEM	TSHD	TST
28%	30%	37%	21%	45%	25%

For female associate professors, the target remains at least 40% in 2025 (currently 30%).

#### 5.1.2 Target female executives

At least 33% of the executives are women. We strive for diversity in a broad sense for him/her/them. By executives, we mean the Board of Governors, the Executive Board, the Deans, and the Directors. Diversity in decision-making positions opens the door to further diversity in the organization. By the end of 2021, 46% of this group is female. However, in terms of background, culture, and ethnicity, this is not a very diverse group. There is monitoring at the national level, namely through the *Bedrijvenmonitor Topvrouwen* (Business Monitor Female Executives) which the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science puts out annually.

#### 5.1.3 Target women on committees, etcetera

At least 33% and preferably 50% of the members of committees, steering groups, and working groups are women. The target of 33% women on appointment and promotion committees has been included in the Action Plan for Recruitment, Selection, Promotion, and Outflow. Monitoring is possible through SuccessFactors, coordination with TiSEM on recruitment through the international job market, and with TLS on the use of the Appointment & Promotion Committee.



#### 5.1.4 *Target for nominations*

An equal opportunity for men and women to win a prize is only possible if an equal number of men and women are nominated by a jury. Attention should also be paid to diversity in the broad sense. Therefore, the jury must also have a diverse composition.

It is important that committees use criteria that are appealing and likely to appeal to candidates from both overrepresented and underrepresented groups.

Monitoring of longlists takes place via SuccessFactors. Academic Services provides monitoring of nominations for honorary doctorates and research awards.

## 5.2 **Institutions**

As outlined in Section 3, this includes measures aimed at reforming structural processes as well as working towards an inclusive organization. Measures to improve figures are important, but this must be supported by an inclusive organizational *structure* and *culture*.

### 5.2.1 *Structure*

The way universities are *structured* can lead to inequality between different groups. Small systematic differences lead cumulatively to inequality.

In the following areas, this is recognized and acknowledged, and the university has set up measures to take these differences into account.

#### 5.2.2.1 *Recruitment, selection, promotion, and outflow*

The scouting, recognition, development, and retention of (gender) diverse talent is more firmly embedded in strategic personnel planning.

When drawing up vacancies to attract talent, the profile is more closely geared to the addition that a team needs. From Recognition & Rewards, we increase the possibilities of defining “job fit” and “team fit” based on the five domains of education, research, impact, team spirit, and leadership. The considerations here must be unambiguous for all parties: the Department, the selection committee, and the candidates.

The Action Plan for Recruitment, Selection, Promotion, and Outflow has been formalized and the concrete action points incorporated into the Essentials Checklist that will serve as a guide for Deans, Vice-Deans, Managing Directors, Heads of Departments, HR advisors, and members of selection committees until 2025. The Action Plan contributes to an inclusive mindset and to achieving the target of 28% female full professors in 2025.

#### 5.2.1.2 *Exit interviews*

Not only is the recruitment of female and diverse talent important but also the retention of talent. We want to prevent highly qualified female scientists from leaving. To gain more insight into the reasons for leaving, an independent party conducts confidential exit interviews with female full, associate, and assistant professors. More knowledge about the motives and needs is used for customized work in creating an inclusive work environment.

#### 5.2.1.3 *Recognizing mechanisms that make inclusion difficult*

Schools, Departments, and selection committees can make use of external expertise. This training contributes to transparent recruitment and promotion procedures to ensure equal

treatment of candidates and optimal and fair decision making. Participants learn to recognize their own and the group's bias and are then made responsible for holding each other accountable. In this way, inequality of opportunity through bias or stereotyping is counteracted.

#### *5.2.1.4 Remuneration system and allowances*

Tilburg University has tightened its remuneration policy and applies a transparent and neutral remuneration system based on a set of criteria for grading scaling on relevant work experience. This ensures that equal cases are treated equally. The remuneration system involves four steps: (i) transparency in advance when vacancies are posted; (ii) neutral criteria for scaling; (iii) justification of the remuneration decision; and (iv) monitoring and evaluation. Differences also occur in the granting of allowances.

#### *5.2.1.5 Work-life balance*

Tilburg University supports the balance between work and private time with various measures. To facilitate a healthy work-life balance, a lot of attention is paid to interconnectedness and time for training and reflection.

Attention to a good work-life balance is even more necessary now that the COVID-19 pandemic has made hybrid working, partly from home and partly at the university, the starting point. Tilburg University offers facilities and support by giving tips on how hybrid working in a good, healthy, safe, and effective way can be organized and how work-life balance can be properly monitored. In addition, several Golden Rules were agreed upon, including five weeks without meetings ([Golden Rules | Tilburg University](#)).

Women take on more care responsibilities than men do, regarding both children and people in the vicinity who need care. Tilburg University strives to ensure that men and women make equal use of special leave arrangements—including care leave and parental leave. Men and partners are given the opportunity to take paternity/partner leave, so that they can divide care tasks at home more equally. This allows both partners to invest equally in their careers.

Tilburg University has a unique scheme called “Research support after pregnancy leave.” This enables female assistant, associate, and full professors to compensate for the research time missed during pregnancy leave, so that they can compete with colleagues on an equal footing and meet the same publication standards as their colleagues. The scheme thus promotes equal career opportunities. For a period of four months, there is a right to exemption from education tasks or alternative funding for, for example, research assistance or additional research facilities.

#### *5.2.1.6 Education evaluations by students*

Research<sup>7</sup> shows that female lecturers systematically receive lower student education evaluations compared to their male colleagues, even after correcting for effects such as course content, composition of the student population, point for the exam, age, quality & impact of publications, and position. A similar negative effect occurs when an international lecturer has a non-Western European accent. This applies to both men and women, but more so for women. Because lecturer evaluations are part of decisions on applications, tenure, and promotion, these affect career progression, contract extension, promotions, and assignment of education and research responsibilities.

In the policy on education evaluations, the possibility is therefore created to argue the quality of education based on peer feedback and qualitative feedback from groups of students.

### *5.2.2 Culture*

The culture of an organization can lead to exclusion and isolation of groups.

Therefore, a safe environment, dialogue and encounters, communication, and visibility of diversity are important, in line with the core values of the university: Caring, Curious, Connected, and Courageous.

#### *5.2.2.1 Social Safety*

Social safety is central this strategic period and has elements that touch both the structure and the culture.

In the Strategy 2022–2027, based on the core values Caring and Connecting, the ambition to create a community in which everyone can develop academically and personally is formulated. TiU wants to offer an inclusive and socially safe environment in which we appreciate and know each other, based on openness, trust, and transparency as laid down in the philosophy of Connected Leading.

Tilburg University continues to work on a socially safe and inclusive study and working environment. The policy is based on 4 pillars: behavior & integrity, recruitment and selection (see 5.1), inclusive organizational culture, and training (see 5.2.2).

There is a relationship between diversity & inclusiveness and social safety because it is observed that the majority of reporters are women (employees and students) and it is mainly men (employees and students), often with a higher hierarchical position, the reports of undesirable behavior relate to.

These profiles indicate the importance of gender and diversity policies. Diversity and heterogeneity reduce the image of 'the otherness' and the chance of exclusion and discrimination. Core programs such as Connected Leading, Recognition & Rewards, and International Classroom address inclusive behavior.

The Code of Conduct (see Appendix 3), in which standards, values and etiquette are laid down, was recently revised. The Code of Conduct includes a roadmap to help employees and students find their way when seeking support. There is a structure of confidential advisors, ombuds officer, positions, and an integrity officer.

In 2022, an external agency will carry out an analysis of the organization of our safety in the area of integrity and undesirable behavior.

#### *5.2.2.2 Training and dialogue*

Openness, transparency, trust, and the courage to take and bear responsibility are important elements for effective collaboration. In the collaboration, we engage in dialogue, for which it is important to listen to the other person and to hear the ideas and views of our interlocutors. Tilburg University wants to encourage a culture of continuous feedback, reflection, and open dialogue. Employees regularly engage in discussions with each other and their managers and use this feedback for self-reflection to adjust or fine-tune their actions where necessary. Making mistakes is allowed as long as the starting point is that we learn from them.

Training sessions and meetings that contribute to a safe and inclusive work environment include:

D&I will be further embedded by focusing on the following points.

- Connected Leading's training courses comprehensively address employees' intercultural competencies & communication and focus on how bias works and how to reduce its effects.
- Since 2018, Tilburg University organizes the Active Bystander Training. During one session you will gain insight into how to adequately respond, intervene, and communicate when you witness undesirable behavior. The training pays attention to recognizing your own undesirable (micro) behavior, something that is not always obvious due to shifting norms. There is a follow-up training in which strategies for intervening in a transgressive situation are practiced in a small group.
- We organize reflection and dialogue on current themes, such as scientific integrity, discrimination, and exclusion. We do this, for example, with Mindlab, a theatre performance combined with reflection and dialogue.
- The Cross-Cultural Competences & Intercultural Communication training aims to clarify bottlenecks in work processes in diverse teams and to provide insight into how such a team can best work together based on the strengths of the team members.
- The Intercultural Classroom trains lecturers and support staff who work with students in intercultural skills to promote an inclusive learning environment.
- The Executive Board will discuss discrimination, racism, and exclusion with a diverse group of students, PhD researchers, and employees. In this dialogue session, an exchange of concerns, needs, and priorities regarding social safety takes place.
- With study and student associations, Tilburg University enters into discussion on issues such as exclusion, inclusion, and empathy. The annual Association Day is dedicated to the theme of international inclusiveness.

#### *5.2.2.3 Language policy*

We make a conscious choice for the language of communication in each situation. We choose a solution that allows everyone to participate. Inclusion is the golden rule. We give standard attention to which communication can be done in Dutch and which should be bilingual. We expressly open ourselves up to other language areas that are important in Europe because language areas are also areas of thought.

If our international employees are employed at Tilburg University for a longer period of time, we ask them to learn Dutch. At the same time, we continue to invest in the quality of English, both for Dutch-speaking employees and for international employees for whom English is not their native language. Tilburg University provides a training program.

In our communication, we pay attention to gender-stereotyped words. Vacancy texts with gender-specific wording offer potential applicants information on whether or not they "belong."

The Action Plan for Recruitment, Selection, Promotion, and Outflow points out the importance of tone and wording in vacancy texts and also refers to an online Gender Decoder to detect and replace gender-stereotyped words. Having a D&I expert or HR advisor read the text can also contribute to gender-sensitive and inclusive texts.

#### *5.2.2.4 Visibility of diverse talent*

The increasing diversity of our people and of scientific discourse is reflected in Tilburg University's textual and visual communication. Attention is paid to various role models and

success stories. An example are the Philip Eijlander Diversity fellows who figure in a colorful series of linocuts by a Tilburg artist. Students can see the scientists as being versatile and (inter)national role models who can inspire them to aspire to a career in science.

#### 5.2.2.5 Events

Human rights and emancipation movements are considered at several moments. Below is a selection.

- March 8, International Women's Day

Tilburg University celebrates International Women's Day with students, staff, administrators, and visitors. The aim of the annual Gender Unlimited event is to give visibility to diversity in the broadest sense of the word.

- June 20, World Refugee Day

Not only on this day but every day, the pre-Bachelor's program is offered, annually preparing approximately 15 refugee students for a study program at a Dutch educational institution. Universities of applied sciences and universities can nominate students for the ECHO Award, a prize for excellent talent with a non-western background in higher education. Tilburg University nominates students who stand out because of their entrepreneurial attitude, organizational ability, active social involvement, or constructive approach to challenges related to exclusion.

- October 11, Coming Out Day

At Tilburg University, everyone is welcome, everyone can be themselves and everyone should feel accepted and (socially) safe, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. This is what we stand for, and we show this by raising the rainbow flag at several locations on Coming Out Day. In collaboration with the Tilburg Municipality, we actively participate in this annual LGBTI+ awareness day. By becoming a member of Work Place Pride (see: [Workplace Pride | Tilburg University](#)), we convey that Tilburg University supports a work and study environment where LGBTI+ persons can be themselves and are appreciated for who they are.

### 5.3 Knowledge and skills

These measures are aimed at integrating knowledge about social categories such as gender, ethnicity, and class in research and education.

#### 5.3.1 Research and innovation

Scientific studies point out the exclusion of groups and perspectives in research. Studies also show that not including gender differences in the design and implementation of research projects can lead to costly mistakes. For example, cardiovascular disease is the main cause of death among women in Europe, but for years this disease was only studied in men. When social groups structurally have limited access to science, this affects the production of knowledge. Reflecting on how knowledge production in one's own field is affected by such processes of exclusion should be a core feature of every academic practice.<sup>8</sup>

Diverse talent in science increases our knowledge. It is valuable when people with different backgrounds also ask different research questions. Integrating sex and/or gender analysis in research and innovation

- adds value to research in terms of excellence, creativity, and valorization;
- helps researchers to question gender norms and stereotypes and to reconsider norms and reference models;
- leads to an understanding of different gender needs, behaviors, and attitudes;
- meets the diverse needs of citizens and thus increases the social relevance of knowledge.<sup>9</sup>

Objective 1: We promote inclusive research throughout the research & innovation cycle and involve all our scientists. Tilburg University as a knowledge institute is committed to

- (gender) diversity in all scientific positions;
- integrating gender and D&I dimensions in research and innovation;
- (gender) diversity in research teams, review panels, and expert groups.

These three elements are also criteria used by the European Commission to assess research proposals.

Objective 2: We promote (interdisciplinary) collaboration among researchers as well as collaboration between researchers and policy officers on the themes of gender, diversity, and inclusion.

Persistent strong differences in the representation of groups in the core tasks of knowledge institutions—education, research, and impact—have prompted the European Commission to impose preconditions on the research budget of 95 billion euros available until 2027.

The European Commission supports knowledge institutions with *Gendered Innovations 2: How inclusive analysis contributes to research and innovation*. The document provides methodological tools and 15 case studies with examples of projects that illustrate gender and inclusion integration in key research and innovation areas. There are case studies in the areas of health (including COVID-19); artificial intelligence; climate change and energy; urban planning and transport; and finance, taxation, and economics.

### 5.3.2 Education

The student population as a whole is more or less gender-equal with even slightly more female students. However, there are some stereotypical differences in the male-female ratio within the various study programs, such as a low proportion of female students in the Master's in Economics. Approximately 20% of the students at Tilburg University are international students. Both among national and international students, there is a wide variety of demographic characteristics and identities.

First generation students, students with a non-western migration background, and students with a disability experience more obstacles in education than average. They are more likely to experience study delays and are more likely to drop out.<sup>10</sup> Students need a good match with the programs offered. Lecturers are increasingly confronted with diversity issues and are looking for ways to deal with them.

Objective: We promote accessible education, an inclusive curriculum, and inclusive educational didactics that are sensitive to the needs of different groups of students. Inclusive education considers the needs, talents, and aspirations of all students and the accessibility of the physical and digital learning environment.

A sense of belonging is key to inclusive learning. It promotes student well-being and success.

Interventions take place along several lines.

- Formally through existing programs such as the Starting Lecturer, *Basis Kwalificatie Onderwijs (BKO)* with its English variant University Teacher Qualification (UTQ) and Senior University Teacher Qualification (SUTQ).
- Formally through Academic Services initiatives such as D&I policy in relation to the education accreditation system; the Vision on Student Well-being and Studying without Hindrance. There is the Inclusive Education working group, and as part of the International Classroom, training courses for intercultural competencies and awareness of bias are offered.
- Informally through initiatives by lecturers, often in collaboration with students. An example is the Diversity Committee in the Philosophy Department. There are also lecturers who include diversity statements in the online information about their courses.

## **6. Goals and resources: people and money**

Gender equality, diversity, and inclusion are high on the university agenda and integrated into HR policy development and implementation. They form an essential part of the core programs Talent Development, Connected Leading, and Recognition & Rewards.

- *Talent development*

Managers transparently and systematically discuss career paths with employees that clearly show what is needed in the individual and personal situation regarding talent development and growth. Tilburg University supports this with the Performance & Talent Development program.

- *Connected Leading*

Connected Leading offers employees the opportunity to discover their talents and invest in their strengths. There is an extensive range of workshops, training courses, and e-learning possibilities. D&I will be further embedded by focusing on employees' intercultural competencies and communication, by paying attention to the effects of bias and reducing them, and by further institutionalizing the mentoring program.

- *Recognition & Rewards*

Tilburg University actively contributes to the national movement to achieve a system and culture change that leads to a more equal appreciation of the diversity of talent and a more inclusive academic community. The 5 domains of research, education, social impact, leadership, and team spirit offer opportunities for recognizing a diversity of talents.

In addition to these core programs, the *Philip Eijlander Diversity Program* has increased the influx of women into higher academic positions by creating 19 additional positions at the level of assistant, associate, and full professors.

The coaching program Navigating the System offers female scientists a year of coaching at crucial moments in their careers. The Schools nominate candidates who are ready to take steps. The program focuses on career strategy, setting short- and long-term goals, making one's own talents visible, networking, profiling, dealing with bias, gender dynamics, and work-life balance.

The training thus supports the university's objective of retention and advancement of female scientists in academia and helps to achieve the target of 28% female full professors.

Through these programs, and in the aforementioned training sessions, workshops, courses, et cetera, Tilburg University deploys its staff and resources for gender equality, diversity and inclusion.

Offered centrally by HR Policy Staff for employees

- There is commitment to gender policy, D&I, and social safety at the HR Policy Staff.
- The HR policy advisors in the Schools are involved in the themes of gender equality, diversity & inclusiveness, and social safety.
- D&I working groups are set up on a project basis.

Offered centrally by Academic Services for lecturers and students

- Employees are committed to diversity policy, internationalization, and well-being.
- D&I working groups are set up on a project basis.

Offered centrally by Executive Services

- Tilburg University employs, among others, internal and external confidential advisors for employees, students, and guests who have a request for help.
- In the short term, an ombuds officer will be appointed to whom employees can turn for advice and mediation. The ombuds officer identifies undesirable patterns in the area of social safety and undesirable behavior and can investigate and address shortcomings in regulations, policy, and culture.

Offered decentralized by the Schools

- In all Schools, an MT member fulfils the role of Associate Dean for D&I, who assesses all subjects from the D&I perspective and ensures that all initiatives are inclusive. The Deans work with the School Boards and Heads of Department to implement the Action Plan for Recruitment, Selection, Promotion, and Outflow.
- All Schools continue to focus on diversity and inclusiveness in their strategies, each with their own emphasis.

### *Resources*

There is a budget for staff, for policy development and implementation, for schemes to promote equal opportunities, for training and development, for activities that contribute to the visibility of diverse talent, for memberships and networks that promote diversity and inclusion, for projects for refugees, for the social safety support structure, etcetera. Funds are available from central facilities, from the funds for strategic priorities, from decentralized, School funds, and from the Decentralized Employment Conditions Funds, the funds the university uses for specific employment conditions after consultation with the trade unions.



## 7. Monitoring and reporting

The monitoring and findings of the evaluations show what is going well and where we can make adjustments.

### 7.1 Figures

- The Dashboard Personnel provides internal data and monitors the male-female ratio in the various academic positions. As far as possible, data analysis is based on an intersectional approach.
- There is an internal data supply and monitoring of the male-female ratio of students. Data analysis is based as much as possible on an intersectional approach.
- Tilburg University participates in the joint monitor of the LNVH and the VSNU of the share of women in science: Monitor Female Professors.
- Every year, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science sends out the *Bedrijvenmonitor Topvrouwen*, a monitor of the development towards a balanced male/female distribution at the top and the sub top of companies and organizations in the (semi)public sector.
- The training that supports women with navigating the academic system is being evaluated.
- Academic Services monitors the male-female ratio in nominations for research prizes from the Schools and from the Executive Board.

### 7.2 Structure and culture of institutions

- In the Tilburg University Annual Report, the developments in gender equality, diversity and inclusion are accounted for.
- Up to and including 2025, the Action Plan for Recruitment, Selection, Promotion, and Outflow (and related developments) is on the agenda of the OCD, the Executive Board and Deans Consultations, every year in Q2. The action points and dates are used to evaluate what is going well and what could be improved.
- The Deans involve the School Boards and Heads of Department in the Action Plan for Recruitment, Selection, Promotion, and Outflow and make them jointly responsible. They also ensure that an MT member fulfils the role of Associate Dean for D&I. The Associate Deans view all subjects from the D&I perspective and ensure that all initiatives are inclusive. In this way, not only the Board but also middle management have a firm commitment to D&I. D&I will be part of the Talent & Performance Development dialogue between members of the School Board and Heads of Department.
- The person responsible for D&I within the School Board ensures that, in appointment proposals, reports are included on the composition and diversity of selection committees and on actions taken to find suitable candidates from a gender and diversity perspective.
- Through the employee satisfaction survey and the student monitor, Tilburg University increases insight into the composition—including cultural and ethnic diversity—of employees and students and the extent to which they feel valued and safe in the organization.
- The Deans and Directors of the Schools, Grant Support, and HR mediate NWO programs such as Hestia and Mosaic for newcomers and Dutch people from non-Western backgrounds. Academic Services monitors the Echo Award.
- HR monitors the more stringent remuneration system.

- Every four years, the Research Support Scheme after maternity leave is evaluated by HR and discussed with Labor Representation Board.
- The various bodies in the support structure, such as the confidential advisors, monitor the number and type of reports of integrity and undesirable behavior. The annual report provides an insight into the number of reports per category of undesirable behavior, the characteristics of the reporting parties, and the persons who are the subjects of the reports, and it provides an insight into the effects of the interventions by the confidential advisors: were cases resolved properly?

### **7.3 Knowledge and skills**

- Academic Services, the Vice-Deans for Research and Grant Support have a proactive attitude in further embedding the gender & D&I dimension in research & innovation and in a (gender) diverse composition of research teams, review panels and committees. Reporting is done in the annual reports.

## Appendix 1

### Definitions

A clarification of the main concepts in this document. These are based on the Harzing report<sup>11</sup>, the Central Government<sup>12</sup> and the European Commission<sup>13</sup>.

Inclusion	Inclusion refers to the behaviors and social norms that create a culture of belonging and feeling at home. All staff and students are actively invited to participate in the academic community.
Diversity	Diversity refers to the variety in the composition of staff and students. <i>In terms of numbers:</i> such as the % of female full professors or % of international students. <i>in terms of culture:</i> cultural diversity is about the plurality of identities. <i>In line with Connected Leading:</i> talents and strengths are diverse and at team level preferably complementary.
Equality	Equality refers to providing equal opportunities to all, treating everyone equally, and protecting people from discrimination. The law specifically mentions the following grounds of discrimination: <i>age; sexual orientation; religion and beliefs; race (as a social construct); gender; nationality; disability or chronic illness; political beliefs; marital status; type of employment contract (permanent or temporary); and working hours (full-time or part-time work).</i>
Equity	Equity considers the diversity of needs and support individuals require to excel.
Intersectionality	Intersectionality refers to overlapping or intersecting categories such as gender, ethnicity, age, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and geographical location, which together define the identity and experiences of individuals. The interdependent characteristics can lead to privilege or disadvantage.
Sex	Gender refers to biological characteristics.
Gender	Gender refers to sociocultural attitudes, behaviors, and identities.

## Appendix 2

### Overview of the implementation of requirements and recommendations by the European Commission

The table provides an overview of the actions Tilburg University is taking that relate to the specific requirements of the European Commission for Gender Equality and D&I.

Mandatory elements	Gender and D&I Plan 2022–2025
<b>Public document</b>	
<p>The Plan is a formal public document.</p> <p>The Plan must be signed by the management of the institution.</p> <p>The Plan should be available on the website.</p> <p>The Plan should be disseminated throughout the institution.</p>	<p>The D&amp;I Plan is formally approved and a public document.</p> <p>The Plan is signed by the Executive Board, see page 3.</p> <p>The Plan can be found on the Tilburg University <a href="#">website</a>.</p> <p>The Plan will be communicated; directly to all scientists and through the newsletter.</p>
<b>Deployment and resources</b>	
<p>Resources should be allocated to gender equality positions or teams.</p> <p>Time must be made available for others to work on gender equality.</p>	<p>See chapter 6 Gender equality, diversity, and inclusion are vested in in HR and Academic Services policy officers.</p> <p>Staff work on gender equality and D&amp;I initiatives, including from synergy with the core programs Talent Development, Recognition &amp; Rewards, and Connected Leading.</p>
<b>Data collection and monitoring</b>	
<p>Data on gender or sex of staff and management are available.</p> <p>Annual review and reports on progress and results.</p>	<p>See Chapter 7, Monitoring There is internal data provision and monitoring of the male-female ratio of students and staff.</p> <p>See Chapter 7, Monitoring, page 17 and 18</p>

<b>Training and development</b>	
The entire organization is involved.	See the chapter 1, page 2 The entire organization is involved in working towards an inclusive and safe organizational culture. D&I is a strategic priority.
Addressing gender bias in people and in decisions.	Addressing bias receives considerable attention. See chapter 4, Challenges and goals section (4.2); diverse composition of the selection committee (4.2); structural processes (5.2.1); training (5.2.2.2 and 5.3.2)
Joint action on specific topics.	Examples of joint actions are celebrating International Women's Day; an equal percentage of men and women for nominations; and a transparent remuneration system.
<b>Recommended focus areas</b>	
Work-life balance and attention to the organizational culture.	See the chapter 5.2.1.5, Work-life balance Tilburg University facilitates the balance between work time and private time, and between career and care responsibilities. All initiatives are aimed at strengthening an inclusive organizational culture.
Gender equality in leadership and decision making.	See chapter 5.1, Targets Targets are in place to ensure a good representation of women in management, decision-making positions.
Gender equality in recruitment and career development.	See chapter 5.2, the Structural Processes Tilburg University works with the Action Plan for Recruitment, Selection, Promotion, and Outflow to scout, develop, and retain (gender) diverse talent more firmly embedded in the strategic human resource planning. There is a training available to support this.
Integration of the gender dimension in research and education themes and education.	See the chapter 5.3.1 Research and Innovation Tilburg University is committed as a knowledge institute to: 1. gender diversity in scientific positions; 2. integration of the gender and D&I dimensions in research; 3. gender diversity in research teams, review panels, and expert groups.
Measures to fight gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.	See the Social Safety chapter, chapter 5.2.2.1 Social safety is central, including preventing and combating sexual harassment. We are working to create an organizational culture in which there is no room for transgressive behavior. We do this by, among other things, developing connecting leadership, intercultural competencies, and awareness of the effects of bias.

## Appendix 3

### Code of Conduct

Respect	You treat each other with respect, both inside and outside the organization, in word, gesture and writing. You engage in dialogue with others, and you listen to each other.
Openness and vulnerability	You work together with others. This means that you can ask others for help, help others, are open, and show our vulnerability. You support and value others. It is important to engage in dialogue with others, for which trust, openness, and transparency are important conditions.
Discrimination	You do not discriminate. Tilburg University defines discrimination as: treating a person differently from another person in a comparable situation on the grounds of religion, philosophy of life, political affiliation, race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, health or on any other grounds referred to in Article 1 of the Constitution.
Sexual harassment	You are not guilty of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as any form of verbal, non-verbal, or physical behavior of a sexual nature with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when an intimidating, hostile, offensive, humiliating, or offensive situation is created.
Aggression and violence	You do not use aggression or violence against others. By aggression and violence, we mean all incidents in which a person is mentally or physically harassed, threatened, or attacked.
Bullying	You do not bully. By bullying, we mean any form of intimidating behavior by one or more employees (colleagues, managers), students, or guests directed against a single employee, student, or guest, or a group of employees, students, or guests.

## NOTES

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<sup>3</sup> Naezer, M. M., van den Brink, M. C. L., and Benschop, Y. W. M.: Harassment in Dutch academia: Exploring manifestations, facilitating factors, effects, and solutions. LNVH 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Bleijenbergh, I. L., van Engen, M. L., & Vinkenburg, C. J.: Othering women: fluid images of the ideal academic. Equality, diversity and inclusion: An international journal. 2013.

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<sup>6</sup> Adviescommissie Divers en Inclusief Hoger Onderwijs en Onderzoek: Guide for drawing up gender equality plans'. Ministerie van OCW, 2021.

<sup>7</sup> See note 5.

<sup>8</sup> Bohnet, I. What works. Gender equality by design. Cambridge, 2016.

<sup>9</sup> See note 13.

<sup>10</sup> SER: Gelijke kansen in het onderwijs. Structureel investeren in kansengelijkheid voor iedereen. 2021

<sup>11</sup> Harzing, A.W.: Gender and international diversity & inclusiveness at TiSEM. 2021.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/discriminatie/vraag-en-antwoord/wat-is-discriminatie>

<sup>13</sup> European Commission: Gendered Innovations 2: How inclusive analysis contributes to research and innovation, 2020.

*'The Gender and Equality Plan 2022 was adopted by the Executive Board of Tilburg University on December 20, 2021 in Tilburg.'*