

GENDER EQUALITY

PLAN



INTRODUCTION

Deggendorf Institute of Technology (DIT) considers it its responsibility to offer all employees, teaching staff and students an environment that stands for openness, equal opportunities, acceptance, inclusion, and freedom from discrimination. As DIT has a share of ca. 35% international students, it is even more important to establish a culture in which everyone feels included, integrated, and accepted. We see diversity as an opportunity and as the future, which is why we want to offer every single person the same opportunities to develop to the best of their abilities at DIT. This also includes breaking down existing barriers, exclusion mechanisms and discrimination, effectively.

Our family-friendly university community stands for equal opportunities regardless of gender, sexual orientation, origin, and religion. We promote cultural diversity, as well as the physical and mental health of our students and employees. Therefore, we commit ourselves and all members to a respectful and sensitive interaction with each other.

This gender equality plan is a work in progress as, while we are making steady progress (see below), there is still a lot to do in our society and institutions to achieve true gender equality; thus, our work will not stop with the publication of this plan. With the support of DIT management, we are promoting the equality of everybody working, studying, teaching and researching at DIT, regardless of their gender identity. In no particular order, we focus on the increase of the proportion of women in all academic and research roles and academic career levels, the increase of gender competence at the university, the promotion of the compatibility of career/studies with raising a family or other care commitments, as well as the expansion and safeguarding of structural equality standards. It is especially important to us that equality is not just seen as a trend, but as a lifestyle.

In order to establish this in our university community, our university management feels responsible for actively exemplifying it and thus serving as a good role model. This commitment is also evident in the financial support provided to establish antidiscrimination and sexual harassment officers at the DIT, to ensure the necessary support is available for anybody who may have been harassed, feels threatened or discriminated. Further support has been provided to employ a diversity trainer, who delivers diversity workshops, tailored to the demands of faculties, departments, or integrated teaching sessions.

DITs efforts to recruit more women to professorial roles has stagnated over the past couple of years (Table 1 & 2). Setting these numbers in context, and despite a gradual increase in the proportion of female professors, DIT is still scoring well below the percentages in Germany (26,3 in 2020) and Bavaria (22,4 in 2020). This is recognized by DIT and the management team, who are leading a progressive and modern university in a region known for its focus and pride in traditions and, to a certain extent, conservatism. DIT prides itself on its internationalism and diverse body of students and staff, and has written values of democracy, respect and equality into its mission statement: „We are committed to uphold our democratic, flexible and dynamic culture. Our shared values are acceptance, mutual respect, tolerance and openness. We promote and champion cultural diversity and equality regardless of gender, nationality, rank and religion. We stand for cultural diversity and the physical, mental and social wellbeing of our staff and students.“

As such, DIT/THD is committed to pursue equality. This report will outline the current activities and interventions, as well as the plans for the future, in order to achieve not just gender, but ultimately intersectional equality

Newly employed professors per year, over the past four years:

Jahr	Professorial positions filled	Professorial positions offered to women	Professorial positions offered to women in %
2018	14	5	35,71 %
2019	14	3	21,43 %
2020	8	1	12,5 %
2021	16	2	12,5 %

Number of women employed in academic positions over the past 4 years:

	End of 2018		End of 2019		End of 2020		End of 2021	
	Total	Identif. as female	Total	Identif. as female	Total	Identif. as female	Total	Identif. as female
Academic Staff (excl. Professors)	125	48 (38,4 %)	155	65 (41,9 %)	175	70 (40 %)	213	48 (35,2 %)
Professors	144	17 (11,8 %)	154	19 (12,3 %)	159	20 (12,6 %)	172	48 (12,8 %)

Apart from academic positions, DIT is also working towards increasing the proportion of women in various managerial committees and boards and have recently appointed a female head of administration (Kanzlerin).

Measures concerning the recruitment of new staff

We are working towards a recruitment process, whereby at the stage of shortlisting, an anonymised list is used which does not show information on gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, etc.

Job titles and descriptions in advertisements tend to be written in a gender-inclusive language, and DIT is continuously working on improving the language used on their websites and documentation.



Project: ProForTHD

In order to also increase the number of women in professorial and research roles, a new and innovative project, ProForTHD, has been started in 2021.

ProForTHD aims at recruiting and developing research-focused professorial staff. The project is funded by the federal ministry of education and research together with the Bavarian ministry of research and art (2021-2027). It helps to establish an employer brand for our university to increase attractiveness for research-focused, highly qualified experts, and to test innovative strategies for recruitment of staff at professorial level. One of the central aims of Pro ForTHD is to decisively increase the proportion of female applicants for research and professorial positions, by explicitly targeting female researchers. Additionally, we would like to attract international researchers.

In order to meet our ambitious objectives, supportive structures will be created, especially for newly appointed professors, that will facilitate their start at DIT and will allow them to establish a good work-life balance. Part of the measures to facilitate a good work-life-balance is the opportunity to use, and the support provided with online teaching, and to allow research-focused professors a reduced teaching load; this will allow them to commence research activities early in their career. Part of this project is also a review and elimination of potential gender biases in the process of application and appointment procedures (Berufungsverfahren).

Measures to facilitate a good work-life-balance

Generally, all staff working under flexitime conditions, allowing them to a degree, to adapt their working hours to their commitments outside work. Of course, professorial staff generally have more freedom in the organisation of their working time, as they are not bound to specific times or working days.

DIT also provides several support services for their staff, including flexible contractual arrangements if care commitments need to be taken up, the opportunity to take part in continuous professional development programmes, as well as institutional exercise and sport programmes. A special department, 'Family Affairs' is providing further services that support staff with any family or child care commitments, including an on-site nursery for pre-school children.

1. General Steps to pursue Equality at DIT

a) Raising awareness

Statistics show repeatedly that gender equality has not yet been achieved in Germany (or any other western industrial nation), however, the perception of a large proportion of society is that we are living in a society of equity and equality and that, therefore, feminism and the pursuit of equality is not necessary anymore. This postfeminist stance is partly down to the existing laws and regulations, including the constitutional rights that have been put in place to give every person equal rights and opportunities, which make it appear that everything necessary has been done. Inequality, however, is also engrained in the dynamic power relations of a society, and due to it having been normalised over decades and centuries, at times difficult to identify/recognize/perceive. Thus, one of the prime tasks of an organisation in its fight against equality is raising awareness of these (normalised) inequalities, the processes and power relations that reproduce them and keep them in place, and what everyone of us can do to make a change.

With this in mind, DIT has put in place several measures to raise awareness of inequality, the importance of diversity:

- Diversity Workshops: We are offering diversity workshops in which participants can reflect their own experiences and get insights into the basic concepts of diversity. The objective of the workshops is to develop good working environments, filled with respect for, and appreciation of each other. We offer the workshops in regular intervals for individuals to sign up to them, as well as for teaching staff to integrate into their modules, or departments and academic faculties to offer to their staff (see below). The provision and publication of these workshops will not only raise awareness amongst staff, generally, but will also ensure that the issues of gender and intersectional equality are integrated into teaching and research. Not all teaching staff and research project leads are sufficiently confident in teaching or instructing on these issues, but can draw on the services provided by these workshops and integrate them into their modules. The workshops will be tailored to the audience and the needs of the respective department, and can just offer a general introduction to diversity, or a particular focus on gender. These workshops can be offered in German or English.
- iLearn (Moodle) Course - „Diversity - not just gender“: As of 2021, we have developed and launched a special iLearn-Course entitled „Diversity - not just gender“. The course has been especially designed **for everyone in the DIT community**, who is interested in the topics of **diversity & gender**. The content explores a variety of current aspects, such as economics, discrimination, intersexuality, etc. We also publish details on interesting events, funding agencies, podcasts, etc. available, providing further access to information of interest. In irregular intervals, we send out information on events, new publications, etc. which anybody signed onto the course will receive. As we see ourselves as part of the wider community in Lower Bavaria, this course is also accessible to guests from outside of DIT.

b) The importance of language

The German language is highly gendered and there is ample evidence that the ‚generic masculine‘, still used as the official language format in legal texts and widely used in official, business and day-to-day communication, contributes to the gender inequality, in existence in Germany. There is also a level of insecurity noticeable as to how to write and speak in a gender-sensitive manner, so often this is not avoided out of lack of awareness but also due to a lack of confidence. To increase the level of awareness of the importance of language, as well as reduce insecurities in relation to gender-sensitive language, DIT has published guidelines for gender-sensitive language, which are available to everybody via the DIT-website, as well as the iLearn-course mentioned above. The recommendations laid out in these guidelines are to be considered as recommendations, so nobody is obliged to heed them or - in case of students - will get marked down or otherwise penalised for sticking with the ‚generic masculine‘ format.

www.th-deg.de/Studieninteressierte/Beratung/genderleitfaden_thd.pdf

In addition to the gendered language guidelines, we also invite experts on gender and language to speak to the DIT community, at irregular intervals.



c) Taking sexual harassment and violence seriously

DIT is taking the issue of sexual harassment and violence seriously, and has published guidelines to this effect in 2019 (see Appendix 1 & 2).

These guidelines are under constant review, however, and will be replaced in the near future. DIT is planning to establish an officer for sexual harassment and violence, as well as an officer for antidiscrimination, ahead of the new Bavarian Higher Education Law, which demands the installation of these officers, but is still in draft format. This will improve the services to students and staff, who fall victims to discrimination or sexual harassment/violence and will also raise awareness of these issues, which frequently remain hidden, thus making it easier for potential perpetrators.

In addition to these guidelines, faculty women's representatives have the opportunity to attend a workshop helping them to manage and deal with sexual harassment, discrimination and violence in higher education.

d) Integration of gender issues in teaching

At a technical university of applied sciences, most of the teaching staff are not immediately experts in social scientific and gender issues. Many are very aware of gender equality and will live it at home and at work, but many others will not feel confident to integrate these topics in their teaching. As such, we are offering tailor made diversity workshops to teaching staff who want to include it in their teaching schedule. These workshops are also available to faculty meetings, in order to raise awareness and confidence in their teaching staff.

