



Gender Equality Plan University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna

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Proof of Compliance with Horizon Europe's Gender Equality Plan Requirements at the Vetmeduni

Strategy

Objectives on the Individual Level

Staff members and students are part of the Vetmeduni's diverse community and should recognize that they contribute significant value. They are encouraged to actively engage with diversity in team settings - for example, through intergenerational and intercultural collaboration.

Staff members and students alike are expected to take an active role in campus life and work with others to make the University a more inclusive, sustainable, and fair environment while respecting differences in culture, gender, faith, and identity. Furthermore, all University members are expected to take pride in their institution, give back to the community, and contribute positively to student and academic life. They are called upon to show compassion and empathy, collaborate with others, share their own ideas, and remain open-minded when learning from different viewpoints.

Members of the University are supported in being curious and eager to expand their knowledge. They are encouraged to value diversity, avoid waste, and take responsibility for the well-being of their community. Inclusion, empathy, independence, and perspective are essential values. The University supports this by raising awareness and setting rules and standards, while offering specifically designed networks tailored trainings.

Objectives within the Organisation

The vision of the Vetmeduni is to be a people-centered academic institution that values respectful dialogue, welcomes diverse perspectives, and ensures that differing opinions can be expressed without fear of discrimination.

Guided by the belief that diversity and heterogeneity are vital drivers of creativity, performance, and excellence, the University is committed to fostering an environment where all students and staff can participate equally and realize their full potential.

In this spirit, diversity and equality are regarded both as responsibilities and as valuable resources. The Vetmeduni believes that an inclusive, discrimination-free academic culture is built upon respectful, considerate collaboration.

Concrete measures that underscore the University's commitment go far beyond the gender binary of male/female and include, in addition to the ongoing development toward a barrier-free university (e.g. website accessibility adjustments, partnerships with job portals targeting people with disabilities, values brochures), the creation of exchange networks specifically for female leaders (VetFutureTalks), further increasing the proportion of women in professorships and tenure-track positions, the development of career paths and opportunities, as well as the enhancement of the social dimension within the student body.

Objectives on the Societal Level

The University's Development Plan 2030, together with its Social Dimension and Diversity Strategy, set a clear goal: to establish the Vetmeduni as a truly inclusive and equality-focused institution. Recognizing that this is an ongoing process—requiring critical self-reflection, learning from past mistakes, and continuous progress—the University is committed to removing barriers, dismantling exclusionary practices, and speaking out against prejudice in all its forms.

The University's strategy makes diversity and equal opportunities an overarching theme in university development by:

- enabling the best personal and professional growth for students and staff,
- remaining open and attractive to the brightest minds from all backgrounds, and
- delivering socially relevant, sustainable research and teaching that fully embrace heterogeneity and equality.

In pursuing these goals, the Vetmeduni ensures that its gender, diversity, and equal opportunity policies meet Horizon Europe's requirements and reflect its mission to be a university where everyone can contribute, participate, and thrive.

1. Public Documents Published on the Vetmeduni Website

In Austria, the Universities Act 2002 (§ 20b (1)) requires all universities to have both a Career Advancement Plan for Women and an Equal Opportunity Plan. These documents form part of each university's official Statutes. In accordance with this law, the Vetmeduni has adopted and published its Career Advancement Plan for Women and Gender Equality Plan as integral components of the University Statutes. All long-term goals related to gender equality are outlined in these documents, as well as the University's Development Plan and its Social Dimension and Diversity Strategy.

1.1. Career Advancement Plan for Women (Frauenförderplan)

The Career Advancement Plan for Women of the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna is based on the Federal Constitution, the Federal Equal Treatment Act, and the Universities Act 2002. It applies to all members of the University and aims to achieve gender equality across all areas and hierarchical levels, with a particular focus on increasing the proportion of women in leadership positions. Key measures include supporting academic careers for women, promoting gender-sensitive language, implementing gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting, protecting against discrimination and harassment, and collecting and analyzing gender-related data. The plan sets out guidelines for recruitment, appointment and habilitation procedures, professional development, and career advancement, as well as providing a dedicated funding programme to support female researchers. Its purpose is to eliminate disadvantages and ensure equal opportunities in research, teaching, and administration on a lasting basis.

Further information:

→ [Frauenfoerderungsplan.pdf](#)

1.2. Gender Equality Plan (Gleichstellungsplan)

The Gender Equality Plan of the Vetmeduni aims to promote gender equality across all areas of the university and to prevent discrimination. The University places special emphasis on increasing the proportion of women in leadership positions, research projects, and habilitations, as well as on the continuous implementation of gender mainstreaming. A respectful and discrimination-free working and learning environment is actively fostered to protect against sexual harassment, discrimination, and bullying. To support the work/study-life balance, the Vetmeduni offers flexible working hours, part-time options, and parent-child rooms. The plan also includes regular professional development activities in equality and diversity. Implementation is monitored by the Working Group on Equal Opportunities, with overall responsibility held by the Rectorate. Through these efforts, the Vetmeduni ensures an inclusive and equitable environment for all members of the university community.

Further information:

→ [Gleichstellungsplan.pdf](#)

1.3. Development Plan (Entwicklungsplan)

The Vetmeduni's Development Plan is a strategic document outlining the long-term goals, priorities, and programmes of the University. It serves as a roadmap for the institution's future direction in research, teaching, organization, and social responsibility. The plan is a legal requirement under the Universities Act 2002 and serves as the foundation for performance agreements with the Ministry. Its aim is to enhance the university's quality and competitiveness, promote innovation, ensure equal opportunities, and prepare the institution for current and future challenges.

The University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna's Development Plan 2030 places strong emphasis on gender equality, diversity, and social inclusion as core guiding principles. The aim is to create an environment that promotes equal opportunities and prevents all forms of discrimination. The University strives to recognize and value diversity among its staff and students while removing social barriers. Measures are designed to support different life situations, cultural backgrounds, and needs to ensure full participation for all. Through this inclusive approach, the Vetmeduni seeks not only to establish fairer structures but also to foster innovation and excellence in research and teaching.

Further information:

→ [Entwicklungsplan_2030.pdf](#)

1.4. Social Dimension and Diversity Strategy (Strategie zur Sozialen Dimension und Diversität)

The University's Social Dimension and Diversity Strategy complements its Development Plan, aiming to create an inclusive, discrimination-free, and equality-oriented work environment for all employees. Key measures include promoting diversity and gender competence, removing barriers, and enhancing family-friendliness.

Another priority is raising awareness of diversity-related issues among all members of the university community. To this end, the University is expanding information services and implementing training programmes to strengthen diversity and gender competence.

Through these strategic initiatives, the Vetmeduni seeks to foster an inclusive culture that advances equal opportunities and actively combats discrimination. Continuous implementation and regular evaluation of these measures are integral to the University's ongoing development.

Further information:

→ [Strategie-Soziale-Dimension-und-Diversität.pdf](#)

1.5. Performance Agreement (Leistungsvereinbarung)

Performance Agreements of Austrian universities are legal requirements under the Universities Act 2002. They are contractual arrangements between the universities and the Federal Ministry and define the goals, measures, and financial resources of a university within a timeframe of three years. These agreements focus on steering and promoting research, teaching, continuing education, infrastructure, and social responsibility. Performance agreements serve to ensure transparent planning, monitoring, and accountability, making sure that public funds are used efficiently to support the strategic development of the universities.

The University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna's performance agreement for 2025–2027 focuses strongly on equality and diversity. Key initiatives include promoting women in leadership roles, improving work-life balance through family-friendly measures, and supporting people with disabilities. Additionally, awareness of equality issues is raised through trainings and an information platform. Overall, the Vetmeduni aims to create an inclusive and fair working environment for all employees.

Further information:

→ [Leistungsvereinbarung_2025-2027.pdf](#)

2. Dedicated Resources

2.1. Unit for Human Resources, Equality and Inclusion (Abteilung für Personalwesen, Gleichstellung und Inklusion)

According to the Women's Advancement Plan (Frauenförderungsplan) announced in the notification plan of 2.7.2018, the organizational unit for the coordination of the tasks of gender equality, the advancement of women and gender studies in accordance with § 19 (2) no. 7 of the Universities Act 2002 is the member of the Rectorate responsible for personnel matters, acting through the Human Resources Department of Vetmeduni Vienna, to whom all relevant enquiries are to be addressed and which in this respect reports directly to the Rector and the Chairperson of the Senate. The Human Resources Department is a service institution that strives to provide the staff of the Vetmeduni with optimal support in all matters relating to personnel administration. To this end, it works in close cooperation with the works councils and the working group for equal treatment issues. Beauftragte für Gleichstellung und Frauenförderung Laut Gleichstellungsplan der Vetmeduni Wien vom 15.05.2017 § 5 Abs 6 erfolgt die Beratung zu allen Belangen der Gleichstellung und Gender Studies durch die Organisationseinheit gemäß § 19 Abs. 2 Z 7 UG der Universität, die diese Belange nach innen vertritt und nach außen als Vertretung der Universität in der Genderplattform sichtbar wird.

2.2. Coordination Office for Gender Competence in accordance with the University Act 2002 §19 Z 7 (Organisationseinheit zur Koordination der Aufgaben der Gleichstellung, der Frauenförderung sowie der Geschlechterforschung)

According to the Equal Opportunity Plan of the Vetmeduni Vienna of 15.05.2017 § 5.6, advice on all matters relating to equality and gender studies is provided by the organizational unit of the university in accordance with § 19 para. 2 no. 7 of the Universities Act, which represents these interests internally and becomes visible externally as the representation of the university in the gender platform.

2.3. Working Group on Equal Opportunities (Arbeitskreis für Gleichbehandlungsfragen)

The Working Group on Equal Opportunities (AKG) at the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna is committed to promoting gender equality and preventing discrimination within the university community. Operating under the Austrian Universities Act, the group provides guidance and support on issues related to gender equality and the advancement of women. Its key responsibilities include monitoring recruitment and appointment processes to ensure fairness, combating discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, religion, age, or sexual orientation, and ensuring gender-balanced representation in university bodies. Additionally, the AKG offers advice and assistance in cases of bullying or sexual and gender-based harassment connected to employment or study. The group functions as a supervisory body with members who are bound by confidentiality, working to foster a fair and inclusive environment at the University.

Further information:

→ www.vetmeduni.ac.at/arbeitskreis-gleichbehandlungsfragen

2.4. Diversity Officer for Students (Diversitätsbeauftragte für Studierende)

The University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna is committed to ensuring equal treatment and non-discrimination for all students. To uphold this commitment, the University provides support with confidential advice, guidance, and assistance to help students understand their rights and the procedures available to address concerns related to unfair treatment.

Students can turn to designated contact persons for help in resolving conflicts, filing complaints, or accessing additional resources.

2.5. Project-Group “hochschuleundfamilie”

The members of this project group represent the diverse range of work areas and professional fields across the University. Acting as representatives of all employees, they actively discuss, develop, and formulate potential measures to enhance the compatibility of work and family life. Furthermore, they play a key role in the “hochschule-undfamilie” audit process. (see below).

Tasks of the project group include the dissemination of information and acting as contact persons for Vetmeduni employees, developing proposals to improve work-family balance, implementing measures coordinated with the Rectorate and discussing ideas and challenges

3. Resources for Mainstreaming Activities

3.1. Target Agreements (Zielvereinbarungen)

The Target Agreements between the University's Rectorate and the heads of departments are an internal management tool. They set out shared goals, priorities, and performance indicators for a period of 3 years, derived from the university's overarching strategy and its performance agreement with the Ministry. The agreements specify the contributions each department is expected to make in areas such as research, teaching, knowledge transfer, or administration, as well as the resources provided to achieve them. These agreements, developed through discussions between the Rectorate and the departments' leadership, are generally binding yet cooperative in nature, and aim to clarify responsibilities, ensure transparency in resource allocation, and support performance evaluation. In line with its performance agreement, key initiatives include promoting women in leadership roles, improving work-life balance through family-friendly measures, and supporting people with disabilities.

4. Data Collection and Monitoring

4.1. Gender Monitoring

The University uses unidata.gv.at, the central tool of the Austrian Federal Ministry, as well as the gender indicators (eg. Gender Pay Gap, gender equality indicator in faculty recruitment processes, disaggregated data on gender of student applicants, students, graduates, postgraduate students, staff, gender quotas in academic governing bodies) of its Intellectual Capital Report for the systematic collection and analysis of gender relations. In this respect, the unidata platform provides a wide range of analyses, including data on the development of student numbers by gender, the distribution of study programmes and degrees, as well as the gender distribution across various academic positions. The monitoring also includes analysis of career trajectories to identify the Glass Ceiling Index and „leaky pipeline“ effects.

The goal of this gender monitoring is to create transparency regarding gender relations at the university, to support gender equality measures with reliable data, and to facilitate the development of appropriate policies and action programmes.

Further information:

→ unidata.gv.at/Pages/auswertungen.aspx

4.2. Intellectual Capital Report (Wissensbilanz)

The University's Intellectual Capital Report is a legally mandated annual publication in which the Vetmeduni systematically presents its resources, activities, and outcomes in research, teaching, and administration. Prepared in accordance with the Intellectual Capital Report Regulation (WBV 2016), it incorporates standardized indicators in areas such as staffing, student enrollment, publications, internationalization, and third-party funding.

The report also addresses the gender pay gap, the representation of women, and measures and results related to diversity, gender equality, and equal opportunities. These include initiatives to promote women in academic leadership, support underrepresented groups, and create inclusive study and working environments.

By providing this information, the Intellectual Capital Report ensures transparency for the public and policymakers while also serving as a tool for internal university management.

Further information:

→ [Vetmeduni_Wissensbilanz_2024.pdf](#)

5. Training and Capacity Building

5.1. Training

As part of its gender and diversity management, the Vetmeduni places strong emphasis on knowledge transfer and the provision of relevant information. Raising awareness of diversity and actively promoting it are integral elements of all HR development initiatives. Gender and diversity considerations are embedded as essential cross-cutting and interdisciplinary competencies within team-building activities, seminars, coaching sessions, and leadership training. When selecting trainers and coaches, particular attention is given to ensuring they possess substantial experience and qualifications in gender and diversity competence. In addition, the University offers a dedicated range of diversity-related courses in both German and English.

In recent years, the Vetmeduni has placed particular focus on expanding training opportunities designed to raise awareness and strengthen diversity competence. Scientific and administrative staff, teaching staff, and leaders are encouraged to engage with topics such as social responsibility, digital accessibility, accessibility and inclusion in the workplace, and discrimination-free, inclusive recruitment and job advertisement practices. The following trainings are being offered 2025 (sample list):

- DisAbility Awareness Training
- Unconscious Bias: Unconscious assumptions in an organizational environment
- Intergenerational collaboration
- Digital Accessibility
- Navigating Academic Life: Diversity-Aware, Bias-Conscious, and Inclusive
- Social Responsibility: inclusivity and diversity

Furthermore, diversity competence is a core requirement for newly appointed professors and is embedded in their competency profile. This ensures that, in addition to professional qualifications, diversity competence is taken into account when assessing personal suitability and potential for development.

5.2. LeadingVet Programme

The LeadingVet Programme at the Vetmeduni is an internal leadership development initiative designed to enhance the leadership skills of university staff.

Training sessions aim to equip participants with the tools and knowledge to navigate the evolving landscape of academic leadership. The LeadingVet Programme reflects the Vetmeduni's commitment to supporting staff in leadership roles by providing targeted training that addresses the complexities of modern academic environments.

The Vetmeduni has prioritized expanding training opportunities focused on enhancing awareness and building diversity competence, particularly for individuals in leadership roles in the past years. Trainings include:

- LeadingVet: Inclusive Leadership – Developing and Leading Diverse Teams
- LeadingVet: Healthy and Family-Friendly Leadership
- LeadingVet: FeMale Leadership

5.3. Internal and External Networks

VetFutureTalk

The “VetFutureTalk” was launched in 2023 by the Rectorate as an internal information event for professors. Its purpose is to provide a platform for knowledge transfer, stimulate discussion, and encourage exchange, while also fostering a positive and collaborative atmosphere at the leadership level.

In 2024, a new focus was introduced in line with the Vetmeduni’s 2025–27 performance agreement: a dedicated format within the VetFutureTalks specifically for women. This initiative aims to build informal networks that enable women to support one another, strengthen their participation, and enhance their professional development and leadership opportunities within the University. Ultimately, it seeks to advance gender equality and empower women to progress in their academic and career paths.

Interuniversity Collaboration

The Vetmeduni is actively involved in the interuniversity network “UniKid-UniCare Austria,” which implements targeted measures to promote a cultural change at universities.

For example, as a result of this network, an online support group for caregiving relatives was recently established. In Austria, approximately 950,000 people provide care for their relatives, with women accounting for around 70 per cent of caregivers. These women often face unique challenges in balancing caregiving duties with professional responsibilities. Therefore, it is crucial to keep caregiving and support for caregiving relatives at the forefront and integrate these concerns into university work-family balance initiatives. Seven universities, all members of the UniKid-UniCare network, have joined forces to offer monthly anonymized meetings led by a professional coach. These sessions provide caregiving relatives with a safe space to exchange experiences and receive support aimed at easing their burdens.

Interinstitutional Cooperation

The Vetmeduni cooperates closely with “kindercompany” to organize the on-site daycare center for its employees. Within the framework of the “hochschuleundfamilie” audit, it also collaborates with “Arbeitswelten Consulting e.U.”.

As a partner company of the platform “Unternehmen für Familien” (Companies for Families), the Vetmeduni promotes exchange with other organizations and increases the visibility of its family-friendly initiatives. Moreover, it regularly participates in interuniversity networks such as AUCEN, UniKid-UniCare Austria, and the Gender Platform to leverage synergies in the fields of gender and diversity and jointly develop new ideas.

Recommended Requirements

1. Work-Life Balance and Organizational Culture

1.1. Audit “hochschuleundfamilie”

Since 2010, the Vetmeduni is regularly successfully certified under the “berufundfamilie” audit and, since 2011, the University also participates in the “hochschuleundfamilie” audit. Ongoing involvement in the “hochschuleundfamilie” process ensures a structured, externally monitored commitment to addressing key issues and areas of action related to balancing university and family life. These sustained efforts are central to strategically embedding and continuously improving measures that support this priority at the Vetmeduni.

In December 2024, the University successfully completed its recertification for the “hochschuleundfamilie” audit, earning the quality seal for another three years. This achievement was the result of intensive strategy and auditing workshops, during which innovative approaches to enhancing family-friendliness were developed.

1.2. Compatibility-Promoting Activities and Services

The Vetmeduni places special emphasis on providing suitable offers to all employees and students when implementing measures to support work-life balance. In particular, the compatibility of work or study with family life is promoted through targeted measures in the following areas:

Compatibility Service – Individual Advice and Support

Employees in the Unit for Human Resources, Equality, and Inclusion are available for individual consultations and to develop solutions regarding compatibility challenges. Students can turn to the staff of the Student Affairs office for issues such as caregiving responsibilities, leave of absence, pregnancy, or parental leave, who assist in finding customized solutions to balance studies and family life.

Work Organization – Flexibility of Working Hours and Location

The Vetmeduni promotes working time models that offer employees flexibility, thereby facilitating the compatibility of work and family. Managers play a particularly important role in this. Colleagues from Human Resources, Equality, and Inclusion are available for direct exchange. The personnel development team supports managers with specialized training offers (e.g., labor law, healthy and family-friendly leadership), which can be expanded with additional topics as needed.

Measures During Parental Leave

The university facilitates the return to work after parental leave and the compatibility of work and caregiving duties by offering part-time employment options for parents. In addition, employees on parental leave can voluntarily participate in internal training programmes offered by the University’s HR-development in agreement with their supervisors. This enables them to refine social and professional skills or acquire new ones. The continuous expansion of online and e-learning offerings further supports these efforts.

Working Hours and Home Office

Thanks to the flexible working hours regulation, employees can arrange their daily working hours flexibly within a specified framework. This especially supports the compatibility of professional and personal interests and commitments. When tasks and organizational conditions allow, working from home is generally possible up to 40 percent of weekly working hours.

Childcare at Vetmeduni

The Vetmeduni supports employees with children in balancing family and work through childcare services on campus. Needs-based care options help parents manage their daily lives and dedicate time to their professional development.

- *Kindergarten on Campus:* The facility is operated by the association “kindercompany,“. In 2024 the year-round kindergarten cared for a total of 34 children in two groups (14 children aged one to three years and 20 children aged three to six years). Enrollment priority is given to children of employees and students.
- *Holiday Childcare:* In summer 2024, full-day professional care was offered for children of employees over all nine summer holiday weeks. 129 children participated in the summer 2024 holiday programme.

Continued Payment for Marginally Employed Female Employees

Marginally employed female employees are not entitled to continued payment during statutory protection periods (maternity leave). However, the Vetmeduni voluntarily pays an amount equivalent to the maternity allowance to marginally employed female employees (continued payment).

Virtual Teaching Offers

About two-thirds of the Vetmeduni's courses provide materials on the e-learning platform "Vetucation®." Additionally, students have access to an electronic, case-based learning system. This flexibility allows students to access learning materials anytime and anywhere, supporting the compatibility of study and family life.

Skills Lab "VetSim," University Library, and Learning Zones

The university library and the training center "VetSim" (Vetmeduni's skills lab) offer students opportunities to improve their time flexibility and thus promote compatibility of study and family life. To this end, extended opening hours continue to be offered.

Dual Careers

At the Vetmeduni, Dual Careers refers to the university's support for couples or families where both partners are pursuing professional careers—often in academia or research. Recognizing that relocation or job changes for one partner can significantly impact the other's career, the Vetmeduni offers guidance and assistance to help both partners find suitable employment opportunities.

This may include:

- Providing information on the local job market and networking opportunities.
- Facilitating contacts with other universities, research institutions, and companies.
- Offering advice on work permits, childcare, schooling, and integration into the region.
- Supporting work-life balance and family needs as part of its broader family-friendly and equality initiatives.

Through its dual career services, the Vetmeduni aims to attract and retain top talent while fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment for academic staff and their families.

1.3. Fostering an Inclusive Organizational Culture

Code of Conduct (Verhaltenskodex)

The Vetmeduni Code of Conduct sets binding guidelines for all staff to ensure responsible, ethical, and lawful behavior. It emphasizes respectful interaction, equal treatment, and the rejection of any form of discrimination or aggression. In research, teaching, and clinical practice, scientific integrity is the highest priority, with zero tolerance for misconduct. Corruption and conflicts of interest must be avoided and disclosed. Employees are expected to act loyally, use resources sustainably, actively promote animal welfare, and maintain high standards of workplace health and safety. Confidential information and data protection must be strictly observed, as must IT security. Public appearances and media communications are subject to clear coordination processes. The university actively supports the balance between work and family life and provides designated contact points for various concerns. Violations can lead to disciplinary action, while whistleblowing systems ensure the protection of those who report in good faith.

Values Brochure (Wertebroschüre)

The Vetmeduni's values brochure outlines the core principles guiding collaboration and development across the university, serving as a compass in daily work and long-term goals. It emphasizes appreciation, continuous development, teamwork, and a clear commitment to equality, diversity, and work-life balance.

Appreciation is expressed through openness, fairness, mindfulness, and transparency, fostering mutual respect, recognition, empathy, and an inclusive environment free from discrimination. Continuous development is rooted in lifelong learning, innovation, engagement, and adaptability, encouraging proactive contributions and personal responsibility for growth. Teamwork is built on accountability, valuing diversity as a strength for collective growth, open participation, knowledge-sharing, and a constructive approach to mistakes.

These values shape the university's public image and ensure it meets its social responsibility as a leading institution in veterinary medicine—supporting not only academic excellence but also a healthy, balanced work environment where all individuals, regardless of background, can thrive.

2. Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making

2.1. Quota for Collegial Bodies and Committees and Accompanying Measures

The Gender representation in selected university bodies with special consideration of the minimum 50% female quota in collegial bodies is monitored with every new appointment and is reported annually in the University's Intellectual Capital Report. As of December 31, 2024, all of the Vetmeduni's committees meet the legally mandated quota for female representation.

To ensure that diversity and gender are taken into consideration at all times, these topics are integrated into all of the Vetmeduni's continuing education programmes. This ensures that all staff develop cross-disciplinary competencies in these areas, which they can put to good use when working in Collegial Bodies and Committees.

2.2. Women in Leadership Positions

The university boasts an exceptionally high proportion of women among its staff: as of December 31, 2024, women constitute 67.7 percent of the total workforce. Within the academic staff, women represent 66.3 percent, while their share in the general staff is even higher at 69.4 percent. Numerous key administrative and service units are led by women; as of December 31, 2024, nearly 54 percent of leadership positions are held by women. The continuous increase in the proportion of women among professors is particularly noteworthy, reaching 47.6 percent in 2024.

The Vetmeduni actively supports the career development of women through a broad range of initiatives—from programmes aimed at improving work-life balance to targeted training and coaching opportunities. This commitment is reflected in the high proportion of women occupying assistant professorships, a crucial step toward full professorship. As of December 31, 2024, 14 out of 19 assistant professorships (74 percent) at the Vetmeduni are held by women. Since 2022, the university has also prioritized gender equality in appointing university assistants and post-doctoral researchers with career-track positions, with women accounting for 70 percent of such appointments in 2024.

In 2019, the Vetmeduni launched the "VEmpowerment" programme to increase the representation of women in leadership roles and foster female talent within academic careers. The programme enhances leadership competencies among emerging female scholars and supports their efforts to successfully balance professional responsibilities with personal life.

The insights gained from this successful initiative informed the establishment of the "Research Mentoring Programme" in 2022. With women comprising 86 percent of participants (12 out of 14), this programme is particularly beneficial for female researchers.

3. Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Progression

3.1. Job Advertisements

At the Vetmeduni, job postings actively support gender equality and women's advancement. The university ensures that all vacancy announcements explicitly encourage qualified women to apply. In line with its women's advancement plan, the Vetmeduni implements targeted measures to increase the visibility and attractiveness of academic positions for female candidates. This includes proactively reaching out to talented women, promoting family-friendly working conditions, and maintaining transparent, bias-free hiring procedures to foster equal opportunities throughout the recruitment process.

3.2. Appointment of Female Professors

The University regularly tracks key indicators related to gender representation in professorial appointments as part of its commitment to transparency and accountability. Recent data reveal significant progress in advancing female candidates through each stage of the appointment process, reflecting the effectiveness of the Vetmeduni's targeted policies and procedures.

The opportunity index for the appointment of female professors is generally very high and is monitored annually by means of the University's Intellectual Capital Report. In this context, the consistently high proportion of women in the hearing stage (57.4% in 2024) is a particularly notable achievement. This elevated representation is the result of deliberate efforts to promote women by specifically inviting many early-career female candidates to participate in the hearing. This approach provides them with valuable opportunities to compete in the appointment process. Furthermore, the share of women in the appointment proposals increased significantly to 72.9% in 2024, well above their proportion among applicants. Ultimately, women accounted for 75.0% of the appointments in 2024. The Vetmeduni attributes this positive development to its objective and transparent appointment procedures, as well as its proactive recruitment of female candidates. These efforts reflect the institution's strong commitment to advancing gender equality. The university rigorously enforces its women's advancement plan, which mandates that all applications from women who meet the formal criteria must be forwarded to the reviewers.

3.3. Programmes Aimed at Promoting Gender Equality and Supporting the Career Development of Women

VetWoman and VetTalents

VetWoman – a pioneer initiative at the Vetmeduni dedicated to promoting gender equality and supporting the career development of women in veterinary medicine and related fields – marked the beginning of the University's transformative programme to significantly promote female professorships. It set a platform for networking, professional development, and empowerment of female scientists and professionals. Through workshops, mentoring, and events, VetWoman helped to increase the visibility of women in academia, foster their leadership skills, and address challenges related to work-life balance, career progression, and gender bias.

VetTalents, a programme developed alongside VetWoman, focused on identifying, nurturing, and developing young academic talents across all disciplines. It offered training opportunities, workshops, and mentoring to help early-career researchers build essential skills for successful academic and professional careers.

Sixteen highly talented early-career female scientists at the Vetmeduni successfully completed these programmes, which concluded in October 2021. Participation in the programmes has contributed to a marked increase in the representation of women in professorships and tenure-track positions, which now comprise 48% and 74%, respectively.

Research Mentoring

Building on the foundations laid by VetWoman and VetTalents, the Research Mentoring programme constitutes an advancement and refinement of these initiatives, providing an evolved and comprehensive mentoring approach. It supports early-career researchers by pairing them with experienced mentors who provide tailored guidance on research strategies, publication, grant applications, and career planning. This programme fosters personal and scientific growth, encourages interdisciplinary collaboration, and helps young researchers navigate the challenges of academic life to achieve long-term success. Research Mentoring thus integrates and expands the goals of previous initiatives by offering a structured, holistic development framework for emerging scientists at Vetmeduni. With a female participation rate of 86% (12 out of 14 participants are women), this programme particularly benefits women.

3.4. EqualitA Quality Seal

Every three years, the BMWET awards the equalitA quality seal to companies, organizations, and public institutions that actively promote women within their operations, advance gender equality, and increase the visibility of women's career paths. The evaluation process is standardized and comprehensive, assessing criteria such as women's representation in leadership roles and equitable treatment across the organization.

Vetmeduni first received this quality seal in 2021. The recent renewal confirms the university's sustained commitment to implementing and further developing effective gender equality measures. This recognition places the Vetmeduni among the leading Austrian organizations that proactively foster women's career advancement and cultivate a gender-inclusive organizational culture, making these efforts visible and impactful.

Further information:

→ <https://www.vetmeduni.ac.at/universitaet/infoservice/news/news-detail/ausgezeichnete-frauenfoerderung-equalita-guetesiegel-fuer-die-vetmeduni>

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

4.1. VET:DIDACTICS Qualification Programme for Teaching Staff at the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna

The University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna is dedicated to advancing teaching competencies as part of its ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of higher education didactics. The VET:DIDACTICS certification programme seeks to highlight the importance of teaching while further professionalizing the self-concept and role-perception of the University's teaching staff.

Participants in the programme are empowered to support students in their learning process in a targeted manner, design their teaching in a research-oriented way, conduct assessments that are goal-oriented, transparent, and fair, continuously evaluate and further develop their own teaching and integrate innovations and contribute to their development

While gender awareness is an overarching theme, specific aspects include:

- inclusivity in addressing learners and educators, emphasizing that the programme supports all teaching staff regardless of gender identity.
- promotion of equitable access: By offering flexible learning formats (e.g., self-study, online), the programme accounts for diverse personal circumstances and responsibilities that might be influenced by gender roles (e.g., caregiving duties).
- collaborative learning: The peer observation and workshops foster an environment of mutual support and shared development, encouraging a culture of equality and respect among participants.

4.2. Enhancing Diversity and Gender Competence and Raising Awareness Among University Members

The Vetmeduni aims to expand universally accessible information to enhance awareness and understanding of diversity, thereby fostering an inclusive culture across the University. The development of diversity competence – especially gender competence - is increasingly and systematically integrated into continuing education programmes for all members of the university community.

Additionally, a working group called “Communication and Culture” at the Vetmeduni actively promotes diversity-sensitive communication grounded in mutual respect and equality. The group also incorporates the concept of intersectionality, raising awareness of the potential overlapping experiences of discrimination that students and staff may face within their environments.

4.3. Gender Dimension in Research

The University's Development Plan 2030 explicitly acknowledges the gender dimension in research by designating Gender Studies as a key research area. This commitment is further reinforced by plans to establish a professorship in teaching and learning research, which routinely addresses gender-related aspects—especially when exploring the social, psychological, and cultural factors that influence learning processes. Gender considerations are essential in educational research as they shape the experiences of learners and educators, reveal existing barriers, and guide the development of strategies to promote equal opportunities within educational settings.

5. Measures Against Gender-Based Violence Including Sexual Harassment

The Vetmeduni implements various measures against sexual harassment to ensure a safe and respectful environment for all employees and students. Key measures include:

- **Integration into Gender Equality Management:** Sexual harassment is treated as an important aspect of gender equality and diversity management and is addressed in the relevant policies and frameworks (eg. Frauenförderplan, Gleichstellungsplan).
- **Procedural Rules:** the Vetmeduni has binding procedures for handling reports of sexual harassment that ensure transparency, protection of those affected, and appropriate consequences (eg. Frauenförderplan, Gleichstellungsplan, Verhaltenskodex).
- **Promotion of Contact Persons and Complaint Offices:** Confidential contact points and specially appointed trusted persons are available for those affected to seek support or report incidents (eg. AKG, Office for Gender Competence, Diversity Officer for Students, Trusted Advisors).
- **Training and Awareness-Raising:** Regular workshops and training sessions on sexual harassment, discrimination, and respectful interaction are offered to staff, managers, and students to raise awareness and promote prevention (see section on “training”).
- **Clear and Open Communication Culture:** Through information campaigns and public relations efforts, a culture of respect and zero tolerance towards sexual harassment is actively promoted (eg. Values Brochure).

These measures are part of the Vetmeduni’s comprehensive commitment to equality, diversity, and a discrimination-free work and learning environment.

5.1. Trusted Advisors

The University is deeply committed to providing its employees with working conditions that promote and sustain health. This commitment includes fostering an environment characterized by mutual appreciation and recognition, as well as offering support during challenging situations.

To ensure employees receive the assistance they need during difficult times, the Vetmeduni, in collaboration with the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, has launched the “Trusted Advisors” project.

Trusted Advisors are carefully selected Vetmeduni staff members who act as confidential first points of contact for colleagues facing challenging workplace situations. Their role is to offer early support for issues related to conflict and psychological stress through empathetic listening and by directing individuals to appropriate internal or external university support services and contacts. Trusted Advisors may be approached for topics such as

- psychological strain, stress, illness
- sadness, anxiety, anger, dissatisfaction
- fatigue, lack of motivation, work-life balance
- conflict, disputes, bullying
- work environment, change processes
- questions about support services

5.2. Employee Survey

The Vetmeduni regularly conducts employee surveys to assess and improve workplace satisfaction, identify areas for development, and promote a positive organizational culture free from inequality and harassment. These surveys reflect the University’s commitment to transparency, employee well-being, and continuous improvement.

Additionally, Vetmeduni employees are represented by the Works Council for Scientific Staff and the Works Council for General Staff, both of which play important roles in addressing employee concerns and facilitating communication between staff and administration.

This complete document of the Gender Equality Plan has been signed and approved by the Rector of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna.

The document is published on the Website.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gauly', with a large, stylized loop at the bottom.

Prof. DDr. Mathias Gauly, Rector

Impressum

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