

Gender Equality Plan (2022 – 2025)

1. The objectives of the policy and practice regarding equal opportunities

The ZAE is committed to the DFG's "Research-Oriented Equality Standards" and to the compatibility of family and career (cf. Annex).

The institute aims to be a forerunner in the promotion of equality and the creation of a respectful atmosphere for diversity. It recognises and eliminates practices and structures that create and sustain inequality. Equality is one of the guiding values of the ZAE. The institute strives to promote a sense of community. This means that the institute seeks to promote a sense of trust and mutual appreciation in all interactions. This plan includes the goals and measures to be taken for the strategic period 2023–2026. Many of the goals featured in the plan take the form of permanent practices. The equality plan will be reviewed and updated with regard to the measures and their impact at least every three years. The plan is available on the ZAE website at <https://en.zae-bayern.de/research/en-ef>.

This plan intends to focus on and ensure the implementation of the German Federal Equality Act (BGleiG) with its goals:

- Equality of women, men and non-binary persons.
- Eliminate and prevent existing disadvantages based on gender.
- Improving family-friendliness and reconciling family care and work.

and of the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG) with its goals

- Prevention and elimination of discrimination on grounds of race/ethnic background, gender, religion/belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

2. Prevention of discrimination and harassment

In 1999, the Treaty of Amsterdam empowered the Council of the European Union to undertake unanimous legislative measures to combat discrimination on grounds of race, sex, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation.

Subsequently, European Union legislators passed four pieces of legislation on the basis of Articles 13 and 141 of the Treaty of Amsterdam (regulating equality in the workplace, including equal pay for women and men), establishing the European Community (now Articles 19 and 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union):

- Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment irrespective of race or ethnic origin (Racial Equality Directive).

- Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation. Through the Framework Directive on Employment, the EU pursues the objective of creating a general framework to combat discrimination on grounds of religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation in employment and occupation.
- Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services (Equal Treatment in Goods and Services Directive).
- Directive 2006/54/EC of 5 July 2006 of the European Parliament and Council (formerly Council Directive 2002/73/EC amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC) on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and women in matters of employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions (Equal Treatment Directive).

These four EU directives have been incorporated into German law via the General Equal Treatment Act (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz). The scope of this Act extends beyond that of the EU directives in all situations governed by private or civil law (which means in access to goods and services), as it applies to religion/belief, age, disability, and sexual orientation, as well as race/ethnic background.

In its rationale for the Act, the German Federal Parliament pointed out that not everyone in Germany has the same opportunities. Hence, the General Equal Treatment Act's objective is to prevent and eliminate discrimination. The protection offered by the Act extends to unequal treatment on a number of grounds, known as "multiple discrimination".

Discrimination is often the product of cultural or operational structures, which may be difficult to recognise. Covert discrimination includes subtle forms of discrimination, which can be difficult to identify, such as excluding, belittling, denying support and ignoring individuals due to their minority status. Discrimination may stem from attitudes or prejudices held by individuals or groups, or the fear of extra costs or problems at the workplace. Such attitudes do not justify discrimination, nor is discrimination acceptable when justified with reasons related to culture, religion or conviction.

Multiple discrimination means discrimination based on more than one reason. In such cases, the negative effects of discrimination can compile or combine in a way, which results in a different level of discrimination than discrimination based on one reason alone. To name just a few examples: A woman can be a member of an ethnic minority, a member of an ethnic minority may have a disability, a disabled person may be a member of a sexual minority, a member of a sexual minority may be a senior citizen. One person may have all of the above qualities and face discrimination based on all of them. Different forms of discrimination are often present simultaneously. The impact of the gender system and gender equality are often also relevant when examining other types of discrimination.

Direct discrimination occurs when an individual or group of people is treated differently from others in the same position for no acceptable reason. Cases of direct discrimination show that an individual or group of people has been placed in a poorer position specifically due to a personal characteristic, which should have no impact on his, her or their treatment.

Indirect discrimination occurs when an ostensibly neutral rule or practice places certain people at a disadvantage compared to others. In case of indirect discrimination, the guilty party does not necessarily recognise that they are engaging in discrimination. Nevertheless, such practices are discriminatory. It is also possible to engage in indirect discrimination consciously. For example, an individual or group may know they are discriminatory, and even intend to be so, but conceal the real motivation for the discrimination behind a neutral measure. Indirect discrimination typically manifests in structural inequality deriving from cultural reasons, established practices or deficiencies in the physical environment. In such cases, a particular individual or authority cannot be established as the direct culprit of discriminatory behaviour. Structural discrimination often entails the attitude that discriminatory practices or structures cannot be changed. The facilities are simply not appropriate for disabled people, or the work requires long hours or physical strength. However, steps can be taken to prevent structural discrimination. Facilities can be renovated, and different life situations of employees can be considered in the division of work. Structural discrimination is also a choice. The change of the discriminatory situation is possible if there is sufficient impetus for change.

Every person has the right to invoke anti-discriminatory principles without suffering negative consequences. Any retaliation – such as a decline in work conditions because the employee has invoked anti-discriminatory principles – will be considered discrimination.

Harassment is another form of discrimination. Harassment means infringing on an individual's or group's integrity or human value in a way that creates a threatening, derogatory or hostile atmosphere. Both purposeful harassment and behaviour, which can result in offence, are forbidden. Examples of harassment include racist jokes or calling a colleague derogatory names related to his, her or their sexual minority status.

An instruction or order to discriminate is also a form of discrimination. No person can instruct or oblige another to violate anti-discriminatory legislation. Such an instruction or order is considered discrimination when the person issuing the order has the authority to oblige others.

An employer is obliged to intervene in any discrimination or harassment at the workplace.

Objectives

- The ZAE must be a professional and academic community, which treats all of its members equal and with respect.
- The ZAE does not condone inappropriate treatment, discrimination or harassment of its staff or students.
- The management staff are aware of their right and responsibility to intervene in instances of discrimination and harassment and to become actively involved in all cases as early as possible. The employer can issue a reprimand or a written warning to an employee found guilty of discrimination, or terminate the employee's contract.

- The ZAE equality advisor is the contact person for staff in issues regarding discrimination. The harassment contact advisor is bound by complete confidentiality.

Measures

- The ZAE is systematic in its efforts to eradicate harassment and discrimination.
- The ZAE ensures that employees and students know whom to contact and how to handle possible cases of discrimination and harassment.
- The ZAE will organise training for superiors and equality contact people related to the recognition and prevention of discrimination and harassment as well as how to handle harassment cases.

3. Organisation and resources for equality work

The responsibility to promote equality applies to all ZAE activities and all members of the ZAE community, both staff and students. Promoting equality is the particular duty of the ZAE management. ZAE management monitors the equality situation continuously. The equality development is reported and discussed as part of the operations management process.

The ZAE has an equality advisor who is in charge of communications and training in equality-related matters while developing ZAE equality activities. Any person suspecting harassment at the institute may contact the equality advisor in full confidentiality.

Objectives

The ZAE aims to create an equitable academic culture in which the expertise and experiences of students and staff are taken equally into account. It is the goal of the ZAE to account for different forms of inequality and to prevent the accumulation of inequality against certain individuals or groups. The ZAE is creating a working atmosphere with a positive understanding of equality issues, where problems related to equality are recognised and addressed.

Measures

- The ZAE allocates an annual budget for equality work.
- Effective communication of matters relating to equality throughout the ZAE community.
- Discussion of equality issues as part of the development work conducted in ZAE.

- ZAE ensures that issues related to equality are consistently and comprehensively considered when organising staff training.
- Starting in 2022, there will be various awareness training sessions at ZAE to sensitise individual employees (management, administration, communication, group leaders) with personnel responsibility to the topic of diversity and equality.
- ZAE emphasises the importance of using appreciative and gender-sensitive language in presentations, publications, on the Internet and in social media. To this end, ZAE has developed its own guidelines that are binding for official communication.

4. Monitoring and compiling statistics of the equality status

In order to implement the Gender Equality Plan at ZAE, the first data collection was executed in July 2022 to create a proper database. In the future, data collection will take place annually.

Table 1: Diversity at ZAE in numbers (as of 08/2022).

	total number	thereof women
total	48	15
scientific staff	29	5
technical staff	10	3
service groups	9	7
Breakdown by employment group		
Undergraduates	-	-
Postgraduates	4	0
PhD students	-	-
Employees, science (excluding PhD students)	21	3
Group leaders, science	4	1
Group leaders, service group	2	1
Laboratory	6	3
Technician	4	0
Service group	7	7

ZAE is a research institute committed to diversity. Women, men and non-binary people work here. The table explicitly identifies the group of women.

Objectives

The ZAE monitors the status of equality as well as the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan in its annual staff reports. The continuously created statistics and reports will allow for regular, comprehensive and long-term evaluation of the actual equality situation.

Measures

- The ZAE management will monitor the realisation of the objectives of the Gender Equality Plan.
- The ZAE management will develop monitoring methods for equality status.
- The Gender Equality Plan will be revised every strategic period.
- Gender-based statistics will be examined in the annual reports.

5 The promotion of equality and non-discrimination

5.1 Recruitment, employment and career development

Personnel selection and payment takes place regardless of gender. We use a gender-independent pay scale for salaries. The wages for staff are set out according to the collective pay agreement of the federate states of Germany, known as TV-L. This ensures equal pay.

When selecting applicants their qualifications and suitability are considered irrespective of their gender.

ZAE job advertisements are always formulated in a (gender-)neutral way. ZAE sees itself as an institute where equal opportunities are practiced. This principle is found again in our job advertisements.

Objectives

ZAE will promote the equal recruitment of women and men to various positions and will ensure equal opportunities for career advancement at all levels. Obstacles to women's and nonbinary's career advancement will be eliminated. It is particularly important in the current situation that recruitment processes are transparent and fair. Clear and transparent criteria will be applied in recruitment processes to ensure that each applicant's merits are equitably assessed.

Measures

- ZAE will promote the equal recruitment of women, men and nonbinary people to various positions.

- Women and nonbinary people in particular will be encouraged to seek leadership positions.
- Transparent procedures must be employed when filling fixed-term positions.
- ZAE management will ensure that all professional groups have equal opportunities to participate in staff training.
- The ZAE will ensure that age does not affect recruitment or career progress.
- Disability, illness or medical history must not unduly affect a person's employment or career progress at the ZAE or in a research project.

5.2 Reconciliation of work and family life

The need to reconcile work and family life has traditionally affected women more than men. Although more fathers have begun to take parental leave in recent years, women still take most of the available parental leave. This may indirectly weaken their status at work. Not all families have two parents of different gender; there are also single-parent families, same-sex parents, multi-parent families and stepfamilies. This diversity gives rise to a wide range of issues involving the reconciliation of work and family life.

Analogous to German law, ZAE offers the possibility of part-time employment within the framework of parental leave. Flexible working hours as well as possibilities for part-time work can individually be agreed upon with the group leaders and the institute management. We enable mobile working. In addition, we are developing an official policy for working in a home office. During the Covid 19 pandemic, ZAE allows staff to work in a home office wherever possible. Working hours at ZAE are flexible. However, there is a core working time to carry out important arrangements and meetings in presence. This is intended to allow all coworkers to attend important internal meetings while balancing childcare and family-care schedules.

Objectives

The reconciliation of work and family is and will continue to be supported regardless of gender and the type of family. ZAE will endorse flexible work arrangements when such arrangements are necessary for the provision of care. This must not result in employees being placed in an unequal position in the distribution of duties, rewards for services or career advancement. Care responsibilities may include not only childcare but also, for example, care given to elderly parents. Men will be encouraged to use their right to parental leave.

Measures

- ZAE management will ensure that employees can work flexible hours because of various care responsibilities, regardless of family type.

- ZAE will also endorse flexible arrangements required for the reconciliation of work and family life when the employee cares for his or her elderly parents.

5.3 Promotion of accessibility

In an accessible environment, everyone is able to function equally –irrespective of their personal characteristics related to sight, hearing, mobility, age, learning difficulties or any other such factors.

Working is accessible when the coworker is able to fully participate in the work, has easy access to the working place, and can easily use the IT services and in communication about it.

Accessibility of the built environment concerns all movement at the ZAE, from students, employees and guests to visitors. Correctly designed facilities are important not only for people with physical and other disabilities.

In the same way that the borderline between disability and ability is culture bound and unsteady, so is the borderline between sickness and health. A sick person may be fully able and healthy, but disabled in some situations. The state of one's health or one's medical history does not justify discrimination. Some illnesses, such as HIV and mental illnesses, may raise fear and prejudice that lead to discrimination. Everyone has the right to tell or not to tell about his, her or their sickness or disability to the colleagues.

Objectives

ZAE strives to enhance its services, facilities and operations so that they will be suitable for all. The ZAE complies with the principles of equality, non-discrimination and inclusion. Inclusion means accommodating all, as a matter of course, so that everyone can participate equally in any activity. The various needs of people with disabilities must be considered in all planning as part of the diversity of humanity. This entails the removal of all barriers, whether physical obstacles, prejudiced attitudes or hindrances to communication.

Measures

- Further improvement of the accessibility of the ZAE operating environment.
- Should an illness or disability require adjustments in an employee's duties these must be agreed upon together with the person concerned.

5.4 Promoting young talent

ZAE participates regularly in the Girls' Day – 'Girls' Future Day', which is sponsored by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). With this offer, the girls get to know apprenticeship occupations and courses of study in IT,

crafts, natural sciences and technology, in which women have so far been rather rarely represented.

By linking up with various educational institutions, MINT networks and schools, female students are encouraged and supported in the MINT field at an early stage. MINT means mathematics, information technology, natural sciences and technology. In cooperation with the University of Applied Sciences Würzburg-Schweinfurt, specifically interested women are given an insight into the research activities of ZAE and the training opportunities offered there.

Objectives

ZAE aims to help increase the number of women in MINT fields by providing targeted information. At the same time, ZAE also wants to be a role model for a gender-equitable, discrimination-free work environment. The measures taken are also intended to increase the proportion of women among the institute's staff in the medium and long term.

Measures

- ZAE management will support the implementation of information events specifically for women.
- ZAE will establish a mentoring program.