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From knowledge to practice.

Gender Equality Plan 2024-2026
Of
Portucalense University Infante D. Henrique

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Introduction

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted in September 1995 during the Fourth World Conference on Women, organised by the United Nations in Beijing, China. This landmark document enshrined the fundamental principles of political action to promote gender equality and introduced the concept of mainstreaming, which led to the reorganisation of political processes for the effective integration of equality between women and men. (Government of the Portuguese Republic, XXII Government, 2020) Almost 30 years later, not only does it continue to be one of the world's leading reference frameworks in this area, but many of the critical areas identified there remain relevant and topical.

In 2015, the United Nations established the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a global action plan for eradicating poverty, protecting the planet, and universally promoting peace and prosperity. Building on the legacy of the Beijing Platform for Action, the 2030 Agenda also reflects specific concerns about gender equality, dedicating one of its 17 Sustainable Development Goals to this matter – SDG5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. A dimension that also cuts across many of the goals outlined in other SDGs, such as "*poverty eradication (SDG1), hunger eradication (SDG2), good health and well-being for all (SDG3), quality education (SDG4), decent employment and inclusive economic growth (SDG8) and industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG9), reduction of inequalities (SDG10), sustainable cities and communities (SDG11), responsible consumption and production (SDG12), combating climate change (SDG13), peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG16), partnerships for the goals (SDG17)*" (Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 2018).

According to the *Gender Social Norms Index*, published by the United Nations Development Programme, prejudice against women is present in about 9 out of 10 people. This study covered 85% of the global population. In addition, almost half of the world's population believes that political leadership is primarily a male attribute, and 2 in 5 people believe that men perform better in the business world than women. This view is prevalent in both high and low Human Development Index nations, making gender equality a worldwide concern (United Nations Development Programme, 2023).

On the understanding that "in business, politics and society as a whole, we can only reach our full potential if we use all of our talent and diversity " (European Commission, 2020), the European Commission has made the submission of a gender equality plan mandatory for eligibility for funding under the Horizon Europe programme. At the level of the European Research Area (ERA), the ERA Strategic Agenda for 2022-2024, adopted by the Member States following the conclusions of the Council of the European Union, establishes the promotion of gender equality and inclusivity as one of its key actions, taking into account the Ljubljana Declaration (Council of the European Union, 2021). The aim is to increase the representation and participation of women in research and innovation at the European level, introducing mainstreaming gender equality issues on its agenda and contributing to gender equality in the ERA.

Although data from the *European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)* point to a decrease in gender disparities among Member States during the period 2010-2021, demonstrating an upward convergence trend within the European Union (EU), the reality is that many of the figures available should compel governments and the whole of European society to reflect and, most importantly, act.

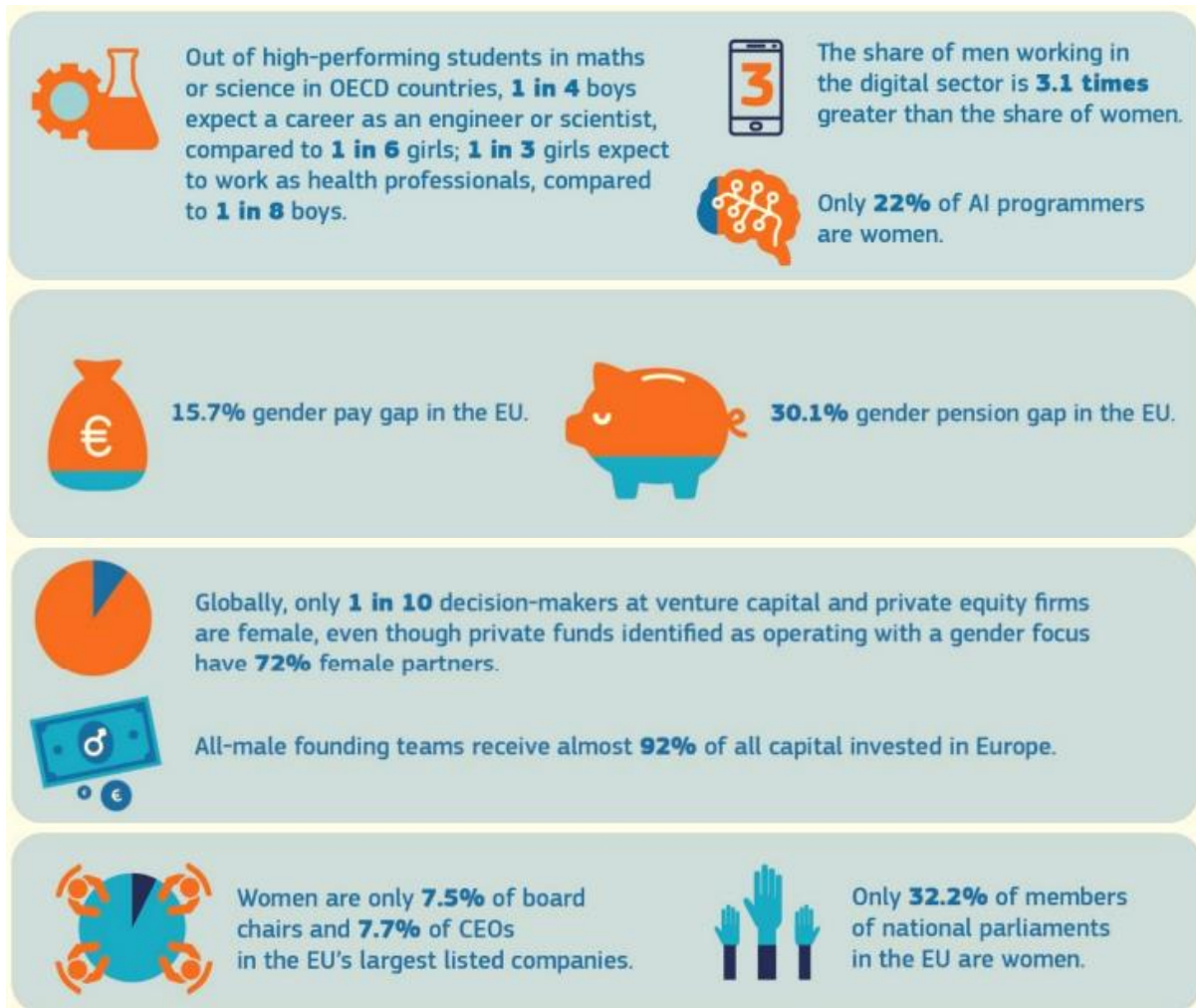


Figure 1 - Gender disparities in the European Union (European Commission, 2020)

In Portugal, the principle of gender equality has been enshrined in the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic since 1976, under its Article 13. Successive national plans have shaped political intervention on this front, which is now guided by the 2023-2026 Action Plans of the "National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination – Portugal+Iguar", currently in force. In particular, the "Action Plan for Equality between Women and Men" addresses, for the first time, issues associated with higher education and research and development (R&D) and stresses, among others, the need to guarantee the conditions for education and training free of gender stereotypes, to ensure non-discrimination in R&D and in the digital world, and to promote the reconciliation of professional, family and personal life (Portuguese Republic, 2023).

Compared to other EU Member States, Portugal is one of the countries that has improved its performance the most in terms of gender inequalities since 2020. Nevertheless, it remains in 15th position in the ranking, below the EU average.

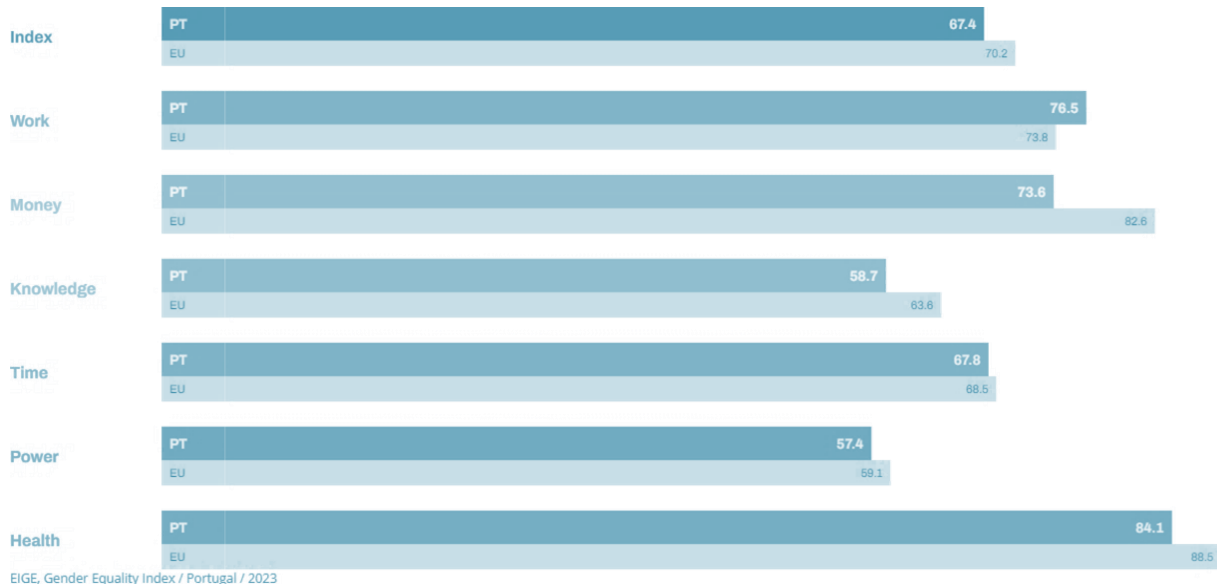


Figure 2 - Gender Equality in Portugal compared to the EU average (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2023)

UPT Framework

As gender inequality remains prevalent at the top of careers and leadership positions at the European level, and many Member States, including Portugal, are still seeking to achieve convergence with the European average in gender equality, academia must act as a transformative space. It should contribute to eradicating entrenched inequalities in society, demonstrating proactivity in deconstructing stereotypes and eliminating discriminatory practices, thereby consolidating a culture of gender equality.

At the Portucalense University Infante D. Henrique (UPT), the commitment to gender equality is embedded in institutional policies and practices. As outlined in its Code of Ethics and Conduct, approved in July 2022, which applies to all UPT employees regardless of their contractual relationship or hierarchical position, the fundamental principles include the dignity and freedom of the individual and non-discrimination based on descent, sex, race, language, territory of origin, religion, political or ideological convictions, education, economic situation, social condition or sexual orientation. More specifically, the document reinforces UPT's commitment to *"ensuring effective equality of treatment and opportunities between men and women, eliminating discrimination, facilitating the reconciliation of personal, family and professional life, and adopting measures that lead to the goal of the balanced presence of women and men in management positions"*.

In rejecting any discriminatory practices, UPT also approved, in July 2022, its Code of Good Conduct for Preventing and Combating Harassment at Work, which underlines the *"zero tolerance approach to harassment, regardless of its form, the gender, job role or hierarchical position of the person being harassed or the person carrying out the harassment"*.

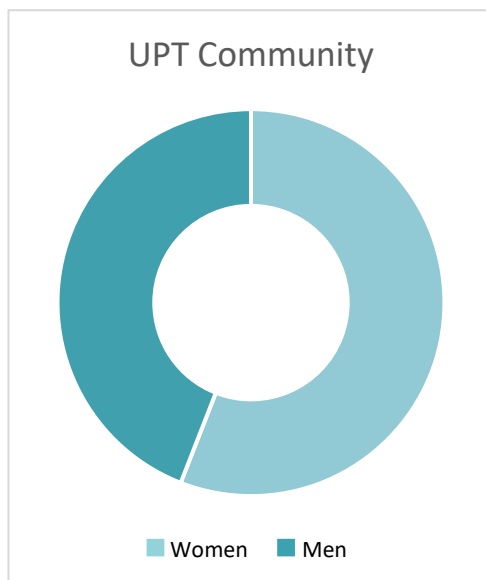
The conduct that guides UPT is also in line with its 2030 Strategic Plan, which emphasises the integral development of people, organisations, and society as one of the pillars of its mission. The institution identifies itself as an *"inclusive and socially responsible university"*, rejecting *"all forms of discriminatory practices"* and striving *"to ensure the well-being of its employees and maintain a*

harmonious and collaborative relationship with the social and economic ecosystem in which it operates".

UPT values the complementarity of views and perspectives and embraces the diversity of ways of being, seeing, and acting. It positions itself as a plural and inclusive organisation that seeks to make an impact not only within its community but also on the social, economic, and business fabric in which it is embedded, whether at the regional or national level or within the scope of its international protocols and collaborations.

UPT Assessment

Concerning gender parity among staff at UPT, there is a predominantly female presence. Although the main decision-making positions, such as the President of the Board of Directors and the Rector, are currently held by men, women at UPT hold significant roles, including Vice-President, Vice-Rector for Education, and President of both the Scientific and Pedagogical Councils, and make up more than 50% of the UPT community. Furthermore, they are the majority in most sectors of the university and are actively involved in the main decision-making bodies, often outnumbering their male counterparts. In some instances, there is even a clear underrepresentation of men, as shown in the charts below, where the percentage of men is around or below 25% - something that would be important to investigate internally, to identify the reason for the disparity and reduce asymmetries in the future.



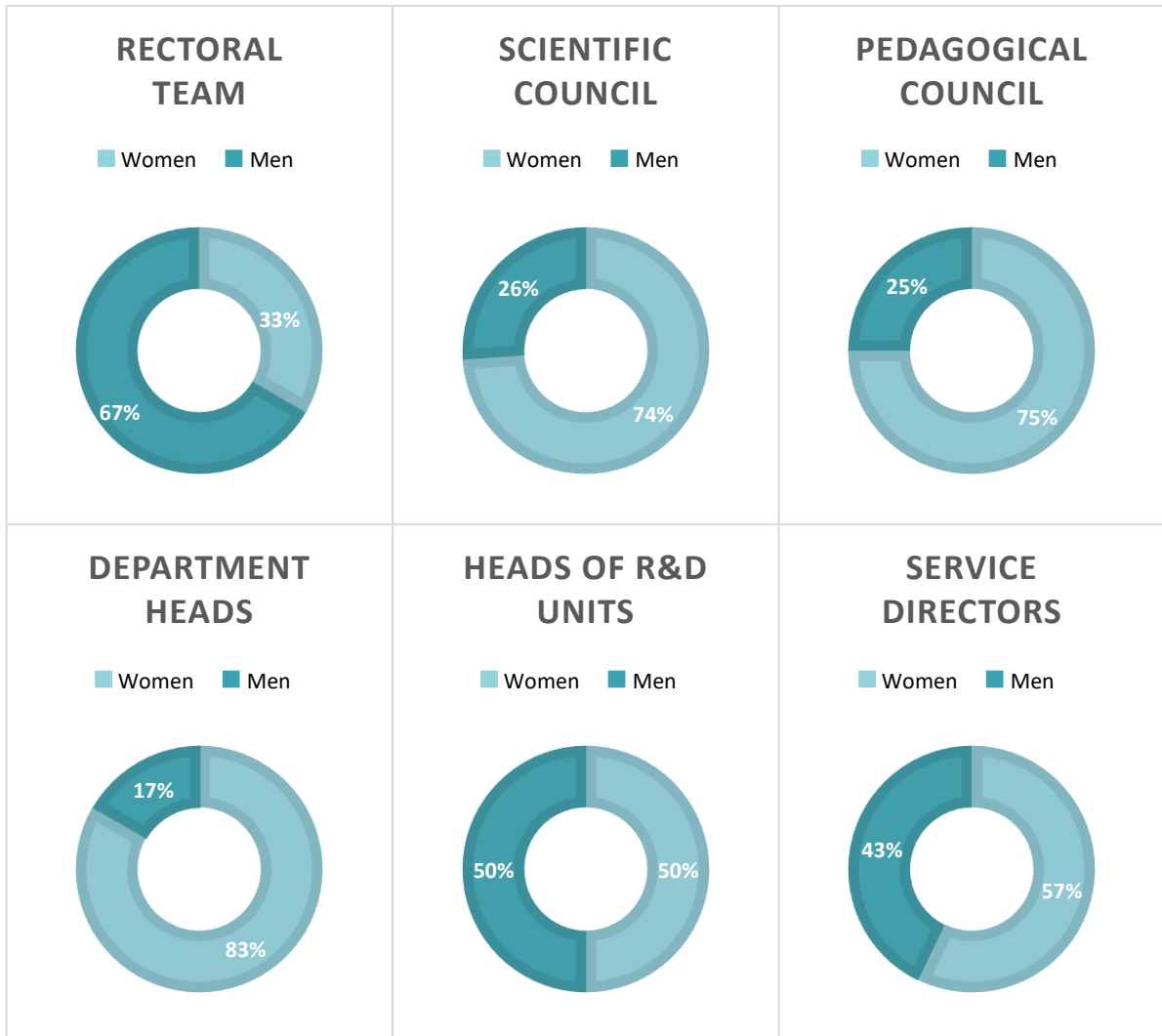
The institution's assessment of gender equality focused on 2024 data, examining the distribution of men and women in the main decision-making bodies and leadership positions, as well as in Teaching, Research, and other functions performed within the institution.

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Leadership and Decision

UPT demonstrates predominantly female leadership across most of the university's governing bodies, with effective gender parity observed only in the leadership of Research Units. While the leadership roles within Administrative Services appear to be reasonably balanced, women in the Scientific Council, Pedagogical Council, and Departmental leadership represent 75% or more. In this regard, the assessment recommends that the implementation of the equality plan should pay particular attention to the reasons behind the lack of male interest in closer involvement in the university's decision-making bodies or the factors preventing their appointment to these roles.

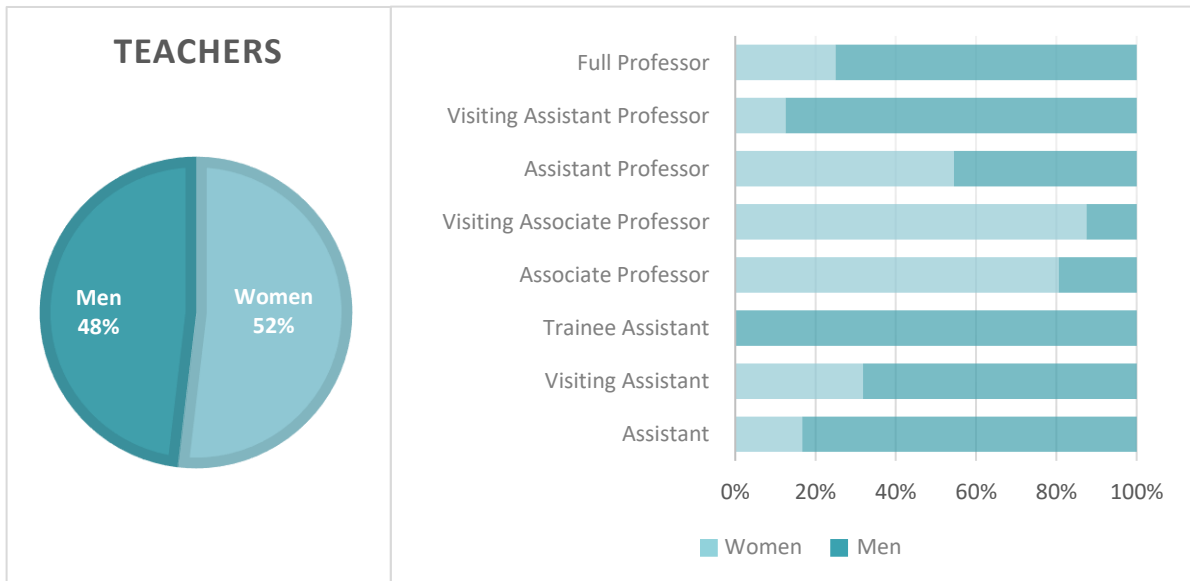
In the case of the Rectoral team, composed of 3 members (Rector, Vice-Rector for Education, and Vice-Rector for Research), total parity cannot be achieved. Nevertheless, female representation is ensured.



Teaching

The gender ratio within the academic staff remains very balanced. However, significant disparities are identified in the position of Full Professor, which is predominantly held by men. In the roles of Associate Professor, Visiting Associate Professor, and Assistant Professor, women again make up the majority.

In the case of Trainee Assistants, although this category is currently filled entirely by men, it actually refers to the position held by a single individual and, as such, does not provide a useful data point for the analysis at hand.



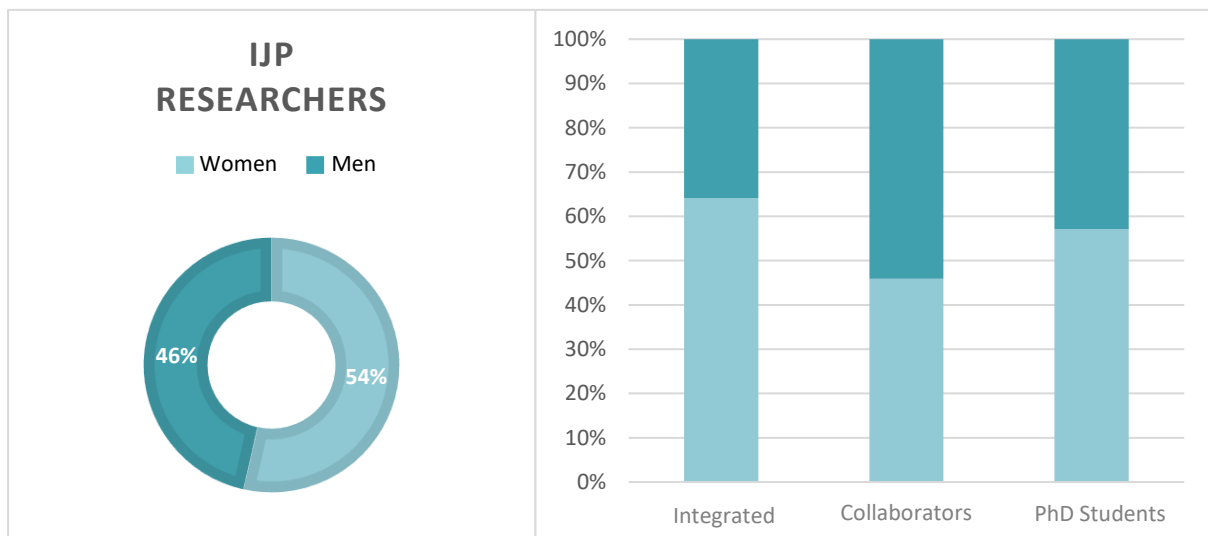
Research

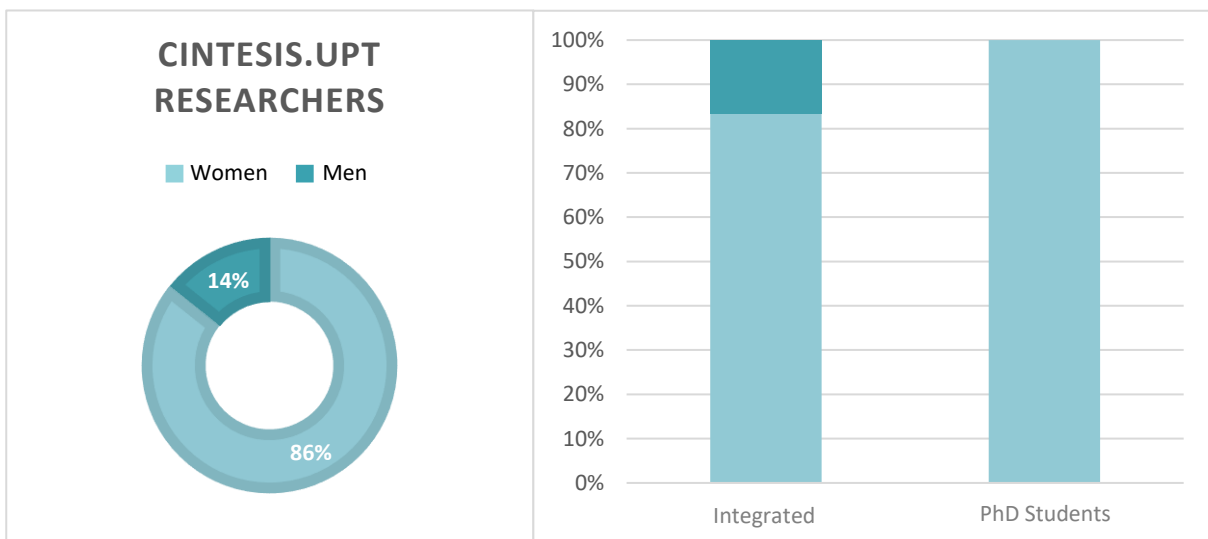
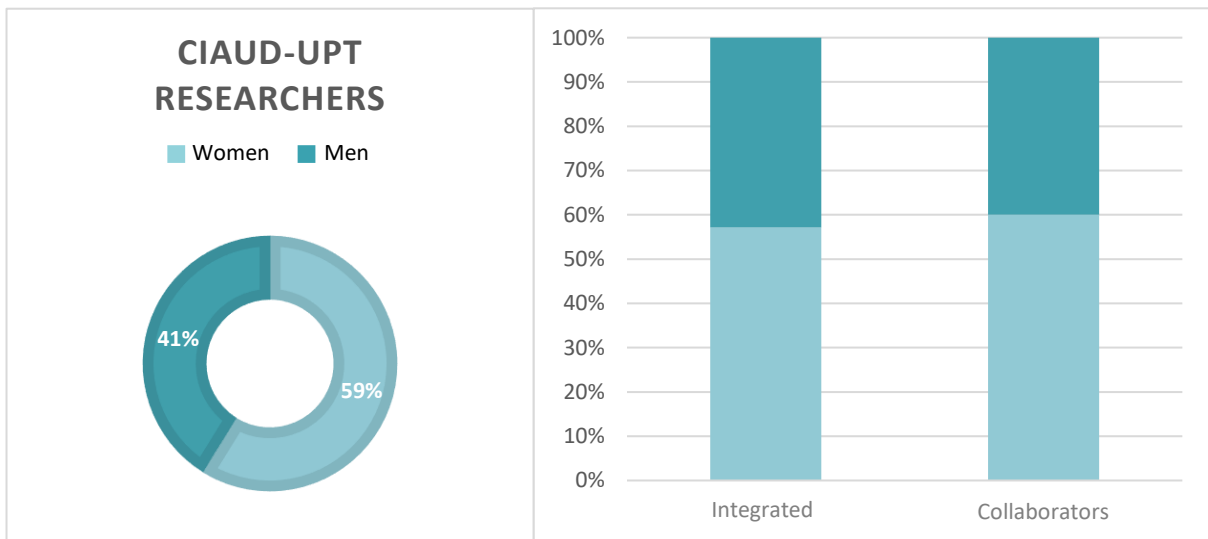
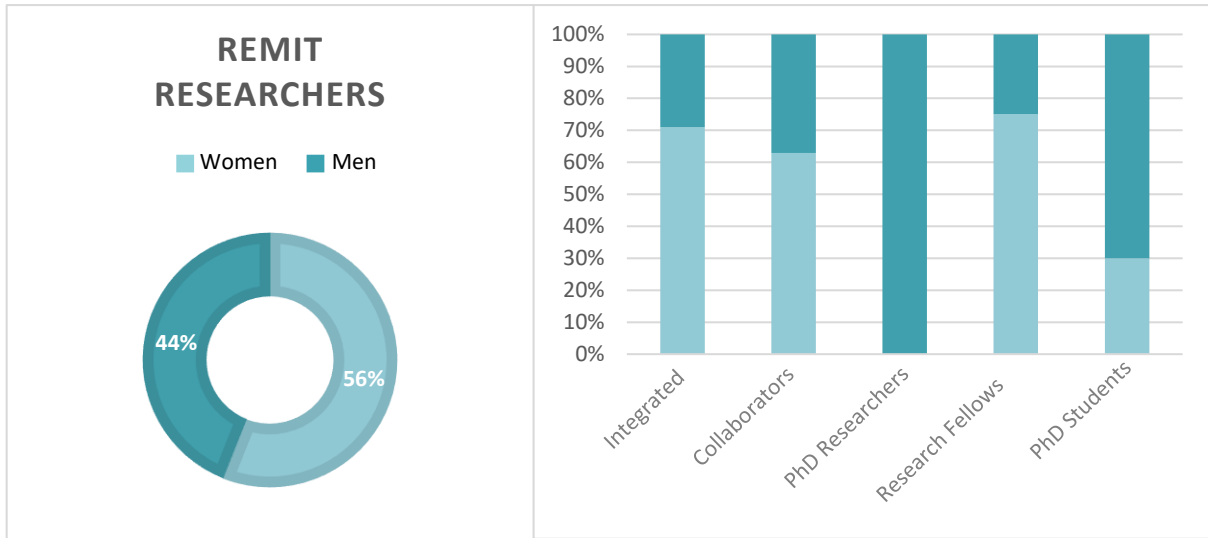
In the field of research, there is a roughly equal distribution between men and women, although in all cases women exceed the 50% threshold. The exception to this indicator is found in CINTESIS.UPT, where women represent more than 85% of researchers.

It is also important to note that most of the Integrated Researchers within the UPT Research Units are women, as well as the majority of collaborators in all Units, except in the IJP, where men are slightly more numerous.

In an apparent countertrend with the latest observations, REMIT doctoral students show a much higher number of men compared to women, a situation that does not occur, for example, in the IJP.

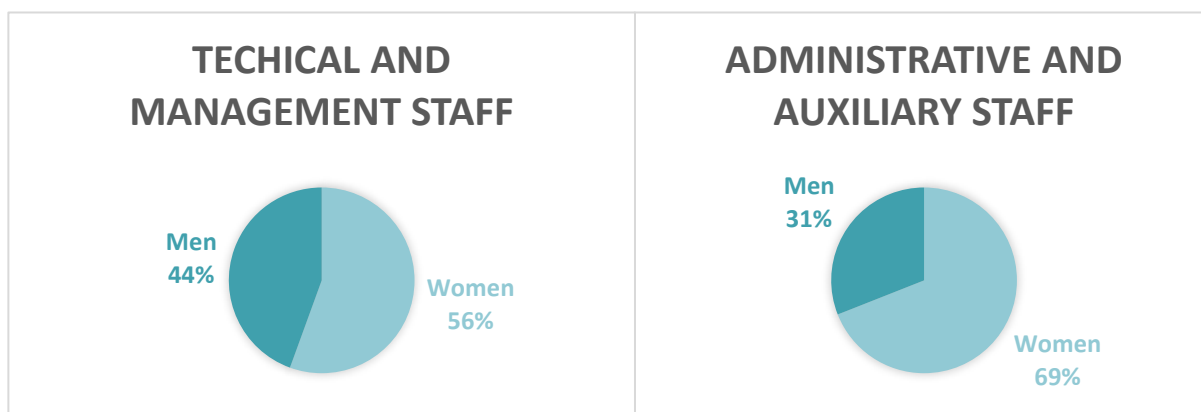
Regarding the discrepancy identified in the position of REMIT PhD researcher, this is also an isolated case (i.e., a single position), and therefore does not reflect any significant pattern.





Other Roles

Women are also at the forefront of the figures for Technical and Management Staff, as well as Administrative and Auxiliary Staff. Although the teaching staff represents 60% of the total number of UPT employees, the Administrative and Auxiliary Staff is the second largest group in size. Involving more than 20% of the workforce, nearly 70% of them are women. This is an indicator of the presence of women in most decision-making bodies, as pointed out at the beginning of this assessment, but it also forms the broader foundation upon which the institution's structure is built.



Finally, it should be mentioned that this survey is only the first step in a process that requires greater scope and systematisation and should allow for a deeper assessment in the near future through the implementation of improvements in data collection and disaggregation.

UPT Plan

The UPT Gender Equality Plan will have an implementation period of 3 years (2024-2026), during which progress will be monitored annually.

This is the strategic document that unequivocally establishes the institution's commitment to gender equality and outlines its guiding principles and specific actions, in line with national and international objectives on the same matter. Its goal is to become a key tool for implementing structural change in gender inequality dynamics and, thus, to keep up with the evolution of social paradigms.

The actions proposed stem from the initial assessment carried out at the institution and are the result of the collaborative work of a multidisciplinary team, incorporating contributions from the Rectorate, teaching and research staff, as well as administrative and management staff, with input also gathered from members of the main decision-making bodies. In its preparation, the best practices and findings presented by some European research projects specifically addressing this area were considered, along with the guidelines of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), particularly through the *GEAR tool*, and the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation of the European Commission.

This plan also ensures compliance with the mandatory eligibility requirements under the *Horizon Europe* programme, specifically:

- **Publication and endorsement**

The plan is published on the UPT website (<https://www.upt.pt>) and has been approved by the Board of Directors, demonstrating the institutional commitment to the highest level of hierarchy.

- **Dedicated Resources**

The implementation and monitoring of this plan will be supported by a dedicated team – the Office for Gender Equality (GIG), equipped with appropriate human and material resources to achieve its objectives. The composition of the GIG will be proposed by the Rectorate to the Board of Directors, which is responsible for the members appointment through an official resolution. The GIG's responsibilities include contributing to gender balance and non-discrimination across all areas of UPT, identifying necessary actions, promoting the dissemination of good practices, implementing UPT's plan for gender equality, ensuring the collection and monitoring of data, and organising the planned awareness-raising actions. The GIG is bound by confidentiality in handling sensitive information, particularly in relation to complaints received through reporting channels. Its remit also includes fostering collaboration with other University bodies and services to collect and process data.

- **Data collection and monitoring**

UPT, through the GIG, will periodically collect sex-disaggregated data relating to its workforce. The information gathered will be analysed, with comparative progress assessments and corresponding conclusions on an annual basis. The reports will be reviewed and discussed during meetings of the Board of Directors and the Scientific Council, and relevant findings will be shared with the academic community when appropriate to strengthen the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan. UPT is also committed to improving its data collection system, in terms of disaggregation, by standardising procedures and ensuring a systematic survey of relevant information.

- **Training and awareness-raising actions**

In line with recent initiatives conducted by UPT, such as training on harassment prevention in the workplace, the institution will continue to promote awareness-raising actions focused on gender equality and issues of unconscious bias. These initiatives will potentially target not only UPT staff but also the wider academic community (indirectly benefiting students) and all levels of the organisational structure.

In summary, this plan ensures gender parity in research and teaching activities, applying a cross-cutting approach throughout the institution, to consolidate ongoing measures and practices within a formal and systematic framework, enhancing their visibility, scope, and effectiveness. By doing so, it fosters a more equitable and inclusive work environment for all staff. This enables UPT to actively contribute to a policy of equality and citizenship practices, supporting scientific and educational activities free from stereotypes, while also reflecting the national and European commitment to eradicating gender inequalities across all sectors of society.

Methodology

UPT's Gender Equality Plan is not intended to be a final and static product with fixed guidelines and actions. Instead, it embraces a notion of ongoing evolution, based on the critical analysis of the data and the GIG's conclusions at each stage, allowing for revisions and flexibility in response to changing contexts whenever necessary.

On the other hand, this plan is embedded in a cyclical process of assessment, planning and policy development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. This ensures that each iteration of the plan incorporates continuous improvement and sets objectives that reflect the dynamic reality of the academic community.

In terms of action, the plan focuses on 5 priority areas:

1. Work-life balance and organizational culture;
2. Leadership and Decision Making;
3. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression;
4. Gender mainstreaming in educational and research activities;
5. Gender-based violence, including all forms of harassment in the workplace.

For each of the priority areas, mentioned above, the Action Plan defines the measures to be implemented, which should generate a set of indicators to monitor the success of the plan's implementation. The Action Plan is annexed to this document and is an integral part of the Gender Equality Plan 2024-2026.

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ANNEX I

ACTION PLAN (2024-2026)

PRIORITY AREA	1. WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE		
	MEASURES	INDICATORS	
M1.1	Define rules for the handover process of GIG elements to the new members who join it, ensuring, whenever possible, a phased transition, to guarantee the knowledge transfer and continuity of the work.	O1.1	Internal procedures document to be validated by the Rectorate and approved by the Board of Directors.
M1.2	Conduct assessments on gender balance and monitor the implementation of the plan, producing an annual report.	O1.2	Annual reports.
M1.3	Promote the inclusion of the gender dimension in all activity indicators collected (including promotions and contract types), deepening the understanding of the University's reality.	O1.3	Diversification of analytical aspects in the annual report compared to the current assessment.
M1.4	Ensure reorganisation and standardisation of internal procedures, to improve data collection and disaggregation of the data by sex, in compliance with data protection regulations.	O1.4	Increased granularity of data to be reported in the annual report.
M1.5	Include gender statistics in UPT's institutional presentations, to be provided by the GIG.	O1.5	No. of presentations.



M1.6	Periodically review actions for upcoming gender equality plans.	O1.6	Recommendations to be included in the annual report.
M1.7	Review the institution's key strategic governance documents to incorporate more inclusive language, where applicable, in line with national governance guidelines on the matter.	O1.7	No. of documents reviewed.
M1.8	Create a gender equality seal, which will function as an internal certification, aimed at distinguishing actions, initiatives, and scientific activities that promote and uphold gender equality, according to GIG's validation.	O1.8	Publication on the institution's website of the criteria for awarding the gender equality seal. Annual record of certifications awarded.
M1.9	Assess the conditions of greater workplace flexibility to improve the balance of professional, family, and personal life for both women and men and make proposals accordingly.	O1.9	Implementation of the GIG proposals in the psychosocial risk report.
M1.10	Disseminate the Gender Equality Plan to the academic community.	O1.10	Publication of the current Gender Equality Plan on UPT's website and annual dissemination to staff at the beginning of each academic year.
M1.11	Promote the exchange of best practices with other Higher Education Institutions, to amplify the positive impact of gender equality initiatives on society, both nationally and internationally.	O1.11	Annual record of interactions established at this level and the potential added value they may have represented.
M1.12	Raise awareness of gender equality, through the organisation of an annual event open to the entire academic community, focusing on the issue of stereotypes and unconscious bias.	O1.12	Organisation of 1 event/year, open to the academic community.



PRIORITY AREA	2. LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING		
	MEASURES		INDICATORS
M2.1	Incorporate the gender dimension into decision-making processes at the different levels of the University's operation, including placing the discussion of the conclusions from the GIG's annual reports on the agenda of key decision-making bodies to ensure the committee's work remains relevant.	O2.1	Annual meeting of the GIG with the key decision-making bodies.
M2.2	Promote gender representation within UPT's decision-making bodies.	O2.2	Observations and conclusions should be included in the annual report, with a record of the proposals submitted.
M2.3	Provide specific training for leaders and members of key decision-making bodies on gender stereotypes and unconscious bias.	O2.3	Provision of training.

PRIORITY AREA	3. GENDER EQUALITY IN RECRUITMENT AND CAREER PROGRESSION		
	MEASURES		INDICATORS
M3.1	Review the Performance Evaluation System (SAD), to include measures that do not disadvantage employees on parental or family care leave.	O3.1	Review of the SAD.



M3.2	Ensure as balanced a gender representation as possible in the composition of recruitment, evaluation, and selection panels.	O3.2	Compilation of recruitment processes and the respective composition of selection panels, with data disaggregated by sex.
M3.3	Include, as a preliminary step in recruitment, assessment, and selection procedures, guidance on the relevance of gender equality and unconscious bias issues.	O3.3	Guidance document for recruitment, evaluation, or selection panels.
M3.4	Encourage men and women to enter scientific fields with lower gender representation, develop guidelines to support the recruitment of the underrepresented gender, and promote gender equality in career progression, particularly in senior positions.	O3.4	Creation of a document with specific guidelines on gender equality for recruitment, evaluation, and selection processes.
M3.5	Create a mentoring course to foster visibility, self-confidence, negotiation skills, and leadership capabilities.	O3.5	Training course to be held on an annual basis.
M3.6	Develop career counselling policies and practices, with individual plans to identify potential gender-related barriers to career progression.	O3.6	No. of individual plans created.

PRIORITY AREA.	4. GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN EDUCATIONAL AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES		
	MEASURES	INDICATORS	
M4.1	Promote the integration of the gender dimension in pedagogical models, research activities, and knowledge transfer initiatives through training sessions that emphasize the relevance and benefits of a gender and diversity approach across different areas of activity.	O4.1	Conducting 1 session/year, under the proposal of the GIG.



M4.2	Encourage research projects that incorporate a gender dimension or include training activities in this area, ensuring a connection with the GIG.	O4.2	Compilation of projects to be included in the annual report.
M4.3	Raise awareness about the importance of forming research teams with balanced gender representation.	O4.3	Recording changes to the original team based on recommendations.
M4.4	Monitor scientific output indicators disaggregated by sex.	O4.4	Information to be included in the annual report.

PRIORITY AREA	5. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, INCLUDING ALL FORMS OF HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE		
	MEASURES	INDICATORS	
M5.1	Ensure the continuation of awareness-raising efforts already undertaken by the institution regarding the prevention of workplace harassment.	O5.1	No. of actions carried out, under the proposal of the GIG.
M5.2	Maintain a permanent reporting channel and disseminate the Code of Good Conduct for Prevention and Combat Harassment at Work at the beginning of each academic year to staff, ensuring that everyone is aware of the institution's policies and internal reporting mechanisms.	O5.2	Sending 1 dissemination email/year to all UPT staff.
M5.3	Monitor harassment complaints and data related to the implemented reporting procedure, proposing revisions and/or adjustments as necessary.	O5.3	Information to be included in the annual report.



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