

Gender equality plan at BIPS

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Preamble

This gender equality plan¹ of the Leibniz Institute for Prevention Research and Epidemiology – BIPS GmbH (BIPS) applies to all employees of BIPS.

As a member of the Leibniz Association, BIPS is committed to the field of equal opportunities, to the implementation of the research-oriented standards on gender equality of the German Research Association (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft - DFG) and of the European Union, and to the improvement of the compatibility of family, private life, work, and career for all employees. It applies the implementation agreement on equality (in German: Ausführungsvereinbarung über die Gleichstellung - AVGLEI²) in its current version. The implementation of gender equality is a central task for the entire institute and includes all areas of work. These areas are considered key management tasks of the heads of the institute. The equal opportunities officer and her deputy have an active and advisory role in this process. The heads of the institute completely support the equal opportunities officer and her deputy in the proper execution of their work, for which a designated budget is provided.

This gender equality plan formulates appropriate goals and measures for transparent human resource development in the context of equal opportunities. All employees should have the same career opportunities and receive the same fair treatment and promotion. The equal opportunities plan is based upon the analysis of the employment structure and will be continually updated. After each year, it will be determined whether and to what extent the objectives of this plan have been met and whether they still appear appropriate. If necessary, new targets and measures will be developed.

1. Breakdown of the BIPS workforce

According to the guidelines for the introduction of flexible target quotas in the sense of the DFG cascade model [DFG-Kaskadenmodell] of the Leibniz Association the following applies: "The proportion of women on a pay group or management level forms the benchmark for gender distribution in the case of new appointments to the next higher pay group or management level. In the case of values of more than 50 %, it can be assumed that there is parity in the fluctuating proportion of personnel. [...] As soon as gender parity has been achieved for a salary group or management level, a target quota of 50 % can be assumed for this career level" (page 2).³ For many years, women have accounted for between 65 and 70% of BIPS staff at almost all levels of the cascade model (highest level 50%). Following a restructuring in 2025, a new department was established. There is now a ratio of three women to four men among the department heads. Given the statistically low number of cases and the absence of any systematic discrimination against women at BIPS, the institute will not set any target quotas for the time being. BIPS strives to maintain gender balance at all career levels. Gender equality quotas are reviewed annually. In the event of significant deviations from parity in terms of numbers, the introduction of a target quota and appropriate measures to increase the attractiveness of research work at BIPS for women will be discussed. To protect the anonymity of employees and avoid unwanted

¹ The title gender equality plan is mandated by the EU. In the English language, there is a distinction between sex and gender. Sex refers to anatomical characteristics, generally linked to reproduction and historically divided into male and female disregarding the existing variety in human bodies. Recently, new categories such as diverse and intersexual have become accepted and are increasingly used. Gender encompasses a range of social, psychological, cultural, and behavioral characteristics divided into masculine and feminine according to the binary sex system. Again, there is a lot more variety which finds expression, e.g., in transgender and non-binary identities. For the benefit of readability, we will use the term gender as an umbrella term in accordance with the title gender equality plan even though the terms sex and gender are not synonymous. Gender is meant to reflect our inclusive understanding of the term.

² Ausführungsvereinbarung zum GWK-Abkommen über die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern bei der gemeinsamen Forschungsförderung - Ausführungsvereinbarung Gleichstellung (AV-Glei)

³ Geschäftsstelle der Leibniz-Gemeinschaft. *Handreichung zur Einführung flexibler Zielquoten 2025*. 15. Juni 2021

re-identification of individuals, the category "diverse / no gender entry" is reported only if there are at least five individuals per analysis category. This also applies to multidimensional and nested table analyses (e.g., breakdown by gender, department, and status group). If the number of cases is below this threshold, the corresponding data will not be reported separately but will be included in the overall analysis or combined with another category.

2. Goals of the gender equality plan

BIPS is pursuing the following objectives with this equal opportunities plan:

- Ensuring equal opportunities through equal professional treatment of all employees
- Counteracting all forms of discrimination
- Targeted and sustainable promotion in both scientific and non-scientific realms
- Expansion of activities to reconcile family, private life, work, and professional career for women and men
- Use of gender-inclusive language in speech and writing.
- Further training on gender equality issues on all levels of employment

3. Measures

BIPS counteracts discrimination at the workplace and supports all employees who feel marginalized. In the following section, measures divided by topic will be defined to grant equal opportunities to and to improve the reconciliation of family, private life, work, and career at BIPS.

3.1 Recruitment

In principle, there will be public job announcements for all open positions; in certain cases, e.g., for personnel development, positions can be advertised internally as well. In line with EU-regulation, job announcements are formulated in gender-neutral language. For job titles, we apply the following regulations:

- Position in third-party funding management (m/f/d/x)
- Wissenschaftler:in (m/f/d/x)

The equal opportunities officer is informed about all job announcements in due time, i.e., prior to publication of announcements and her participation in the selection process is guaranteed from the start. The goal is to ensure gender parity on the selection committee. Family responsibilities are taken into account when assessing CVs.

Part-time work in management positions and in the academic setting can support the career of people with family responsibilities. Each job announcement must contain a statement that the advertised position could be filled part-time, unless the nature of the position absolutely does not allow this. The phrase "women will be given preference in the case of equal qualifications" will be omitted as long as there is a gender balance.

3.2 Gender-sensitive promotion of personnel and career development

BIPS aims to provide specific and sustainable promotion in the scientific and non-scientific areas for all employees. Leadership encourages the motivation of all employees to pursue professional development and continuing education. Thus, they shall have the opportunity to develop professionally and personally, to qualify for higher-level positions, and thus to enhance their career advancement. In particular, highly qualified young scientists are supported in preparing themselves to take on management tasks, e.g. by being recommended to participate in mentoring programs.

Employees determine the needs for further qualification and training measures in individual talks with their supervisors. These talks serve to discuss the personal development needs and potential of the employees and to find appropriate instruments to realize them. Generally, the talks occur once a year for every employee.

In addition to external measures, there are also regular internal workshops that may and should be used by all employees, including doctoral students.

If possible, internal further qualification and training measures are scheduled at times that allow employees to meet their family responsibilities. Here, the usual opening hours of childcare facilities are to be considered as well as school vacation times. BIPS supports all employees in exceptional high-stress situations by offering them various tools and opportunities to participate in qualification measures.

3.3 Expansion of activities to reconcile work and family life

3.3.1 Leave for family-related reasons

BIPS supports family-related leaves of absence – explicitly of all employees – within the context of the legal regulations and rules of collective bargaining. Employees taking leaves for family-related reasons will have no occupational disadvantages. Requests for an early return from a leave of absence are granted at the earliest possible opportunity, provided there are no institutional obstacles.

3.3.2 Part-time work

BIPS supports family-related reductions in working hours - explicitly of all employees - within the context of the legal regulations and rules of collective bargaining.

Employees who have reduced their working hours due to family responsibilities are to be given priority if they want to increase their working hours again.

Within the realm of possibilities at the institute, dates and times of all meetings are to be scheduled so that part-time employees can participate during their working hours. The provisions of the operating agreement on working hours (Betriebsvereinbarung zur Regelung der Arbeitszeit) apply.

3.3.3 Childcare and care of dependents

BIPS supports child-care and the care of dependents with individual solutions for its employees through family-friendly working hours and forms of work. This support goes beyond the legal requirements and rules of collective bargaining. Within the realm of possibilities at the institute, deviations from the usual working hours are possible and the place of work can be moved to a location other than the institute. The exact conditions are to be clarified individually and are to be decided with institute management. The provisions of the operating agreements on working hours and mobile work apply.

3.4 Prevention of unequal treatment, sexual harassment, bullying, and discrimination at the workplace

BIPS does not tolerate any kind of unequal treatment, sexual harassment, bullying, or discrimination in the workplace. BIPS is under obligation to protect its employees from this. The principle of equal treatment according to the definition of Paragraph 3 of the AGG (General Law on Equal Treatment) applies at BIPS.

If employees are suffering from sexual harassment, bullying, or discrimination or if they feel deprived based upon a reason listed in Paragraph 1 of the AGG, they have the right to seek assistance from the workers' council, the officer for equal opportunities, the appeal body pursuant to Paragraph 13 of the AGG, their superiors, people they trust or the occupational health service.

3.5 Equal linguistic treatment of employees

The use of gender-inclusive and gender-sensitive language contributes significantly to a feeling of being equally addressed and increases the perception of equality between persons of different genders.

Equal linguistic treatment helps to avoid gender stereotypes. It allows us to not reproduce stereotypes and to communicate the principle of equality adequately.

We aim to achieve equal linguistic treatment:

- In general correspondence,
- In all regulations and rules of conduct, operating agreements, and publications such as research reports, the mission statement, or program budgets,
- On the website and the intranet,
- In job announcements and forms, posters, etc.,
- In all other publications.

However, the readability of texts should not decrease as a result. Special characters such as */_/:/ hinder the flow of reading. Furthermore, they compromise the accessibility of texts. This particularly affects people with visual impairments who use screen-reading software, as well as individuals with dyslexia or other cognitive impairments who rely on simple language. We therefore recommend avoiding special characters in the text whenever possible and instead using language that is as inclusive as possible, e.g.:

- Gender-neutral language
- The use of the plural

If the use of gender-neutral language is not feasible—for example, because it compromises readability, precision, or clarity—multiple genders may be explicitly named. However, this approach does not explicitly account for people who do not identify with the binary gender system. To date, there are no uniformly established pronouns or forms of address for gender-inclusive language. At the same time, certain writing conventions (e.g., special characters) can impair accessibility. Inclusive and accessible language use therefore requires careful consideration. In direct communication, the form of address requested by a person and, if applicable, their preferred pronouns should be respected and used.

On the intranet, there are extensive examples for gender sensitive language. There are also links to dictionaries for gender-neutral language and other helpful handouts.

3.6 Raising awareness of implicit and explicit discrimination based on gender

3.6.1 General increase in gender awareness

Informative events (e.g., lectures or workshops) on gender equality and unconscious gender bias are held at least once a year to raise awareness among the institute's employees. In this context, other topics such as gender-based violence including sexual harassment or racism are also addressed in order to create an open and equal working atmosphere. Supervisors are responsible for motivating their staff to participate in these training sessions. It is the responsibility of all to take advantage of these offers in order to expand their own professional, personal, and social competencies.

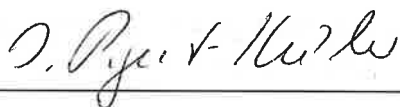
3.6.2 Integration of the gender dimension in research and teaching

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy aiming to achieve gender equality in all areas of social interaction. BIPS is committed to this goal. On March 9, 2016, the Institute Council adopted a policy statement on gender mainstreaming at BIPS. This policy was updated in June 2026.

BIPS encourages and supports university teaching staff to expand their gender competence in teaching through advanced training courses in higher education didactics offered by the university.

3.7 Certification

BIPS is committed to the sustained implementation of family-friendly personnel policies. In order to have its current activities in this area evaluated and possibly developed further, the certification by the so-called audit on work and family (audit berufundfamilie) was carried out in October 2014. The heads of the institute have signed an agreement with objectives for the following three years. The objectives are implemented successively. The measures for family-friendly personnel policies were also recognized by the Senate of Bremen in 2016 and 2018. BIPS has already been successfully re-audited three times within the context of berufundfamilie. In 2017, the first re-audit took place followed by the so-called re-audit consolidation in 2020 and the last certification phase, the dialogue procedure, in 2023. As part of the dialogue phase, measures have been taken to ensure that the high level of performance is upheld or enhanced as required. In December 2023, BIPS was awarded the currently valid certificate.



Prof. Dr. Iris Pigeot-Kübler
Scientific director



Dr. Frauke Günther
Managing director