



Gender Equality Plan 2023-2028

June 2023

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Horizon Europe Gender Equality Plan June 2023

This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) demonstrates The American University of Rome's (AUR) commitment to promoting gender equality, inclusion and diversity throughout the institution and ensuring a safe and supporting environment for all academic and administrative staff and students.

From its inception in 1969 the primary purpose of AUR has been to advance inter-cultural communication and create an international, diverse and tolerant community of scholars and staff. Although AUR is a small institution, it has more than 60 nationalities on campus and more than 28 native languages are spoken by our staff and students. Our focus on the Liberal Arts and Social Sciences has always guaranteed a strong presence of women within our community, but we recognize that commitment to gender equality needs more. With the help of loyal donors, we have initiated a program of scholarships directed at women from conflict countries, in recognition of the heavy burden that women suffer in times of war that so often interrupts their education and limits their life choices. We are currently fundraising for a Global Center for Women's Leadership and we have also recently introduced the Fitzsimmons Scholarship for Women in Leadership, acknowledging that, despite advances in gender equality, there is still a deficit of women in leadership roles at a senior level.

The GEP presented here is written to align with the mandatory and recommended requirements of the Horizon Europe Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 2021-2027. It has been prepared with the assistance and input of academic and administrative staff and details our current policies and outcomes and plans for short-term and long-term goals for improvement. It demonstrates our commitment to ongoing evaluation to ensure that gender equality continues to be embedded in future plans and developments as we move forward.

*Scott Sprenger
President, The American University of Rome*

Introduction¹

The American University of Rome (AUR) originated in 1969 as an institution catering for American Study Abroad students and began offering its own degrees in 1986. It currently offers 10 undergraduate majors, 27 undergraduate minors and three Masters' programs. The focus of the institution is Liberal Arts and Social Sciences supplemented by Business. AUR is recognized by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research as an American university authorized to operate in Italy as a Foreign Higher Education Institution. Its degrees are accredited by Middle States Commission on Higher Education, which is authorized by the U.S. Secretary of Education to conduct accreditation for institutions of higher education.

As a foreign institution drawing on an international body of students, staff and academics, the American University of Rome has always placed a high priority on ensuring equality of all types including gender equality. The institution as a whole has a predominance of females (70% students, 68% administrative staff, 60% academic staff) which is common in institutions with a Liberal Arts and Social Sciences concentration. However, AUR recognizes that numbers alone do not ensure gender equality and is committed to continuing the already established good practices as well as actively exploring areas for improvement. Gender equality is a fundamental value of the European Union, the geographical home of AUR, and is one the UN Sustainable Development Goals. A Gender Equality Plan is a prerequisite for eligibility for funding from Horizon Europe and this document is intended to ensure those requirements are met. AUR's Gender Equality Plan consists of the following elements:

1. A publication on the institutional website signed by the university President and covering the following elements;
 - a. work life balance and organizational culture
 - b. gender balance in leadership and decision-making
 - c. gender inequality in recruitment and career progression
 - d. integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content
 - e. measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.
2. Dedicated resources that will ensure the plan is implemented;
3. Data collection and monitoring whereby disaggregated data are monitored annually;

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all the information in this document refers to the situation as it was in June 2023.

4. Training for administrative and academic staff to ensure gender equality and combat unconscious bias.

A. Work Life Balance and Organizational Culture

Work Life Balance

Italian labor law protects workers' rights and supports an environment where family needs are protected. Since the end of the Covid 19 pandemic AUR has introduced new working practices that improve on statutory rights and allow for an improved work-life balance.

Flexibility in working hours: Administrative staff have flexibility over beginning and leaving work subject to ensuring that all duties are covered. In addition, except for a few offices where presence is essential, staff can opt to work from home (known in Italy as 'Smart Working' (SM)) two days a week. In summer 2023 AUR is trialling a period of extended SM which will allow staff to work two consecutive weeks of remote working. This will enable staff with family who live distantly or abroad to maintain better contact with their families and will assist parents with school age children. On days when staff work in the office, they receive a seven Euro meal ticket allowance. Academic staff (also known as faculty) are required to teach and attend some meetings in person but can deal with other meetings and duties remotely.

Caring duties: According to Italian Law women expecting a baby may take leave to carry out medical examinations and all kind of tests related to the pregnancy with no limit. These absences are considered paid leave. Maternal leave, paid at 80% of salary, consists of five months leave, usually taken as two months before the birth and three months afterwards. Paternal leave consists of 10 days. In addition to mandatory maternity and paternity leave, Italy also offers optional paid parental leave. As of 2023, parents can be eligible to receive up to 11 continuous months of paid parental leave. Both parents are entitled to three months of optional parental leave, and another three months of paid leave can be added by one parent. This can be continuous with mandatory leave or can be taken any time up to the child's 12th birthday with 15 days' notice. One of these optional months is paid at 80% of salary, if taken within the child's first six years. The remainder of optional parental leave is paid at 30%. Parents of children with a registered disability are entitled to three days a month leave for caring duties. There are no written regulations concerning reduction of hours for caring duties, but in the past, they have been requested and granted.

Bereavement Leave: Italian law allows for 6 days bereavement leave a year.

Marriage Leave: Full time and part time employees are entitled to 15 days paid leave in conjunction with the date of marriage.

Complementary Pension: AUR runs a complementary pension scheme above and beyond the contributions to state pensions.

AUR runs an opt-in health private health insurance to supplement the state run health care facilities available to all residents.

Organizational Culture

As an international institution AUR actively seeks to have a diverse community and this is incorporated into our mission statement. AUR is a committed equal opportunity employer in all its hiring practices. All undergraduate degree-seeking students are required to fulfill a curriculum condition of taking a minimum of two courses focused on diverse perspectives and, as the university catalog makes clear, the exploration of different worldviews on culture, race, gender, class, religion, and social status is encouraged at every level and in every discipline.

As society changes, new challenges arise. Recently, Student Government requested the university to reconfigure space in order to accommodate gender-neutral bathrooms and gender-neutral student accommodation. This has been carried out and the situation will be monitored to ensure that there is an appropriate amount of space apportioned as gender-specific and gender-neutral.

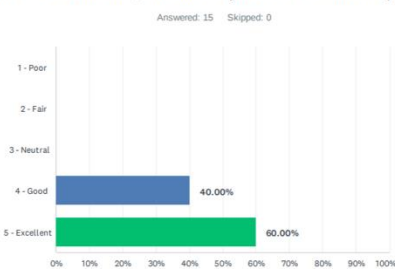
A supportive social circle is an essential part of a university experience, and this is particularly true of AUR where many students are not only living away from home for the first time, but also navigating a foreign culture. Within AUR there are a number of social clubs, run by students and supported by the university which allow students to mix and organize social events with people who share their identity and interests, and where they can offer and receive mutual support and advocacy. These include the LGBTQ+ Club, Diversity Club, Women's Advocacy Club, and Women of Color United.

Gender equality is an important part of the larger university policy on DEI – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. DEI allows gender equality to be monitored in an intersectional context, weighing its interaction with other potential biases such as race, nationality, religion, and class. In AY 2021-2022 a task group was set up within the Strategic Enrollment Management group to address DEI. The group carried out research, conducted surveys and made recommendations for ensuring a fair and balanced enrollment policy into the future. The group concluded that success should be measured not by numbers alone, but when “all members of the community have the opportunity to find their own ‘space’

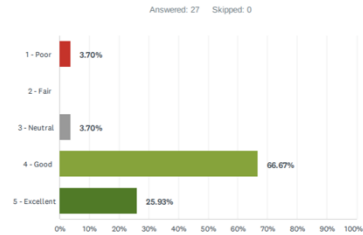
without having to downplay or adjust their identity to fit in, because feeling included does not necessarily mean to belong.”

In Spring 2023 DEI workshops for academic and administrative staff were held as part of faculty/staff development. The core elements of DEI were introduced and discussed. The goal was to build a greater awareness and understanding of how DEI has an impact in different working situations. The workshops covered: the difference between equality and equity, the need to recognize privilege, understanding the types of hidden bias that affect judgement but of which we may be unaware, the corrosive effects of microaggression, and the importance of inclusive language. Surveys taken after the training showed that academic and administrative staff found the workshops useful, and they will be incorporated into orientation for new employees.

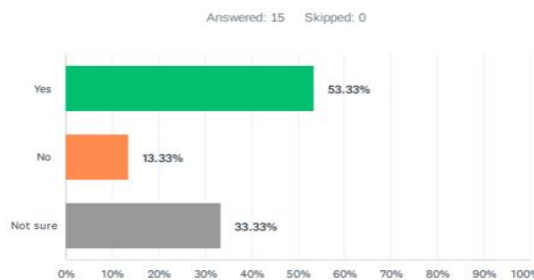
DEI workshop for AUR staff follow-up survey
Q1 On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the workshop overall?



DEI workshop for AUR faculty follow-up survey
Q1 On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the workshop overall?



DEI workshop for AUR staff follow-up survey
Q5 Do you feel there is a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion at AUR?



Selected Comments

Most valuable part ...”The inclusive language and the opportunity to have a reserved time for reflection and discussion with colleagues. Sometimes we are so caught up in our individual activities and we believe that they are just that, so we do not remember that we live within an organization made of people and relationships and not only of numbers and tasks to perform.”

Most valuable part ...”explanation of the new way to deal with addressing people with gender adjectives”

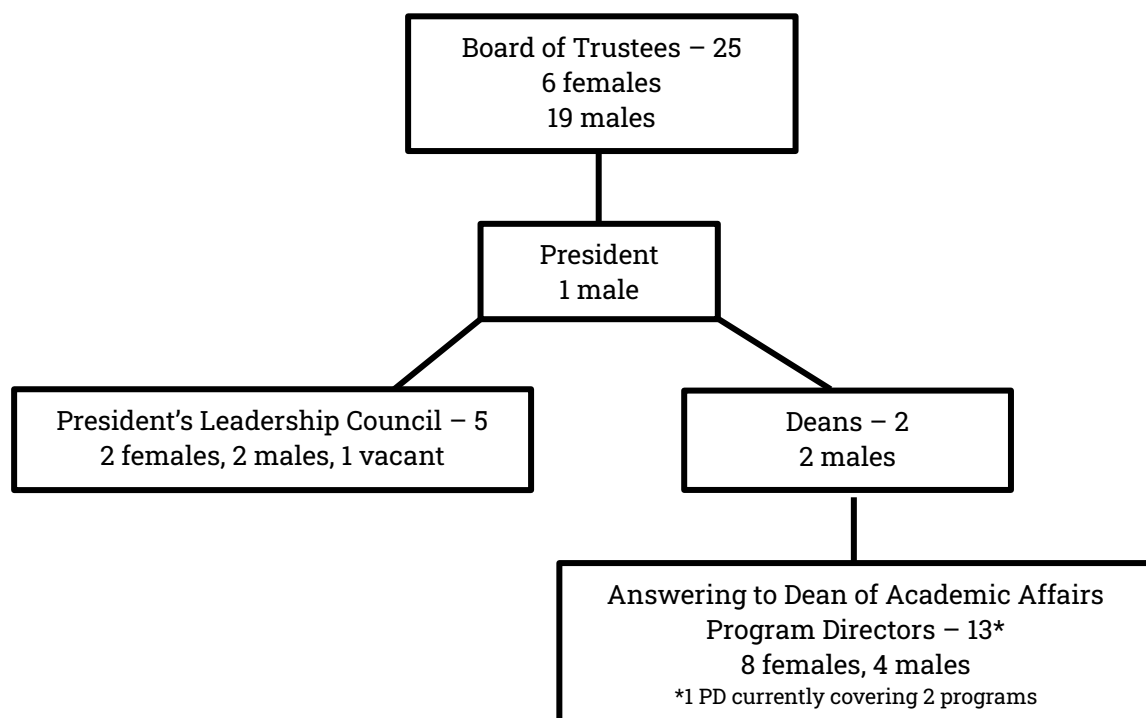
Most valuable part"Understanding how I can present myself to show that I am an ally rather than someone who is judging others."

"I think we all mean well, but that there is definitely much to be learned and much work to be done, especially as it ends up affecting the work we do with students."

"The majority of the AUR community actively try to be inclusive, but given our demographics, I think it is hard for a lot of us to see that there is even an issue. The majority of us are coming from privileged places, so I think it is important that these issues are highlighted and we are all trained to deal with DEI on a daily basis."

B. Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making

AUR is governed by a Board of Trustees who appoint a President. Below the President is a Dean of Academic Affairs who is the Chief Academic Officer and a Dean of Students who is in charge of non-academic student affairs such as welfare and social activities. The Presidential Leadership Council consists of senior managers who meet weekly to discuss the administration of the university. On the academic side, below the Dean of Academic Affairs, there are Program Directors who are in charge of individual academic programs.



Given the small numbers overall, the gender balance distribution within the institution is deemed to be acceptable. The current Dean of Academic Affairs is male which may appear to weight unfairly the senior administration, but the previous two Deans were female, so there is no evidence of any bias against women in senior roles. The Program Directors, a post held by academic staff, are weighted in favor of females. The lack of female Board members has been noted and is being addressed. As term limits for Board members come up there is the opportunity to improve diversity and gender equality.

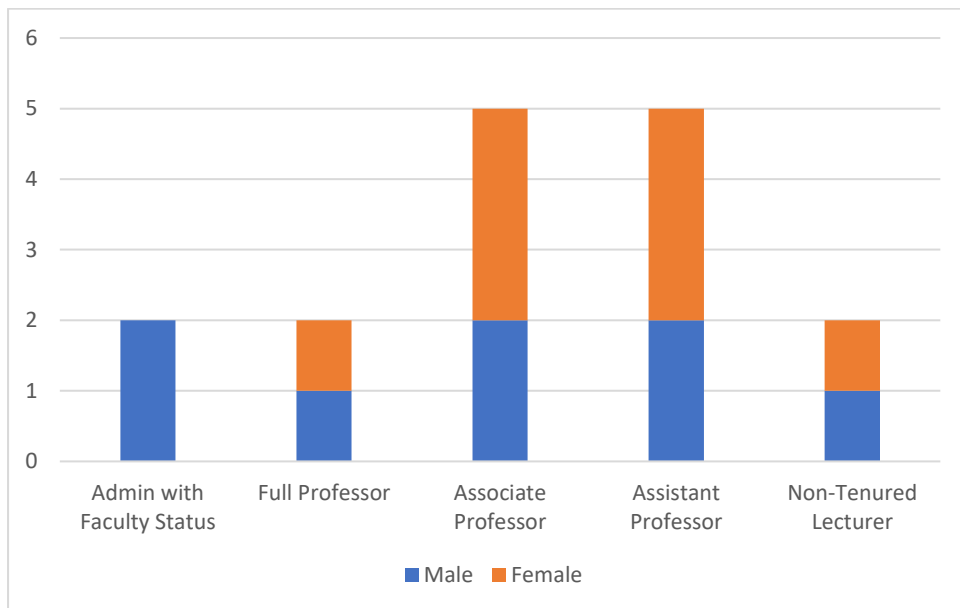
The appointment of new senior personnel is conducted through search committees comprising between three and five persons made up of members of the academic and administrative staff who have knowledge of the duties of the position. Tenure-track academic positions are advertised internationally. The search usually results in a short list of three candidates who make a campus visit and give a lecture to students to demonstrate teaching aptitude and a general lecture to the community on their research. Senior management positions are advertised internationally and usually result in a short list of three candidates who make a campus visit. They participate in meetings with appropriate departments and individuals and may or may not give a lecture to the community, depending on whether it is considered relevant the position. In all cases, after the campus visits, anonymous feedback is elicited from the entire community and sent to the Search Committee who take it into consideration on making recommendations. The final decision rests with the President. Since hiring recommenced in fall 2021 (it was suspended during the Covid 19 pandemic) there have been four new senior hires. The table below is restricted to international searches for senior administrators and full-time faculty. It does not include junior administrative posts or adjunct (aka part-time/sessional) instructors who are recruited locally.

Position	Gender of Chair of Search Committee	No of Committee Members	Gender Distribution of Committee	Candidate Decision
Dean of Academic Affairs	F	4	75% F 25% M	M
Program Director Business	F	5	80% F 20% M	M
Assistant Professor IR	F	3	66.6% F 33.3% M	M
Director of Advancement	F	5	80% F 20% M	F

C. Gender Inequality in Recruitment and Career Progression

Academic Appointments Disaggregated by Rank

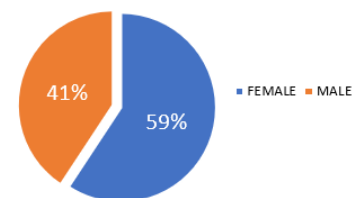
Full time academic (faculty) appointments are ranked in the following categories: Full Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Non-Tenured Lecturer. Procedures for progression between tenured ranks are described in the Faculty Handbook and consist of evaluation by faculty colleagues of teaching, research and service to the university and professional community. The faculty meet and vote on their recommendation which is forwarded to the Dean of Academic Affairs, who makes a final recommendation to the President. The final decision rests with the President. An appeals process is defined in the Faculty Handbook for individuals who wish to appeal the final decision.



Part-time Faculty (Spring 2023) Disaggregated

Female	48	59%
Male	33	41%
Total	81	100%

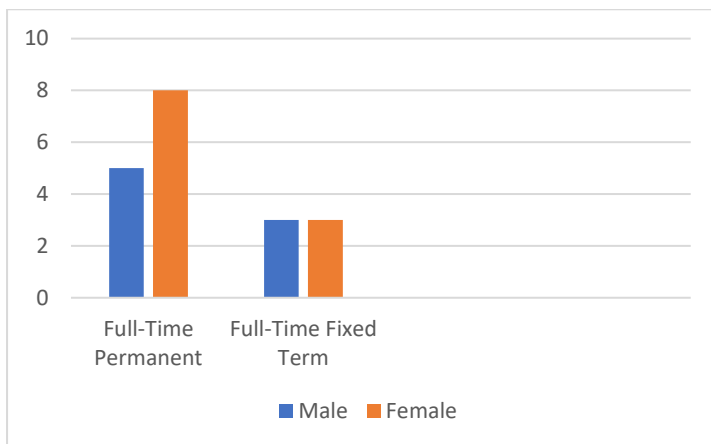
Spring 2023 AUR part-time faculty gender



Within the full-time faculty there is an equal gender balance overall and no evidence of any systematic bias. In part-time workers there is a slight predominance of females.

Faculty Disaggregated by Contract Length

Full-time faculty hires usually begin with a fixed-term contract. These convert to permanent on being awarded tenure or, in the case of non-tenure track appointments, after two years. Some fixed-term contracts are issued to cover specific academic needs in certain time periods.



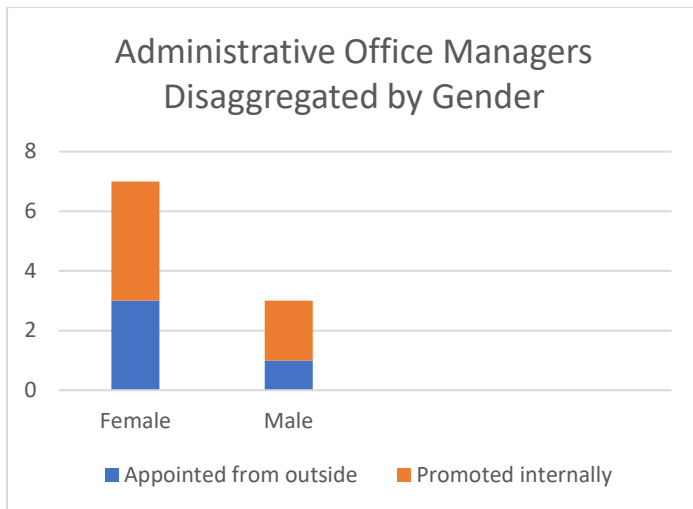
All part-time contracts are fixed term and renewable.

There is no evidence that gender discrimination is a factor in the type of contract issued to employees.

Gender Balance and Career Progression in Administration

Administrative appointments are usually initially on a fixed term contract which converts to permanent if the employee remains in the position after two years. Career progression is encouraged at AUR, though the small size of the institution can sometimes restrict advancement. Under Italian law all employees are allowed 150 hours of Study Leave with the permission of their line manager and they are allowed to attend courses within the university free of charge.

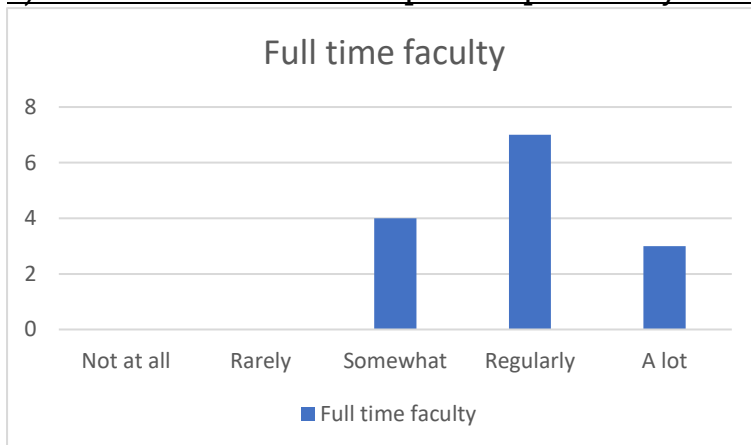
There are ten administrative departments at AUR. Excluding the President and Dean of Academic Affairs, the managers in charge of these offices are seven females and three males. Four out of seven female managers and two out of three male managers have been promoted internally. Both females and males in administrative roles have opportunity for career progression.



D. Integration of the Gender Dimension into Research and Teaching Content

In order to measure the importance of gender in research and teaching at AUR, the full-time faculty, and senior administration who engage in research, were surveyed. They were asked to respond to a series of questions using a Likert scale and to add comments.

a) Gender issues are an important part of my teaching:



Selected comments

"I make a conscious effort to incorporate issues regarding this field as much as possible....for example, in the course on Italian food and culture I discuss and include course readings on how gender relates to food production, preparation and consumption in the Italian context throughout various phases of history."

"I typically let each class or group determine the depth to which gender issues are a major topic of discussion on a given day, but I always have at least one focused discussion on gender issues early on in the course so that students are aware that these are valid and available methods of interpretation going forward."

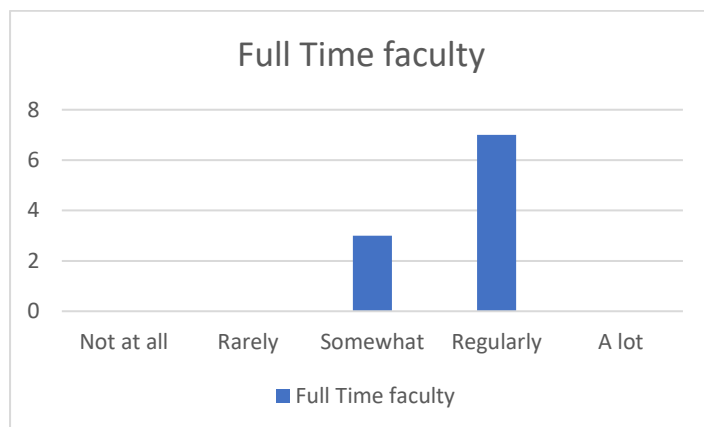
“Gender issues are particularly important in two of my courses. In *Digital Media & Society*, we discuss how algorithms often discriminate against women and the LGBTQ communities when they’re trained on data which are either biased or unrepresentative. Related themes touch upon issues such as feedback loops and the intersection with race and socioeconomic status. In *Media Ethics*, we discuss both the male-dominated configuration of the media industry and issues in media content, such as stereotyping, objectification, sexualization, etc.”

“In my human rights and international criminal justice courses (for undergraduates and graduates) I cover topics such as: elimination of discrimination against women; discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity; violence against women including rape as a war crime.”

“I do not specifically disaggregate data by gender in my teaching, but going forward I think it might be a useful approach.”

“In terms of the content of what I teach, they are not important, as I am teaching very specific skills to students about how to make film. However I am aware of the gender disparity that still exists in the film world, so I make an extra effort to support and encourage female students in their work.”

b) For program directors: Gender issues are incorporated into the courses in my program:



Selected comments

“Gender is taken into consideration in syllabus design in my English Literature classes, from surveys to upper division specialized courses.”

“The program has a specific course, *Media and Gender*, dedicated to the relationship between media and gender issues.”

“Gender issues are important in travel and tourism as ...[it] has more female employers than other sectors and provides women with more opportunities for workforce participation, leadership, entrepreneurship and empowerment than other industries, particularly in developing countries.”

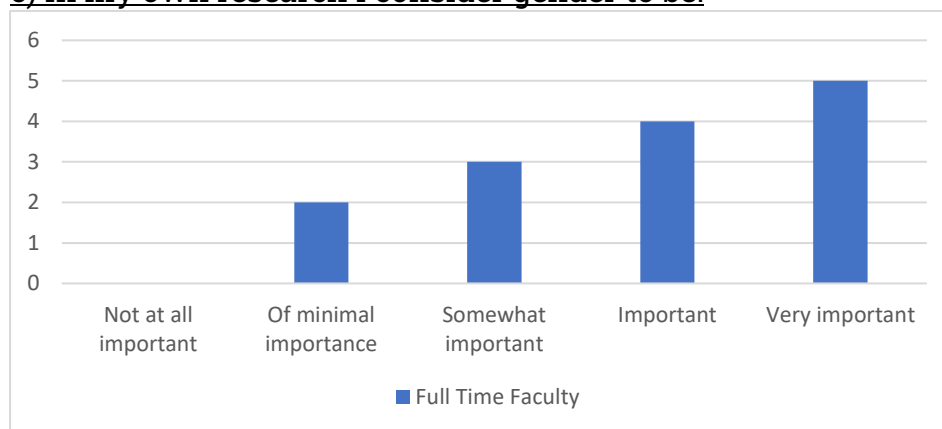
“Under the guiding goals of the Sustainable Development Goals of No Poverty (SDG1), Zero Hunger (SDG2), Gender equality (SDG5) and Responsible Production and Consumption (SDG12) the Master highlights i) Analyses of disaggregated data on food insecurity on a global scale showing how women are more food insecure than men; ii) Gender as a critical factor in the intrahousehold allocation of resources and impact on nutrition; iii) Role of men and women in agricultural production – in developing and developed countries; iv) gender roles in food consumption and sustainable diets.”

“I inserted recently a course *Gender in Global Perspectives*, so that on top of the recognition of the issue in the IR, Ethics and philosophy courses, there is also a specific course on this.”

“There is no specific course on gender in my program but impacts on threats to local heritage and intangible culture are often greatest on, and can be mitigated through, women in their role as primary providers and carers for the family.”

“When I am choosing who will be student assistants and TAs for classes I again strive to work towards gender parity, and as we are trying to expand the teaching staff I am also doing the same. We have gender issues incorporated directly into some of our film theory/history/studies classes and I’m actively looking to bolster these in the future.”

c) In my own research I consider gender to be:



Selected comments

“In my Doctorate thesis I focused on gender and race issues and how they impact the First Year Experience of ethnic minority female students.”

“Gender comes in as a critical component in the social analysis of policy impacts through the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of intersectionality and the socio-ecological framework (implying collecting information on biogeophysical as well as social patterns from the macro to micro-level (household and intrahousehold).”

“My research focuses on literary modernism, so the changes in approaches to gender are important both historically and narratively. The growing importance of women’s voices in travel writing and fiction is a particular interest, but so is the way travel allowed for different performances of masculinity that would have been considered taboo at ‘home’.”

“Gender issues are not a specific component of my research.”

“Gender is an issue in my research into antiquity trafficking (and its links to other organized crime) in that nearly all the perpetrators are male, and the initial looting is usually carried out by

groups of men who often bond through trips to look for sites in much the same way as they might go on a fishing trip. On the other side, the museum staff and heritage professionals trying to protect the patrimony are weighted towards females.”

“My own “research” is in writing and directing films, and I’m focused primarily on the human experience in my film films, and the experience of gender is something I consider in each individual character.”

E. Measures Against Gender-Based Violence, Including Sexual Harassment.

AUR has robust sexual harassment policies in place which are described at <https://aur.edu/discrimination-harassment-sexual-harassment-policy-title-ix>. These policies describe in detail behavior constituting harassment and sexual harassment. There is also a detailed description of what constitutes consent to sexual activity.

Although AUR is in receipt of US Federal Funds, it is located outside the United States and therefore not obliged to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which includes having transparent procedures for protecting against sexual harassment and nominating a specific staff member to receive complaints. Nevertheless AUR endeavors to have compatible procedures. AUR’s complaints procedure ensures anonymity to the extent permitted by the Italian and European privacy laws (Art. 13 law degree of June 30, 2003, n.196, and EU law 2016/679) and protects the complainant from retaliation, regardless of the outcome of the complaint. Any member of the community can use the confidential complaints procedure to report sexual harassment.

Upon receiving a complaint through the online written complaint procedure, the President assigns two or more full-time members of the AUR staff to form an investigative panel. The panel will review the complaints and mediate a solution if possible. The panel will report their findings to the President who will take appropriate action on the basis of their findings. If the actions are found to fall into the category of assault or sexual assault then the matter is deemed to be a criminal or civil offense and, as such, is beyond the university’s jurisdiction in Italy and is subject to the laws of this country. It must be reported to the police, who will start an investigation and can press charges against the perpetrators.

As well as the above-mentioned details contained on the website, the Faculty Handbook contains the rules regulating consensual relations between faculty and other members of the community, including students, in particular the potential conflict of interest. The Employee Handbook contains similar rules

adapted for the different role of the administration. In all cases the potential risks of relationships with a power differential makes them inadvisable.

Conclusions

Elements	Conclusions	Recommendations
A. Work life balance and organizational culture	<p>AUR recognizes the importance of a work-life balance and has introduced working practices to assist staff in promoting their career at the same time as supporting their family and caring responsibilities.</p> <p>In general, AUR has an organizational culture that is diverse, promotes equality and is inclusive. All staff appreciated the training workshops in DEI an especially the help with changing gender identification. The general sense was that the training was too short and needed to be repeated and more time given to it.</p>	<p>To build on training workshops. Reduce the scope of each workshop and allow more time for discussion. More explanation needed over changing gender identification and terminology especially for Italian language speakers.</p> <p>To check documentation to ensure that gender neutral language is used throughout.</p>
B. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making	<p>Within the institution there is an equable distribution of position according to gender and in decision making roles. There is no evidence of gender discrimination. The slight imbalances either way are to be expected in a small institution. The one area that is a cause for concern is the Board of</p>	<p>To develop a strategy for increasing gender equality and greater diversity on the Board.</p>

	Trustees which is skewed towards males. Attracting more diverse Board members is an institutional priority	
C. Gender inequality in recruitment and career progression	Recruitment and career progression for both academics and administrators are equable with no evidence of gender discrimination.	None for this element
D. Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content	As part of the program of DEI, the gender dimension is well integrated into teaching and research. More than 70% of full-time faculty incorporate gender into their teaching either regularly or a lot. All Program Directors incorporate gender as a topic within the program and 70% identify it as a topic that is addressed regularly. It is addressed not only in the classroom, but equally as important, in giving support to female students seeking to enter a male dominated industry. Approximately 2/3 full time faculty cite gender as a topic that is important of very important in their personal research.	None for this element
E. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.	There is a well-developed protocol for reporting gender-based violence and sexual harassment.	None for this element

Goals

Goals	Actions	Timeframe
To expand the training workshops on DEI and in particular to address changing gender identification and to ensure that training also addresses Italian language speakers	Develop new course materials and schedule training sessions. Develop resources for new staff to access during onboarding	Ongoing – interim goals to be set each year
To ensure all university documentation is written in gender-neutral language	Check all institutional documentation	During AY 2023-2024
To develop a Board of Trustees with gender equality and greater diversity	To develop a strategy for increasing female Board members and greater diversity	Ongoing – long term