

Our Gender Equality Plan

Heriot-Watt University is deeply committed to advancing gender equality as part of its broader commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion or 'EDI'. We aim to acknowledge the lived experience of our diverse community in all that we do, promoting inclusivity, embracing difference and encouraging opportunities.

Our EDI aspirations are a core element of our University strategy, [Strategy 2025: Shaping Tomorrow Together](#). Through the *Building Flourishing Communities* strategic theme, we consider the wellbeing of our students and staff, promoting equality and diversity in all its forms across our locations and embedding a culture of listening and engagement. We strive to be an inclusive place for work and study.

Heriot-Watt University was a founding member of the Athena Swan Charter in 2005, a framework to support and transform gender equality within higher education and research. Engagement with the Athena Swan framework is key to addressing gender inequality at Heriot-Watt, and our gender equality activity is predominantly covered by our [Athena Swan Action Plan 2021-25](#). Other related actions are embedded in broader EDI plans such as, for example, the [Equality Outcomes](#) and our [Pay Gap Action Plan](#).

For simplicity, all of our gender equality actions are presented together in a single Heriot-Watt [Gender Equality Plan](#).

Our gender equality activity demonstrates the following key features¹:

- **Dedicated resources:** The University dedicates both staff and financial resources to gender equality. Leadership is via the Global Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) Committee, in addition to the University's Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team, which focusses on gender equality. Both groups include senior leaders and staff with professional expertise in gender equality. Participating academic staff are allocated time in workload models. The University supports and funds a range of initiatives and resources to implement our gender equality plans. Key contacts are Sharan Virdee: Equality and Diversity Partner and Tina Donnelly: Athena Swan Officer.
- **Data collection and monitoring:** The University undertakes in-depth analysis of annual gender disaggregated data on staff and students as part of the Athena Swan framework and

¹ The following headings describe requirements for eligibility for Horizon Europe funding.

to meet our legal requirements through the Scottish Public Sector Equality Duty. Annual monitoring is via GEDI and its constituent groups.

- **Training:** The University provides mandatory training for all staff and decision-makers on equality and unconscious bias.

- **Activity and action plan content:** Our cyclical self-assessment and review, and resulting Gender Equality Action Plan addresses the areas of: work-life balance and organisational culture; gender balance in leadership and decision-making; gender equality in recruitment and career progression; and measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment. Many initiatives are now embedded in our policies and practice. Holistic integration of the gender dimension in research and teaching content is being progressed through articulation of EDI into the University's strategic themes.

Our plans and activities for 2021-2025 focus on removing structural barriers and accelerating improved gender outcomes for the University's community. In this endeavour, as Institutional Lead for EDI, I strive to take an active personal role and to act as a visible advocate for positive culture change we wish to see.



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1 January 2022

