

Equal Opportunities Plan 2025–2027

The FWF Strategy for Gender Equality and Diversity in Research

Vienna, November 8, 2024

Discovering
what
matters.

Contents

- 1 Objective 3**
- 2 Research Policy 3**
- 3 The FWF’s Guiding Principles 4**
- 4 Ongoing Measures 4**
 - 4.1 FWF organization 5
 - 4.2 The application process 5
 - 4.3 Peer review procedure 6
 - 4.4 Project implementation 6
 - 4.5 Increasing the visibility of women researchers and diversity in research 7
- 5 Action Plan for 2025-2027 8**

1 Objective

Equal opportunities and diversity are anchored in the FWF's corporate policy as fundamental pillars of research funding. This FWF strategy outlines measures for more equal opportunities and diversity with the aim of increasing the application rates of underrepresented groups, currently especially female researchers, and promoting gender equality and diversity in the research community. The FWF understands diversity as the wide range of dimensions that make researchers different from each other (age, parenthood, gender, origin) and makes every effort to consider relevant dimensions of diversity in the interactions between them (intersectionality).^{1,2,3}

2 Research Policy

The current **RTI Strategy 2030**⁴ defines as its third goal increasing gender equality and diversity in research and development and promoting research careers and making them more attractive, particularly for women, by strengthening equal opportunity programs and introducing personnel development and career planning measures. Gender and diversity aspects also need to be considered in research funding, to help lower barriers to equal opportunities and participation.

In addition, **EU strategy documents**⁵ have identified the need to incorporate gender equality policy objectives within the European Research Area (ERA) and integrate their implementation into the organizational strategy.

Pursuant to § 2 of the Research and Technology Funding Act (*Forschungs- und Technologie-förderungsgesetz*, FTFG),⁶ the FWF is required to aim at achieving actual equality between men and women.

The FWF established its Equal Opportunities and Diversity in Research Funding unit to consolidate its objectives with regard to diversity, equality, and equal opportunities for researchers. The unit's activities are based on the following principles, standards, and measures and supplemented by an action plan for the period 2025-2027.

¹ [Intersektionalität – eine Einführung](#), Katharina Walgenbach

² FWF in-house workshop on "Diversity and Research Funding," November 27, 2015, Vienna

³ See [Form for accounting for career interruptions](#)

⁴ <https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/Forschung/Forschung-in-%C3%96sterreich/Strategische-Ausrichtung-und-beratende-Gremien/Strategien/FTI-Strategie-der-Bundesregierung.html>

⁵ European Commission: [Strategic Plan 2020-2024 DG RESEARCH AND INNOVATION](#); [Horizon Europe gender equality plan eligibility criterion](#) | [European Institute for Gender Equality \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁶ [Legal foundations of the FWF](#)

3 The FWF's Guiding Principles

- The key management responsibilities of the FWF Executive Board include implementing equal opportunities, gender equality, and diversity measures.
- The FWF takes a cross-sectional approach (gender mainstreaming) to equal opportunities, gender equality, and diversity and implements this approach in all its activities.
- The FWF sets itself objectives for equal opportunities, gender equality, and diversity and monitors their attainment (e.g., participation and success rates of male and female researchers in the different programs) on a regular basis.
- The FWF actively promotes fair treatment of all researchers, ensures that funding is allocated transparently and fairly, and avoids discrimination⁷ against researchers on the basis of non-research-related reasons such as age, gender, parenthood, or origin.
- The FWF is actively committed to creating a safe, respectful, non-discriminatory research environment for all individuals working on FWF-funded projects.
- The FWF strives to achieve a gender balance among participants from the research community in its decision-making bodies, functionaries, and decision-making processes, as well as among the applicants and principal investigators in its programs.
- Its career development programs support researchers in their diverse career paths.
- The FWF funds research that specifically targets sex-specific and gender-related aspects in its research approach and promotes appropriate participation of underrepresented genders in research teams.
- The exchange of information with research policy initiatives on the national and international level promotes mutual learning (e.g., about structural and process-related barriers for individual applicants and groups).
- As part of its public image, all of the FWF's in-house and external communications are gender sensitive.

4 Ongoing Measures

Ongoing measures for each of the FWF's processes are presented below.

⁷ Two external evaluations of the FWF's decision-making process have shown that gender, age, and disciplinary background have no significant effect on the probability of approval: [Factors influencing the probability of approval in the FWF decision-making process. \(in German\) FWF Stand-Alone Projects in the years 1999 to 2008 and 2010 to 2019](#)

4.1 FWF organization

- Development and publication of the FWF Strategy for Gender Equality and Diversity in Research (Equal Opportunities Plan), by the Equal Opportunities and Diversity in Research Funding Unit, established in 2005.
- Use of inclusive, gender-sensitive language in in-house and external communications (based on in-house guidelines)
- Signing the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment issued by the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)
- [Equal opportunity monitoring](#): annual and long-term gender-specific data collection with regard to applications, grants, FWF's executive bodies, FWF review procedures
- In-house awareness-raising measures (courses, workshops, information events) for FWF employees on the topics of unconscious bias and diversity as well as on dealing with harassment and discrimination
- Networking and knowledge transfer:
 - FWF in-house Equal Opportunities and Diversity in Research Funding working group for interdepartmental communication and information exchange
 - Regular meetings with an external working group consisting of various stakeholders from the Austrian research community for the purpose of exchange on a national level
 - International exchange on a regular basis with funding organizations such as [DFG](#), [SNF](#), [Science Europe](#), Research on Research Institute (RoRI), and [GRC](#)

4.2 The application process

- Applicants are [required to reflect on sex-specific and gender-related aspects](#) in their research approach as part of the application process:
 - [Information and materials for researchers](#) (Checklist, materials: Videos etc.)
- In collaborative programs,⁸ a target of 30% of the underrepresented gender in the consortium applies; the composition of the consortium is one of the deciding factors in the review and evaluation process.

⁸ [Clusters of Excellence](#), [Emerging Fields](#), [Special Research Areas](#), [Research Groups](#), [doc.funds](#), [doc.funds.connect](#), [#ConnectingMinds](#)

- Career advancement for women researchers: 50% of funding is reserved for women in the [ESPRIT](#) and [FWF ASTRA Awards](#) programs
- [Inclusion](#): Career interruptions and appropriate exceptions are taken into account in the application process (illness, parental leave, caregiving obligations, flight, or asylum)
- [Coaching workshops](#) (Informational events and workshops on the FWF's funding programs; events aimed specifically at women)

4.3 Peer review procedure

- Based on the criteria of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), of which the FWF is a signatory, and the Agreement of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA):
 - Comprehensive presentation of academic achievements in CVs (including career interruptions)
 - Avoidance of metrics such as journal impact factors, Article Influence Scores, or the h-index when evaluating research performance
 - Consideration of academic rather than biological age when assessing researchers' qualifications
- [Reflection on sex-specific and gender-related aspects in the research approach](#) in the context of the questions posed to reviewers
- [Raising awareness of unconscious bias](#):
 - In-house FWF bias awareness training (for FWF staff and Scientific Consultants) and review of procedures based on this training
 - Providing reviewers with [information on unconscious bias](#) and including references in reviewer forms

4.4 Project implementation

- Researchers in all programs are required to [reflect on sex-specific and gender-related aspects](#) in their research
- [Safety & Diversity in Research guidelines](#) for dealing with harassment and discrimination in FWF-funded projects; information on relevant legal regulations in Grant Agreements
- [FWF whistleblower tool](#) for handling complaints and discrimination allegations (reports are monitored)

- Additional project funding for equality and gender mainstreaming measures in [collaborative programs](#) (funding for substitutes, childcare, networking measures; for details, please see the program-specific application guidelines)
- Tenure package for women principal investigators in the ASTRA program: If approved, female principal investigators can apply for additional project funding of €200,000 within the first three years of the project's term in the following cases:
 - They have been granted a position with a permanent employment commitment upon fulfillment of a qualification agreement (e. g. tenure-track position) or already hold such a position at the time of application
 - They have been granted or assumed a permanent academic leadership position (professorship or equivalent position) after applying for funding
- Child allowance (in the programs [ESPRIT](#), [FWF ASTRA Awards](#), and [collaborative programs](#)) for female consortium members

4.5 Increasing the visibility of women researchers and diversity in research

- Portrait articles published in the FWF Science Magazine scilog⁹ describe projects carried out by women researchers
- Project funding/Awards: Events aimed specifically at women¹⁰ increase the visibility of women researchers and allow academically younger women to network with established women researchers in Austria.
- FWF-funded women researchers nominated for Academia Net,¹¹ a platform listing women researchers from different disciplines.
- Campaigns¹² and events¹³ to increase the visibility of women in research and on FWF's measures promoting gender equality and the advancement of women
- Pride Month campaigns focusing on LGBTQI+ research¹⁴

⁹ [Portraits](#)

¹⁰ [An Evening Honoring Women in Cutting-Edge Research; Celebrating Successful Women in Cutting-Edge Research – FWF](#)

¹¹ [Portal to Excellent Women Academics](#)

¹² Newsletter contributions: [Women in Top-Level Research – FWF \(in German\)](#), [Gender Studies on the Rise – FWF Gender research on the rise - FWF](#) (on the gender dimension in research); Science talks "*Am Puls*": [Women's Health in Austria - FWF \(in German\)](#)

¹³ [Women and Careers – The First Annual Women's Circle – FWF \(in German\)](#)

¹⁴ [How rainbow families experience everyday life – scilog \(fwf.ac.at\)](#); [Queer activism and polarized debates – scilog \(fwf.ac.at\)](#); [Queer history in the age of datafication – scilog \(fwf.ac.at\)](#)

5 Action Plan for 2025-2027

The priorities the Equal Opportunities and Diversity in Research Funding unit plans to focus on for the 2025 – 2027 period are listed below.

- Continuing to integrate and establish the unit's responsibilities within FWF processes in terms of gender mainstreaming and diversity
- Extending bias awareness measures to jury-based programs
- Classification of non-usable reviews:
 - Review of the process for dealing with non-usable reviews
 - Development of criteria for non-usable reviews with regard to discriminatory statements
 - Measures to help staff members and Scientific Consultants identify discriminatory statements in reviews
- The expansion of gender budgeting aspects in the allocation of research funds and related measures is currently under discussion.
- Expanding target group-specific information services:
 - For researchers with disabilities
 - For researchers with children
 - For female junior researchers
 - On the FWF's measures for equal opportunities and the advancement of women
 - On an inclusive and diverse research culture in accordance with the published [guidelines](#) for researchers and research institutions
 - On integrating sex-specific and gender-related aspects in research proposals/research topics
- Best-practice exchange with relevant stakeholders (national and international):
Cooperation with research institutions and other funding organizations to further develop content to better incorporate EDI (equality, diversity, inclusion) aspects

On behalf of the FWF
Christof GATTRINGER, President

FWF Österreichischer
Wissenschaftsfonds

Österreichischer Wissenschaftsfonds FWF
Georg-Goch-Platz 2, 1010 Wien
+43 1 505 67 40
office@fwf.ac.at | fwf.ac.at

28.1.2025

City, date

Stamp/signature