

Gender Equality Plan

Inclusion and diversity in UMC Utrecht



Table of contents

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Securing D&I in the organization.....	3
2.1.	Policy	3
2.1.1.	Strategic plan 2020-2025.....	3
2.1.2.	Diversity and inclusion portfolio	3
2.1.3.	Accountability.....	3
2.2.	Staff and groups working on diversity.....	3
2.2.1.	Diversity officer at HR.....	3
2.2.2.	Fellowship Diversity and Inclusion	4
2.2.3.	Platform Diversity and Inclusion UMC Utrecht.....	4
2.2.4.	Diversity and Inclusion Research Group	4
3.	Training and awareness raising	5
3.1.	Bias awareness training.....	5
3.2.	Connecting Leaders.....	5
4.	Career development and equal opportunities.....	6
4.1.	Recruitment and appointment.....	6
4.2.	Talent development	6
4.3.	Monitoring.....	6
5.	Diversity in research and teaching content.....	8
5.1.	Diversity in teaching.....	8
5.2.	Diversity in research content	8
6.	Work-life balance	9
7.	Social safety	10
8.	Future plans.....	11

1. Introduction

In UMC Utrecht's strategic plan, Connecting Worlds, we summarize our strategy as follows: *We believe in bringing together worlds that are all too often separate, because it is in the intersections of these worlds that unexpected insights and groundbreaking treatments are to be found. Within UMC Utrecht, we bring together the worlds of research, care and education with multidisciplinary education and interprofessional learning. We connect the worlds of hospitals, general practitioners and other care providers, from research organisations to laboratories and commercial companies. We connect regional with national and international. Patients with employees, families and students. We connect worlds to create an environment in which patients, employees and students feel seen and heard. Because every person counts.*

Connecting worlds also means connecting people from a wide range of different backgrounds. If we want all persons in our hospital – patient, employee or student - to feel seen and heard, and truly believe that insights are to be found by bringing together different worlds, we need to actively invite people from all backgrounds in, and give them a safe environment to show their perspective and share their experience.

UMC Utrecht has been working on many aspects of inclusion for years. Since 2009, we have been a signatory to the Charter Talent for the Top, which promotes the professional advancement of women. Moreover, we are currently ahead of the curve when it comes to the number of female professors and managers in our organization. Nonetheless, there is still much more ground to be covered to improve the representation of women at the higher levels of the academic ladder, better consider gender and diversity in the content of research, and increase the visibility of broader diversity issues.

As an academic hospital, we have a particular obligation to address diversity, as it plays a role at every level of our work. Not just in representation on the work floor, and equal opportunities for promotion, but in providing optimal care to groups whose very biology influences their care needs. Differences in heart disease between men and women are only just being recognized, stem cell treatments and organ donation are not equally accessible to all ethnicities due to a lack of genetic matches, and skin diseases in people with dark skin are not always properly recognized. Access to health care is a fundamental right, and having it available to all requires acknowledging both individual differences and everyone's equal value.

Addressing the above named issues requires a long-term commitment and involvement of everyone in the organization, at all levels and within all divisions. This Gender Equality Plan represents the current state of our collective efforts to accomplish this and the paths we have followed so far. Over the following years, we will commit not only to the contents of this plan, but also to make a continuous effort to update it and broaden our approaches to inclusion towards different communities. Because in the end, we are not so much connecting different worlds; we are recognizing that combining perspectives gives us the best view of a shared world.

Note to the reader: In a text on gender diversity and inclusion, differentiating between men and women is unavoidable. However, since we work in a medical context, it is relevant to note here the distinction between biological sex and gender identity. Unless explicitly otherwise noted, 'male', 'female', 'man' and 'woman' are used to refer to gender and include all who identify as such.

2. Securing D&I in the organization

2.1. Policy

2.1.1. Strategic plan 2020-2025

In Connecting Worlds, we define focus areas for what we want to do as well as the organizational conditions we need to achieve our goals. Diversity and inclusion are important themes within the strategy. They most explicitly find their places in the focus area The New Utrecht School and the organizational condition "a great place to work". The New Utrecht School aims to better prepare current and upcoming professionals for the future by focusing on multidisciplinary and interprofessional education, and an inclusive and diverse learning environment. "A great place to work" recognizes that to do our best work, we need to be an organization where everyone feels heard and appreciated; this means offering training opportunities and career perspectives, but also creating an environment where all talent is recognized, and everyone feels safe and welcome.

2.1.2. Diversity and inclusion portfolio

Diversity and inclusion is a portfolio within the HR department, with a specifically appointed D&I officer who has 2 days a week available for this work. The D&I officer works closely with HR officers for talent development and leadership, as well as with the internal job coach for disability inclusion and the recruiters.

The D&I portfolio includes:

- Advising the executive board on the Diversity & Inclusion agenda;
- Advising the executive board, divisions, strategic research themes and directorates on specific, quick-to-realize activities ('quick wins'), stimulating D&I activities within the organization, and pointing out any expressions or activities that do not align with UMC Utrecht's vision on diversity and inclusion;
- Advising the executive board on which diversity numbers should be routinely reported, such as:
 - Distribution across different disciplines/career levels within the organization relative to the diversity in the population and society;
 - Equal application of pay policies;
 - Clarity of staff information;
- Promoting the structural embedding of activities;
- Guarding appointment procedures and keeping an overview of representation;
- Restructuring informal and unclear career paths to transparent structures and processes that are accessible and promote the development of talent;
- Stimulating (informal) networks of employees who take initiative for diversity-oriented activities.

2.1.3. Accountability

Diversity is a standard agenda point in meetings between the executive board and divisions, strategic research themes and directorates, and will be included in future management contracts. Agreed upon goals will be monitored and reported.

2.2. Staff and groups working on diversity

2.2.1. Diversity officer at HR

The HR department is undergoing an organisational change. From November 2021 onwards, the Diversity and Inclusion portfolio will be embedded within three HR departments: the policy and innovation department, the recruitment department and the learning and development department.

The precise FTE's are to be determined. Embedding the topic of D&I in several departments allows for a close working relationship between the officers managing programs for fostering talent, promotions, and leadership development.

2.2.2. Fellowship Diversity and Inclusion

As of January 2019, Utrecht University has appointed Dr. Gönül Dilaver as a Senior Fellow, based on a proposal that focuses on increasing diversity and inclusion in education. The Senior Fellowship is a three to five year program, which, when completed successfully, leads to a nomination for a position as a full professor with a focus on education. Candidates prepare their own proposals and are nominated for the program by the dean. Dr. Gönül Dilaver has been working as coordinator of the Biomedical Sciences Master's program since 2007, and has been UMC Utrecht's faculty liaison for Diversity and Inclusion initiatives since 2017.

2.2.3. Platform Diversity and Inclusion UMC Utrecht

The Platform Diversity and Inclusion UMC Utrecht was started as an initiative from UMC Utrecht's Education Center, and has built a solid cooperative network within both UMC Utrecht and Utrecht University over the last years. The platform meets monthly and is open to all employees and students with an interest in the subject. The Platform coordinates a wide range of diversity initiatives, from research and raising awareness with both students and staff, to bias training available to all staff. The platform is well connected to HR, the Education Center, the executive board and the Research Office, allowing them to effectively push for change and be involved in the creation of new policies. More information can be found at <https://www.umcutrecht.nl/en/diversity-and-inclusion>

2.2.4. Diversity and Inclusion Research Group

The Diversity and Inclusion research group is led by Dr. Gönül Dilaver and consists of researchers and PhD students who perform research on diversity and inclusion with a focus on education. Research areas include: bias in selective admissions, how to create a diverse and inclusive curriculum, the importance of role models within education, and connection with the labor market. The group also researches the effect on both faculty and on students of offering bias awareness training to staff. The aim is to use research outcomes to implement changes within education and create an inclusive environment and curriculum for future life sciences and healthcare professionals.

3. Training and awareness raising

3.1. Bias awareness training

As of October 2020, bias awareness trainings have been made available to all departments in the hospital for free. Initially focussed on educational staff, they can be adapted to the needs of each department. The training explains what bias is, and how it can affect our work, and reflects on possibilities for change in the organisation. 265 people from across the hospital have participated in bias training so far, including the Employee Council, and many more trainings have already been planned for the remainder of 2021.

For hiring managers, professors and members of appointment committees, additional trainings are available on fair and open hiring, as well as social safety and recognizing sexual harassment. For appointment committees for new professorships, a minimum of two members must have followed training on bias in recruitment and hiring (see 4.1 for more details on recruitment and appointment practices).

3.2. Connecting Leaders

As part of UMC Utrecht's efforts to create a better working environment, the Connecting Leaders program has been set up. This is a mandatory training program for all managers in the UMC Utrecht to help them develop their skills to manage their teams and create a healthy working environment. The overarching program consists of three subprograms:

- Connecting Leaders Onboarding (for all new managers)
- Connecting Leaders Professionals
- Connecting Leaders Advanced

A module on Diversity and Inclusion is offered in the Connecting Leaders Advanced program.

4. Career development and equal opportunities

4.1. Recruitment and appointment

UMC Utrecht has fully written out its policies and procedures for the recruitment and appointment of assistant, associate and full professors, and placed them on the intranet so they can be viewed by all employees. These procedures include explicit instructions to consider (gender) diversity at each level, from the initial proposal of a candidate by a strategic research theme to the considerations for selection and appointment committees. Committees are always required to include at least two women and two members who have followed a bias training focused on recruitment.

For the recruitment of higher level managers, UMC Utrecht generally makes use of recruitment agencies. Instructions to the agencies always include the explicit request to look for female and culturally diverse candidates.

4.2. Talent development

Starting in 2021, UMC Utrecht has a Research Career Development Program available to top scientific talent at the post-doc / assistant professor level. The program aims to help researchers grow in their research career, strengthen the impact of their work, improve their teamwork and leadership skills, create an internal network for Utrecht University/UMC Utrecht researchers and create a community for young researchers. Positions are limited, and candidates are nominated by their divisions, followed by a selection by the strategic research program.

In recognition of the diversity we want to see in the research community, two measures were taken: firstly, the default language for the program is English, as this not only helps Dutch researchers improve their mastery and comfort with the lingua franca for the research community, but also is actively inclusive towards international researchers working within Utrecht University/UMC Utrecht. Secondly, divisions were asked to nominate equal numbers of men and women, as well as to ensure that at least one in three candidates came from a culturally diverse or international background. The selection committee then aimed to keep these ratios intact. While these new requirements were initially met with some resistance, the overall response has been positive, with divisions commenting that it forced them to better recognize the talents they already had in their teams.

4.3. Monitoring

Closing the gender gap has been a specific goal of UMC Utrecht for over ten years. UMC Utrecht joined the Charter Talent for the Top in 2009, aiming to have more female full professors and a good gender balance on leadership at all levels. The UMC Utrecht therefore annually evaluates the current gender distribution of staff at different levels. The most recent report was released in February 2021. An overview of the results from this analysis can be found below.

% women by category:	2010	2016	2018	2019	2020	Target 2016- 2020:	Target 2021- 2025:
Trainer	22%	33%	38%	44%	49%	50%	40-60%
Substitute trainer	13%	39%	35%	25%	22%	50%	40-60%
Medical specialist & fellow	unknown	49%	53%	54%	55%	50%	40-60%
Professor	16%	24%	28%	29%	29%	35%	40%
Associate professor	38%	39%	39%	42%	39%	50%	40-60%
Assistant professor	unknown	55%	58%	56%	58%	50%	40-60%
U-team	33%	44%	47%	31%	33%	50%	40-60%
Management incl. subtop			55%	54%	57%		
Executive Board	0%	67%	75%	75%	75%	>30%	>30%
Supervisory Board	unknown	29%	33%	33%	33%	>30%	>30%

Quantitative data:	Medical	Scientific	Other	Total
Employees in the organization	1540	1264	7826	10583*
Female employees in the organization	903 (58,6%)	747 (59%)	5943 (75,9%)	7556 (71,4%)
Employees at the top	112	96	34	242
Employees at the subtop	643	475	139	1256
Female employees at the top	29 (25,9%)	31 (32,3%)	13 (38,2%)	73 (30,2%)
Female employees at the subtop	356 (55,4%)	251 (52,8%)	86 (61,8%)	693 (55,2%)
Female employees at top and subtop	385 (51%)	282 (49,4%)	99 (57,2%)	766 (51,1%)

*Totals are lower than the sum of each category, since some persons fall into multiple categories, and numbers are based on actual persons, rather than full time equivalents.

As of 2019, the Monitor published by the Dutch Network of Female Professors (Landelijk Netwerk Vrouwelijke Hoogleraren; LNVH) lists UMC Utrecht in second place of all Dutch university medical centers in its percentage of female professors, and first in the number of female heads of departments. Nonetheless, our target for 2016-2020 - 35% female full professors – was not met, and remains a point of attention. New targets for 2021-2025 are higher at 40% for full professors, and 40-60% for all other positions. Reaching these targets is an important focus point for the organisation. For the Executive Board and Board of Oversight, the target remains >30%, based on the Zorgbrede Governancecode.

5. Diversity in research and teaching content

5.1. Diversity in teaching

UMC Utrecht deeply values diversity in teaching, and actively includes the subject as part of its strategic plan for the New Utrecht School. In 2020, Utrecht University and UMC Utrecht started the cross-faculty project 'Designing an Inclusive Curriculum and Learning Environment'. In its first year, this project reviewed the actions faculties are already taking to offer inclusive education, and what problems staff and students experience regarding the (lack of) inclusivity in the curriculum, both in the topics taught and in the practical aspects of education. In its second year, the project is developing a toolbox for inclusive education.

The Graduate School of Life Sciences also offers a Life Sciences and Society profile, which includes a module on Diversity Perspectives in Life Sciences Research. This module addresses bias, and its consequences for research in life sciences. Lack of knowledge about specific symptoms of diseases and effects of medication in women, different ethnic populations, or age groups are also part of this module, as well as how to better address sex and ethnicity differences in biomedical research. A similar course will be taught at bachelor's level within the bachelor's Biomedical Sciences, starting in the second semester of 2021-2022.

Additionally, a participation in bias training (see 3.1) by a minimum of 30% of education staff has been defined as a key performance indicator for the Education Center.

5.2. Diversity in research content

(Bio)medical research is a field where attention for diversity is of the utmost importance, as differences in sex or gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status can have very real impacts on health outcomes and treatments. Women's heart problems are known to be different from men's, migrant populations have been harder hit than most by the COVID pandemic, and ethnic minorities and people of mixed ethnic backgrounds in particular are unlikely to be able to find a genetic match for bone marrow or organ donation, to name a few examples. For some of those issues, the awareness is becoming more established; Professor Hester den Ruijter at the department of Cardiology is internationally well regarded for her research on heart disease in women and has made the subject of sex and gender differences in cardiovascular disease a focus point in her research group.

In order to stimulate attention for diversity in research, the Research Support Office, which helps researchers in finding funding opportunities, writing proposals and implementing consortium projects, has followed a bias training, with special attention for diversity in research content. This allows central staff to guide researchers in asking the right questions with regards to diversity and inclusion in their research, including in pre-clinical stages where these concerns are often more easily overlooked.

6. Work-life balance

Part of UMC Utrecht's long-term strategy is fostering a healthy, sustainable work environment. As part of this initiative, there is special attention for mental load and stress. A central contact point offers support in dealing with stress, uncertainty, or other problems, whether the source is work-related or personal. Counselors are available through a central program for employees who need support in (re)gaining balance in their work, or in reintegrating after illness. Additionally, all managers have been offered a training in recognizing mental health problems. Finally, a special team was available for psychosocial support of employees working directly in COVID care.

All employees also have access to the digital career development and vitality portal LEV, which offers tests, exercises, and training for personal and professional growth, centered on career development, vitality and health, and work pleasure. E-coaches and trainings on personal strengths, productivity and communication are offered. This includes online modules on topics like bias and cultural diversity.

In light of COVID-19, UMC Utrecht has taken the position that missed work due to COVID restrictions would be considered emergency leave, allowing employees who were unable to work due to quarantine requirements or school and child care closures to take paid leave as needed. Working from home has become the standard where possible, and the long term goal is for those employees who can work from home to permanently work remote for 40 to 60% of their hours, allowing for more flexibility in balancing work and private life.

7. Social safety

UMC Utrecht values a safe working environment for all our employees. A behavioral code is in place for all employees, defining both what is and what is not acceptable behavior. The behavioral code bans things like sexual harassment, aggression and violence, bullying and discrimination, and encourages employees to support each other in addressing these behaviors if they do occur.

For employees experiencing an unsafe working environment and who do not feel safe to address these issues with their management, an ombudsman's office and confidential counselling are available. This way anonymous complaints can be made and confidential support is readily available to all employees to come to a suitable solution. The office is also available to support preventive actions and provide education on (in)appropriate interactions. They report directly to the Executive Board. The anonymous annual report on the number and types of cases, as well as trends relative to previous years, is available to all employees.

In 2020, 297 cases were presented to the ombudsman's office, of which 41 related to inappropriate interactions, making it the second most common issue, after questions relating to employees' legal position. This is a 26% reduction compared to 2019 – this may be related either to preventive trainings done in 2020 or to the fact that, due to COVID, many workers spent most of the year working partially or fully from home.

Of the 41 cases related to inappropriate behavior, 36 were related to sexual or moral intimidation, and 4 related to discrimination. Men and women within UMC Utrecht are about equally likely to bring a case to the ombudsman's office, with cases brought in by 2.3% of the men and 2.8% of the women working at UMC Utrecht.

Additionally, UMC Utrecht sends out an anonymous work experience survey three times a year. The survey asks all employees about their experiences, ranging from pleasure in their work, stress, their management, room for improvement and safety. Results for each department are anonymously reported to management, and related to previous results, allowing for the detection of trends as well as current status. Provided the department is large enough to maintain anonymity, department results are also made available to employees and discussed within departments.

8. Future plans

A new position paper on diversity and inclusion is currently being written and will become the new framework for the upcoming years. This document will then be the guide for policy adjustments and new activities on different levels throughout the organization. UMC Utrecht recognizes that diversity and inclusion is an ongoing topic that requires constant attention and improvement to make sure we not only provide a safe and welcoming environment to all our current employees, but open our doors to new students, researchers and employees of all backgrounds. Thus, the current Gender Equality Plan is intended to be a living document, which will grow with our ambitions to focus on gender equality, inclusion of different ethnic, cultural and religious groups, and neurodiversity and disability. In doing so, we hope to not only meet the standards we have set in our own behavioral code, but also improve the quality of our work by including a wider range of views and experiences.