



UNIVERSITETI I MJEKËSISË, TIRANË

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

2024-2028

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Abbreviations

GEP	Gender Equality Plan
EC	European Commission
HMI	Higher Medical Institute
UMT	University of Medicine of Tirana
GFG	Gender Focal Group

Introduction

For over twenty years, the European Commission has identified gender equality as a key priority in its research and innovation policies. As part of this commitment, the Commission has promoted the adoption of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) as essential instruments to achieve this goal. During the 2020 edition of the European Research and Innovation Days, the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation announced that having an approved GEP is a mandatory requirement for all Higher Education and Research Institutions wishing to access funding under the Horizon Europe research program.

In this context, the European Commission has provided specific guidelines for drafting effective GEPs. These guidelines include a set of commitments and actions aimed at promoting gender equity and balance within institutions, serving as a critical step toward achieving full gender equality through structural change.

This document not only offers an analysis of the current identity of the University of Medicine, Tirana (UMT), but also represents a strategic foundation to:

- Evaluate the effectiveness and sustainability of current initiatives,
- Optimize the outcomes achieved, and
- Identify new opportunities and resources to support future policies.

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) of UMT, covering the period 2024–2028, is a policy framework through which the University intends to implement targeted actions and projects to reduce gender inequalities and promote diversity and inclusion across all areas of academic and institutional life.

This Plan identifies key areas of intervention, in alignment with the European Commission's requirements, and is designed as a flexible and evolving tool. It will adapt over time to meet the changing needs of both the University and the broader social context in which it operates.

The Path Toward Gender Equality at the University of Medicine, Tirana (UMT)

The University of Medicine, Tirana (UMT) is deeply committed to promoting gender equality, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. These values are fundamental to the renewal of its organizational culture and represent an essential part of its educational and scientific mission.

UMT's Code of Ethics clearly emphasizes the importance of respecting the dignity of every individual and fostering an inclusive environment free from discrimination. The University is dedicated to ensuring that all members of its community—students, academic and administrative staff, collaborators, and prospective students—are treated fairly and with respect, creating a climate of collaboration and mutual support.

In its strategic planning, UMT acknowledges that its people are its most valuable resource. The University strives to enhance the well-being of its community by creating conditions where every individual can realize their full potential. This involves strengthening policies aimed at balancing work and personal life, and promoting respect, equity, and inclusion as core values within its organizational culture. Attention to mental health and prevention of bullying and abuse are also priorities, supported by dedicated psychological support services.

Inclusion, non-discrimination, and the fight against abuse are foundational values at UMT. These principles are embedded in key institutional documents such as the Code of Ethics, strategic plans, and university regulations.

Nevertheless, UMT recognizes that its diverse community reflects the broader society, including positive values as well as existing prejudices and unconscious biases. While setting out core values and an organizational culture is necessary for governance, UMT understands that cultural change is a long-term process that requires time and continuous effort.

In this framework, UMT has committed to developing its Gender Equality Plan, a strategic document designed to initiate cultural change through concrete operational actions. This plan aims to foster a more respectful and inclusive environment that addresses gender equality and combats all forms of discrimination within the University.

Introduction to the University of Medicine, Tirana

The University of Medicine, Tirana (UMT) was officially established in 2013, following the structural separation of key medical science units from the University of Tirana. However, the roots of medical higher education in Albania date back to September 22, 1952, with the founding of the Higher Medical Institute (HMI), whose mission was to train general physicians. In 1957, the University of Tirana was founded, incorporating several prominent institutes, including HMI, which became the Faculty of Medicine within the State University of Tirana.

Following an institutional reorganization in 2016, UMT is now composed of three faculties:

- Faculty of Medicine
- Faculty of Technical Medical Sciences
- Faculty of Dental Medicine

Today, the academic structure of UMT includes:

- 3 faculties
- 22 academic departments
- 72 health service units with diagnostic, therapeutic, educational, and research functions
- 1 Center for Professional Development
- 8 Public University Health Structures, including 5 Public University Hospital Structures

This extensive network makes the University of Medicine, Tirana the largest academic, research, and scientific institution in the field of medicine in Albania.

UMT offers programs across all three cycles of higher education:

- First Cycle: Bachelor Programs
- Second Cycle: Integrated Programs, Master of Science, and Professional Master's Degrees
- Third Cycle: Doctoral Programs and Long-term Specializations in the Medical Field

The University currently has over 300 full-time academic staff, 80% of whom hold a PhD or academic titles (Professor/Associate Professor), and around 8,000 students enrolled across all levels of study.

Gender Distribution

As illustrated in Figures 1 and 2, gender distribution at UMT highlights a higher proportion of female students across all faculties and study cycles. This trend is especially pronounced in the Faculty of Technical Medical Sciences, where:

- In the Bachelor's cycle, 90.61% of students are female compared to 9.39% male.
- In the Master of Science cycle, 92.15% are female and 7.85% male.

In contrast, the Doctoral level across all three faculties shows a narrower gender gap, with a slight male majority observed particularly in the Faculty of Medicine.

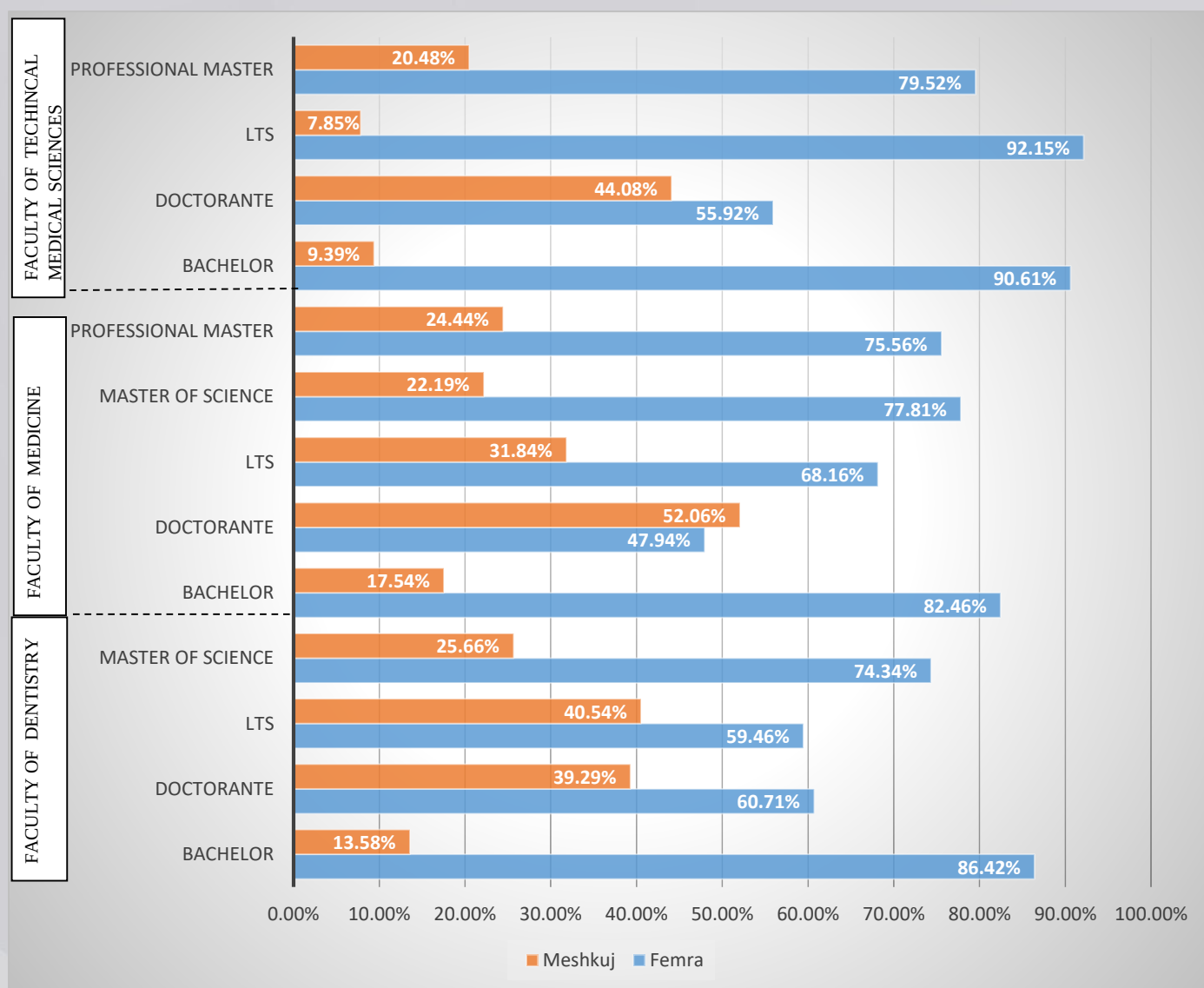


Figure1. Distribution of students according to study program and gender

Women constitute the majority of academic staff in the Faculty of Technical Medical Sciences and the Faculty of Dental Medicine, with an approximate 3:1 ratio compared to men. In contrast, the Faculty of Medicine demonstrates a more balanced distribution, with near-equal representation of male and female academic staff (see Figure 2).

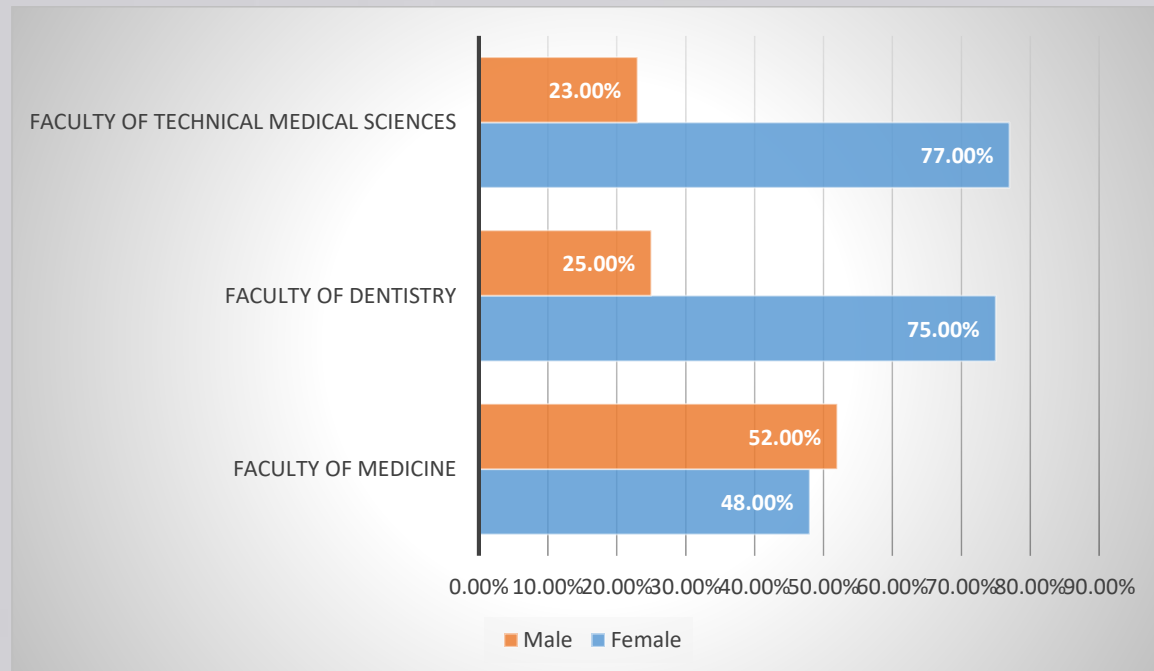


Figure 2. Distribution of academic staff according to faculty and gender

A Look at the Recent Past

The UMT Gender Equality Plan 2024–2028 represents a crucial step forward in advancing gender equality within the university’s academic and administrative community. While UMT has not yet appointed a dedicated Gender Agent, the university is committed to establishing this role soon. The Gender Agent will be responsible for the implementation, coordination, and monitoring of the GEP actions.

In the meantime, the efforts toward gender equality are supported by a newly formed GEP Committee, composed of representatives from academic faculties and technical-administrative staff. This committee is tasked with guiding the development and oversight of the plan, ensuring that gender equality becomes a core institutional priority. UMT acknowledges the value of collaborative work and the sharing of expertise across different units. Positive synergies are being fostered with the university’s Office for Inclusion and the Committee for Equal Opportunities (CUG), which lead cultural renewal and training initiatives promoting respect and diversity.

The Gender Equality Plan’s activities have already involved multiple offices and stakeholders, establishing an emerging collaborative network. This network supports data collection, policy drafting, communication strategies, and the integration of gender perspectives into academic programs, teaching, and research. Such cooperation is key to disseminating the GEP’s goals and raising awareness on gender disparities and the prevention of harassment across the university community.

UMT is also committed to ongoing capacity building, with gender-related topics—such as cognitive bias, inclusive leadership, inclusive recruitment, inclusive language, and gender-based violence prevention—included in planned training activities.

In line with the GEP, UMT is preparing to approve:

- Guidelines for Inclusive Language, designed to promote respectful and inclusive communication across all university activities.
- Regulations for the Protection of Human Dignity, establishing procedures to prevent and address gender and sexual harassment, including the introduction of a Confidential Advisor role to support affected individuals.
- Guidelines for Inclusive and Effective Meetings, which provide practical recommendations to foster inclusivity and productivity in university meetings.

Finally, UMT plans to expand its offer of seminars, workshops, and conferences focused on gender equality topics, making these opportunities widely accessible to all members of the university.

UMT Data

Key Statistics Needed for a University Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

1. University Staff Data

Total number of employees disaggregated by gender (male/female)

Breakdown of staff by category:

- Academic staff (professors, lecturers, assistants)
- Technical-administrative staff
- Researchers/scientists
- Support and collaborative staff
- Gender ratio in leadership positions (e.g., Rector, Deans, Department Heads)
- Gender distribution across different career levels (academic and administrative)
- Salary data, highlighting any gender pay gaps
- Data on working hours, flexible work arrangements, part-time work by gender
- Usage rates of parental leave and other work-life balance related leaves, disaggregated by gender

2. Student Data

Total number of students by gender across study levels (Bachelor, Master, PhD)

- Gender distribution by field of study or department
- Gender participation rates in special programs, scholarships, or postgraduate schools
- Representation of students in leadership roles (e.g., student council presidents)
- Gender participation in extracurricular activities such as clubs, seminars, and conferences

3. Organizational Culture and Work Environment Data

- Results of surveys or assessments on perceptions of gender equality within the university
- Records of incidents or reports related to gender discrimination, sexual harassment, or inappropriate behavior
- Participation rates in gender equality, inclusion, and harassment prevention training sessions
- Existing policies supporting work-life balance (e.g., flexible hours, remote work options)

4. General Institutional Data

- Participation rates of staff and students in gender equality-related training and events
- Gender representation in decision-making bodies and committees
- Documentation of current policies and procedures promoting gender equality

Gender Equality Plan of the University of Medicine, Tirana (2024–2028)

Based on a comprehensive assessment of the current institutional landscape—where the absence of structured gender equality policies and mechanisms has been evident—the University of Medicine, Tirana (UMT) has developed this Gender Equality Plan (GEP) for the period 2024–2028. This plan reflects UMT’s growing commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable academic and work environment.

Institutional Gender Gap Challenges Identified

The following key challenges have been identified at the institutional level:

- Limited availability of gender-disaggregated data and the absence of systematic procedures for data collection and monitoring from a gender perspective.
- Lack of institutionalized policies and structures explicitly dedicated to promoting gender equality, with efforts only recently initiated.
- No prior incentive mechanisms to support the design or implementation of a GEP.
- Insufficient integration of gender dimensions in research, innovation, and academic content.
- University mission, vision, and internal regulations do not yet reflect a gender-sensitive approach.

Purpose and Strategic Direction

This GEP aims to initiate sustainable transformation within UMT by addressing the structural and cultural dynamics that maintain gender disparities. It is designed as a living document, responsive to internal needs and external developments, and is aligned with the Horizon Europe eligibility framework for Gender Equality Plans.

Compliance with Horizon Europe GEP Requirements

To ensure compliance with Horizon Europe funding criteria, the UMT GEP is structured around four key mandatory requirements:

1. Public Document

The GEP is publicly accessible on the University’s website, is endorsed by senior leadership, and is actively communicated within and beyond the institution.

2. Dedicated Resources

UMT will establish a Gender Focal Group at the Rectorate level. This group will:

- Review and assess existing gender equality measures

- Define and coordinate future actions
- Monitor progress annually

The Gender Focal Group will serve as the central institutional body for ensuring that all university policies and practices support gender equality.

3. Data Collection and Monitoring

Although full institutional and national datasets remain limited, UMT is committed to developing an integrated data collection system in collaboration with the Human Resources and Academic Affairs Departments.

This system will ensure regular monitoring and reporting on gender-related indicators to evaluate the progress of GEP implementation.

4. Training and Capacity Building

A series of gender-focused training sessions and workshops will be delivered over the course of the GEP, targeting all university stakeholders—academic and administrative staff, as well as students.

Particular attention will be given to the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in academic content, research methodology, and institutional culture.

Measures and Actions – Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

University of Medicine, Tirana (2024–2028)

To achieve the strategic objectives of this Gender Equality Plan, the University of Medicine, Tirana has defined the following priority areas, each accompanied by targeted measures and actions:

1. Work–Life Balance and Organizational Culture

- 1.1 Promote a healthy work–life balance and foster an organizational culture supportive of gender equality.
- 1.2 Encourage flexible work arrangements where applicable.
- 1.3 Raise awareness about family responsibilities and shared caregiving roles.
- 1.4 Improve internal communication and support systems for staff and students managing work–life responsibilities.

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

- 2.1 Prevent and address gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.
- 2.2 Develop and implement a clear institutional policy on gender-based violence.
- 2.3 Establish confidential reporting mechanisms.
- 2.4 Organize preventive training and awareness-raising campaigns across campus.

3. Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making

- 3.1 Promote gender equality in institutional leadership, governance, and decision-making processes.
- 3.2 Encourage gender-balanced representation in governing bodies, selection committees, and academic councils.
- 3.3 Include gender equality targets in recruitment to leadership positions.
- 3.4 Promote a culture of inclusive leadership.

4. Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Progression

- 4.1 Support women and underrepresented groups in advancing their academic and professional careers.
- 4.2 Ensure transparency and gender sensitivity in recruitment and promotion criteria.
- 4.3 Provide mentoring and career development programs targeted at female academics and staff.
- 4.4 Introduce policies to counteract implicit bias in hiring and evaluation processes.

5. Integration of the Gender Dimension into Research and Teaching

- 5.1 Mainstream gender perspectives into research content and curricula.
- 5.2 Promote interdisciplinary research projects that include gender as a variable.
- 5.3 Encourage faculty to integrate gender analysis into teaching materials.

5.4 Provide training on gender-sensitive research design and methodologies.

Indicators for Monitoring Progress

To evaluate the success and impact of the above measures, the following indicators will be used:

- Number of gender equality workshops and training sessions conducted
- Number of participants trained (disaggregated by gender and staff/student category)
- Number of gender indicators introduced, monitored, and reported
- Number of gender-sensitive policies and regulations adopted and implemented
- Number of gender equality initiatives and awareness-raising activities
- Number of institutional reports on gender equality outcomes
- Number of research projects and publications addressing gender dimensions

Strategic Goals, Measures, and Actions

University of Medicine, Tirana – GEP 2024–2028

Objective 1. Work–Life Balance and Organizational Culture

Final Target:

To foster a supportive work environment that allows staff to effectively balance professional and personal responsibilities.

Objective 1.1 – Foster Work–Life Balance and Supportive Organizational Culture

Measures / Actions:

1.1.1 Develop internal recommendations for improved scheduling of meetings and working hours, respecting the needs of staff for work–life balance.

1.1.2 Revise and improve regulations on flexible work arrangements, promoting hybrid work models (remote + in-person) in line with national labor laws.

1.1.3 Encourage men to take parental leave, supporting shared responsibilities and challenging gender stereotypes.

Objective	Measure / Action	Target	Owner	Timing	Indicator of Success
1.1 Foster Work–Life Balance and Supportive Organizational Culture					
1.1.1 Develop recommendations for improved scheduling of meetings and working hours	All departments adopt guidelines respecting work–life balance	HR Department, Department Heads	2024 Q2 - 2025 Q4	Number of departments implementing scheduling guidelines	
1.1.2 Revise and improve flexible work regulations promoting hybrid work (remote + in-person)	Flexible work policy updated regularly and widely used	HR Department, Legal Office	2024 - 2028	Policy documents updated; % of staff using flexible work options annually	
1.1.3 Encourage men to take parental leave	Increase male parental leave uptake by 50% compared to 2023 baseline	HR Department, Managers	2024 - 2028	Year-on-year increase in male parental leave uptake	

Objective 2. Measures Against Gender-Based Violence, Including Sexual Harassment

Final Target:

To ensure a safe and respectful study and work environment where personal rights and freedoms are fully protected.

Objective 2.1 – Prevent Gender-Based Violence, Including Sexual Harassment

Measures / Actions:

2.1.1 Propose and adopt specific normative acts aimed at preventing gender-based violence and harassment within the University.

2.1.2 Organize awareness-raising activities, including workshops, training sessions, and open days addressing discrimination and violence prevention.

2.1.3 Strengthen institutional protocols for reporting and addressing gender-based violence, including:

- Transparent investigation processes
- Defined sanctions and disciplinary measures
- Mechanisms to prevent secondary victimization of survivors

Objective	Measure / Action	Target	Owner	Timing	Indicator of Success
2.1 Prevent Gender-Based Violence, Including Sexual Harassment					
2.1.1 Propose and adopt specific normative acts to prevent gender-based violence and harassment	Formal policies and regulations approved and published	University Leadership, Legal Office	2024 Q3 - 2025 Q2	Adoption and publication of policies; staff and student awareness levels	
2.1.2 Organize awareness-raising activities (workshops, training, open days)	At least 2 awareness events per year, engaging staff and students	Gender Equality Committee, HR, Student Affairs	2024 - 2028	Number of events held; participant feedback and attendance records	
2.1.3 Strengthen institutional protocols for reporting and addressing gender-based	Full implementation of transparent investigation processes, clear sanctions, and	University Leadership, HR, Legal Office	2024 - 2026	Number of reported cases handled according to protocols;	

Objective	Measure / Action	Target	Owner	Timing	Indicator of Success
violence, including:	victim support mechanisms			reduced complaints of secondary victimization	

Objective 3. Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making

Final Target:

To integrate gender equality into leadership structures and institutional decision-making processes, fostering a culture of diversity and inclusion.

Objective 3.1 – Promote Gender Equality in Institutional Culture and Governance

Measures / Actions:

3.1.1 Regularly collect and analyze gender-disaggregated data (quantitative and qualitative) from departments/faculties in digital format; publish findings in a dedicated monitoring report.

3.1.2 Appoint gender equality delegates in each academic and administrative unit with a consultative and monitoring role.

3.1.3 Schedule regular Gender Focal Group (GFG) meetings with key governance actors (e.g., Vice Rectors, Department Heads, and Administrative Directors) to ensure ongoing commitment and accountability.

Objective	Measure / Action	Target	Owner	Timing	Indicator of Success
3.1 Promote Gender Equality in Institutional Culture and Governance					
3.1.1 Regularly collect and analyze gender-disaggregated data from departments/faculties; publish monitoring report	Annual collection and publication of comprehensive gender data	Institutional Research Office, HR	Annually 2024-2028	Availability and dissemination of monitoring reports; data-driven policy adjustments	
3.1.2 Appoint gender equality delegates in each academic and administrative unit with consultative and monitoring role	Gender Equality Delegates appointed in 100% of units	Rectorate, HR	2024 Q3 - 2025 Q1	Number of delegates appointed; active participation in gender equality initiatives	

Objective	Measure / Action	Target	Owner	Timing	Indicator of Success
3.1.3 Schedule regular Gender Focal Group (GFG) meetings with key governance actors	At least quarterly meetings of the GFG including Vice Rectors, Dept Heads, Admin Directors	Gender Equality Committee, Rectorate	Quarterly 2024-2028	Number of meetings held; documented decisions and actions taken to promote gender equality	

Objective 4. Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Progression

Final Target:

To create gender-sensitive recruitment and promotion processes, support women's academic careers, and ensure equitable opportunities for advancement.

Objective 4.1 – Support Career Advancement of Women and Underrepresented Groups

Measures / Actions:

4.1.1 Highlight and promote best practices and role models, showcasing outstanding contributions of women across all university functions.

4.1.2 Promote the integration of gender equality into institutional strategies and ethics policies through working groups tasked with developing proposals for strategic documents, codes of conduct, and internal regulations.

Objective	Measure / Action	Target	Owner	Timing	Indicator of Success
4.1 Support Career Advancement of Women and Underrepresented Groups					
4.1.1 Highlight and promote best practices and role models showcasing outstanding contributions of women	Develop campaigns, events, and publications to showcase female role models across academic and administrative roles	Communication Office, HR	Annually 2024-2028	Number of campaigns/events held; visibility metrics; feedback from community	

Objective	Measure / Action	Target	Owner	Timing	Indicator of Success
4.1.2 Integrate gender equality into institutional strategies and ethics policies via working groups	Establish working groups to draft proposals for gender-sensitive strategic plans, codes of conduct, and internal rules	Rectorate, Ethics Committee, HR	2024 Q2 - 2025 Q4	Adoption of updated strategy documents, codes, and regulations incorporating gender equality principles	

Objective 5. Integration of the Gender Dimension in Research and Teaching

Final Target:

To integrate the gender dimension into academic curricula and research projects, particularly in disciplines where it has traditionally been absent, enriching methodologies and perspectives.

Objective 5.1 – Incorporate Gender Perspectives into Research and Teaching

Measures / Actions:

5.1.1 Develop and monitor gender-sensitive statistics and indicators to be included in the University's annual performance reports.

5.1.2 Organize faculty workshops and training sessions on how to incorporate gender and diversity topics into course content, syllabi, and pedagogical approaches.

Objective	Measure / Action	Target	Owner	Timing	Indicator of Success
5.1 Incorporate Gender Perspectives into Research and Teaching					
5.1.1 Develop and monitor gender-sensitive statistics and indicators to be included in the University's annual performance reports	Create and update data systems to integrate gender indicators in research outputs and teaching evaluations	Research Office, Institutional Research	Annually 2024-2028	Inclusion of gender-sensitive indicators in reports; improvements in data quality and usage	

Objective	Measure / Action	Target	Owner	Timing	Indicator of Success
5.1.2 Organize faculty workshops and training sessions on incorporating gender and diversity in curricula and pedagogy	Conduct regular training and workshops across faculties to promote inclusive teaching and research methodologies	Academic Affairs, HR	Bi-annually 2024-2028	Number of workshops held; faculty participation rates; feedback surveys showing increased awareness and skills	

Conclusion

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) 2024–2028 of the University of Medicine, Tirana, confirms the university's strong commitment to fostering an inclusive academic environment, respectful of gender diversity and free from discrimination. Building on foundational efforts and assessments, this Plan not only consolidates existing progress but also introduces targeted strategies and actions aimed at addressing identified challenges.

A key focus of this new GEP is the systematic collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data to inform policy and monitor progress effectively. Continuous training and capacity building will be offered to all members of the university community, with dedicated modules for academic and research staff.

UMT is also committed to exploring the possibility of obtaining formal gender equality certification aligned with international standards, while adopting an intersectional approach that recognizes multiple dimensions of diversity.

The implementation of these actions will be supported by significant human and financial resources, ensuring medium and long-term sustainability.

In conclusion, the UMT Gender Equality Plan 2024–2028 represents a pivotal step in advancing gender equality and inclusion at the university. UMT's ongoing commitment is driven by the belief that only through valuing diversity and promoting an equitable and respectful environment can academic and scientific excellence be truly achieved.

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