

IT-OPTICS - GENDER EQUALITY POLICY (GEP)

Mons – 01th January 2024

IT-OPTICS is committed to the promotion of gender equality and diversity.

IT-OPTICS recognizes that women, men, "no gender", or "genderfluid" may experience forms of gender discrimination.

An enabling environment is needed to overcome social constraints that could prevent the professional development of collaborators.

The main objectives of the Policy on Gender Equality are :

- The protection of persons unfairly discriminated against on the basis of gender.
- The removal of gender inequalities that currently exist, denying individuals fair access to resources and employment opportunities.
- The promotion of gender equality and diversity.
- The creation of an enabling environment that specifically addresses the special needs of cisgender, without gender, non binary, or genderfluids.

PROTECTION OF PERSONS FROM UNFAIR DISCRIMINATION AND THE REGISTRATION OF COMPLAINTS

- Every employee is entitled to enjoy the fundamental right to gender equality and human dignity.
- IT-OPTICS respects the dignity and rights of all individuals and will not tolerate any form of unfair discrimination.
- Unfair gender discrimination may be considered as a serious offence, a gross violation of fundamental rights and detrimental to the policy of IT-OPTICS.
- All staff who are alleged to have committed any form of unfair gender discrimination will be subject to disciplinary procedures.
- If an employee perceives that she / he has been unfairly discriminated against in terms of this Policy, she / he should follow the grievance procedure as stipulated in the work rules ("le Règlement de Travail").
- A Sexual Harassment Policy is available and is strongly supported as it outlines specific forms of unfair discrimination.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- IT-OPTICS's pay structure will ensure equal pay for equal work.
- Affirmative action measures may be applied in employment to promote equitable representation of women in all occupational categories and levels.

WORKING CONDITIONS

- A positive and safe work environment will be provided for all employees. Discriminatory humour is particularly offensive, regardless of how innocently intended it may be. At least some, if not

ail, of the "audience" will be offended. Jokes made at the expense of specific groups of people depend on, and in turn propagate, demeaning stereotypes.

- In order to create an enabling environment that supports the advancement of women, the special reproductive needs of women relating to pregnancy, childbirth and childcare will be taken into consideration.
- Infrastructure developed will aspire to provide reasonable support for women and men who have family responsibilities.

DEDICATED RESOURCES

A team (GEP team) is established across the organisation, with 1 representative from the executive committee, 1 department manager, 1 representative from the technical department, and 1 researcher. This group will seek a balanced composition as regards gender.

The GEP team will monitor and facilitate the promotion of equality and elimination of gender discrimination through education, conciliation and, where necessary, giving assistance to a grievant in pressing formal charges as laid out in the general rules.

TRAINING

The GEP team established will undertake an external training session (webinar), in order to promote the awareness of staff about the issues associated with the risk of gendered discrimination and to provide adequate guidance to employees.

DATA COLLECTION & MONITORING

At the closing date of the financial statements (on 30th of June at the latest), a reporting will be done as regards data collection and monitoring, and provide insights and recommendations.

Some of these metrics are published and collected once a year in the social report part of the financial statements. The metrics will be processed by the GEP team and made accessible internally for validation by the members of governing body. The GEP team can formulate recommendations based on this monitoring.

Defined metrics:

- Gender ratios at IT-OPTICS against the global gender ratios in Belgium for the STEM and ICT sectors;
- Staff numbers by sex/gender at all levels, including administrative staff;
- Numbers of women and men in decision-making positions (management team, board);
- Numbers of women and men having left the organisation in past years, specifying the numbers of years spent in the organisation;
- Number of training hours/credits attended by women and men;