

# Equal opportunities and equal terms

Strategic framework for the work on  
gender equality at  
the Faculty of Business and Social  
Sciences 2021-2023

# Vision and goals for the work on gender equality

The Faculty of Business and Social Sciences (SAMF) at SDU has a vision of attracting and retaining the top of the entire talent pool among the faculty's academic and administrative staff. One way of achieving this is to ensure gender equality – i.e. equal opportunities and equal terms – for all employees, regardless of gender. In general, SAMF wants to be known for a good work environment for all employees and with room for diversity.

The faculty has a concrete goal of creating a more equal gender distribution among employees so that the staff composition to a greater extent reflects both the students and the surrounding community.

One way to achieve this goal is to ensure that there are role models in research, teaching, knowledge exchange and administration as well as ensuring transparency, equal opportunities and equal treatment for everyone when it comes to recruitment, employment and career development.

This vision and the overall goals are not new to SAMF. For several years, the faculty has worked wholeheartedly for this. This work must be maintained and further developed in the coming period through efforts at faculty level as well as locally at the individual departments and in the administrative units.

The Gender Equality Committee at SAMF has prepared this strategic framework with the aim of ensuring awareness and a positive development of several themes considered to be central to the work on gender equality in the coming period. The framework is also intended to contribute to ensuring equal terms and opportunities across the faculty's departments and units.

The strategic framework was adopted by the Gender Equality Committee and approved by the Faculty Management on 6 April 2021.

# Significant themes and objectives

The Gender Equality Committee at SAMF has identified the following themes, which in the coming period are of significant importance for the continued achievement of the faculty's vision and goals in the area of gender equality:

1. The consequences of corona and increased working from home
2. The transition from associate professor to professor level
3. Mentoring schemes
4. The distribution of managerial roles.

The selected themes are particularly relevant and should be prioritised in the work on gender equality across the faculty's departments and administrative units. However, the themes are not exhaustive of the work on gender equality at SAMF. Especially at the local level, there will be other and diverse topics that require special attention and action. Gender equality in the PhD area is an example of a particularly important focus area, and the Gender Equality Committee therefore recommends that this should be prioritised separately under the auspices of the PhD School.

Although several of the themes most directly relate to the academic staff, gender equality in the technical/administrative area should be a continuous focus for departments and administrative units across the faculty.

The consequences of corona and increased working from home is an independent and very relevant theme that requires a joint effort across the faculty. The theme relates not only to gender equality but also to equality in a broader sense, including across age, length of employment, etc. In the coming period, the Gender Equality Committee will have a separate focus on launching initiatives within this theme.

Themes 2, 3 and 4 are closely connected because mentoring schemes and the distribution of managerial roles both have an impact on the transition from associate professor to professor level. Efforts within all three themes are crucial to the faculty's success in achieving its goals on gender equality. But the efforts are expected to have the greatest impact if they are defined and implemented locally at the individual departments. Therefore, the Gender Equality Committee strongly encourages the departments to focus on these themes in their work on gender equality in the coming period.

The following is a brief description of the four themes and the strategic objectives connected with them.

## 1. The consequences of corona and increased working from home

It is unclear what the partial lockdown of society and the consequent increase in employees working from home in connection with corona means for the work environment and gender equality at the faculty (and in society in general). Corona's impact, however, is tied to factors that go beyond gender, and the consequences – positive as well as negative – must be expected to affect people differently depending on the situation of the individual employee, such as family constellation, task portfolio, career stage, personal preferences, etc.

An identification of the potential and real consequences of corona and increased working from home for the faculty's staff is necessary in order to minimise any negative impact on gender equality at SAMF. This identification should depend on the broader (national) experiences with the issues and will benefit from being implemented in collaboration with SDU's Central Gender Equality Committee and the Gender Equality Team at SDU.

**The objective** at SAMF is to ensure that issues caused by corona, lockdown and increased working from home do not lead to structural gender equality challenges, for example by creating unequal opportunities for career development and accreditation or unequal terms in relation to work-life balance across the faculty's different employee groups.

## 2. The transition from associate professor to professor level

Although in recent years, the faculty has largely succeeded in focusing on gender equality in the recruitment processes, the total proportion of female professors at SAMF suggests a special challenge at this level.

While the proportion of women and men is largely the same at associate professor level, only 16% of the professors at SAMF in 2019 were women. The figures for the period 2015-2019 show that far fewer women than men apply for a professorship at SAMF, and at the same time, the proportion of female applicants assessed as qualified for these positions is lower than for male applicants. Conversely, the success rate among the qualified applicants is largely identical for both sexes (approximately 24%).

In order to be able to implement the right initiatives, it should therefore be investigated in more detail where in the professor recruitment processes at SAMF the challenges specifically arise. The following actions are therefore encouraged:

1. the individual departments ensure that it is clearly described in the qualification guidelines exactly which competencies and requirements are defining for the transition from an associate professorship to a professorship, and
2. the departments focus on career planning for female associate professors, so that the department ensures equal opportunities for men and women in relation to being able to develop their profile and CV towards a professorship.

This will help to identify any gender-specific challenges in the qualification and recruitment processes at SAMF.

The unequal gender balance at professor level creates a risk that skilled talents fall by the wayside. At the same time, it presents a challenge in ensuring female role models for the academic staff.

**The objectives** at SAMF are therefore to achieve a more equal gender balance at professor level and to ensure that the potential for recruitment among female associate professors is fully utilised.

## 3. Mentoring schemes

A crucial factor in retaining the entire top of the talent pool is that the employees' career opportunities are supported and promoted through local initiatives as well as at faculty level. The figures show that there is a large dropout rate of especially female researchers employed in temporary positions.

Mentoring schemes are a way of working in a focused way on career support, especially for the academic staff employed in temporary positions – often young researchers. Mentoring schemes locally at the individual departments targeted this group of employees can help to retain talented young researchers, including female researchers.

Through mentoring schemes, role models can help to discover, develop and promote career opportunities for the employee in question, and thus the talent pool can be increased and retained. Development and implementation of mentoring schemes should be a priority in the coming years.

**The objective** at SAMF is to reduce the dropout rate of research talents employed in temporary positions and to ensure equal opportunities for career development across the faculty regardless of gender.

#### **4. The distribution of managerial roles**

While there are formalised and transparent procedures for recruitment to, for example, the positions of heads of department at SAMF, the same level of uniformity and transparency across the faculty is not seen in the recruitment to other types of managerial positions. This applies, for example, when appointing heads of research groups or study programmes.

While these positions on the one hand may be perceived as attractive for the individual's career development, the managerial tasks are on the other hand time-consuming and associated with a certain administrative workload potentially perceived as limiting to academic career opportunities due to a lack of time for publishing research etc.

It is therefore considered useful to create an overview of how managerial positions are distributed within the individual departments, including whether there is a reasonable gender balance in the distribution. The departments should constantly pay attention to this. At the same time, it may be considered whether and – if so – how more knowledge can be gathered about the effects of the distribution of managerial tasks on employee's career opportunities.

**The objectives** at SAMF are to ensure that there is full transparency regarding the distribution of managerial positions and heavy administrative tasks, and that the distribution does not create unequal opportunities for career development and accreditation across gender.



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