

2024

# GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

THE CYPRUS INSTITUTE OF NEUROLOGY & GENETICS (CING)

## DOCUMENT INFORMATION

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THE CYPRUS INSTITUTE OF  
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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Gender equality (GE) benefits research and innovation (R&I) by improving the quality and relevance of R&I, attracting and retaining more talent, and ensuring that everyone can maximise their potential. As a result, the Institute aims to embed gender equality principles and strives to sustainably transform organisational processes, cultures and structures within the field of research and innovation (R & I) to combat and reduce gender imbalances and inequalities. It is a holistic and comprehensive process in the way that it addresses the whole organisation, engages all relevant stakeholders and tackles several gender equality issues in our organisation.

The Cyprus Institute of Neurology & Genetics (CING) is a private, non-profit, bi-communal, medical, research and academic centre.

CING is dedicated to lessening the suffering of patients and their families and preventing diseases through patient care, research and educational programs on neurological and genetic conditions such as muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, chromosomal abnormalities and all other aspects of molecular biology and genetics such as thalassaemia, molecular virology, mental retardation, cardiovascular disease, stroke, cystic fibrosis and neurogenetics. Moreover, CING plays a key role in the fight against crime by providing specialized DNA services to the police authorities and expert court testimony for criminal and civil investigations.

CING is a medical and biomedical translational centre, a successful model, as it combines education, service and research activities in one centre, providing major medical benefits to the people, society and the country. CING was one of the first, and today one of the best, examples in Europe where services, research and postgraduate education have been successfully combined.

CING receives international recognition and plays an active and essential role as a national, regional and international centre of excellence for the provision of high-quality services, innovative research and postgraduate education.

## **CING POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

In 2012, CING established a postgraduate school with research and academic interests relevant to CING activities. The Postgraduate School offers seven programs of study leading to MSc and PhD degrees in the fields of Molecular Medicine, Medical Genetics, Neuroscience and Biomedical Research.

## **TELETHON**

TELETHON is an international charitable campaign and in Cyprus has been organized by The Cyprus Institute of Neurology & Genetics and the Cyprus Muscular Dystrophy Association since 1994. It includes many fundraising events that take place throughout the year and all proceeds of Telethon Cyprus support the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Cyprus and the research programs of the Institute.

# 2 GENDER EQUALITY

## ACCREDITATION

The CING has received the following accreditations which among others, demonstrate the maintenance of Gender Equality among its people:

1. **HR Strategy for Researches (2012)**
2. **Sound Industrial Relations (SIR); (2015) and**
3. **Equality Employer (2015)**

The "**HR Strategy for Researchers**" supports research institutions and funding organizations in the implementation of the Charter & Code in their policies and practices. The award "HR Excellence in Research" identifies the institutions and organizations as providers and supporters of a stimulating and favourable working environment **regardless of gender**, ethnicity and religion.

**The SIR 2014** accreditation is part of the 'Healthy Industrial Relations – Contemporary Enterprises' project, which was co-funded by the Republic of Cyprus and the European Social Fund.

The accreditation standard focuses on employment law and integrates a number of proven best practices in the following areas:

- Commitment to the implementation and promotion of healthy industrial relations
- Health and Safety at Work
- Labour law and human resource management
- Prevention of harassment and sexual harassment and promotion of equality in employment
- Work-life balance

**The Equality Employer** standard is a project co-funded by the Republic of Cyprus and the European Social Fund, under the auspices of the Department of Labour Relations of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance. Accreditation with this standard verifies the existence of an integrated system for promoting gender equality in the workplace in all sectors and in all the organization's activities.

The CING is an equal opportunity employer and all advertised new positions state this in the advertisement.

This document describes a set of commitments and actions aiming to improve, formalize and promote gender equality even further, through institutional and cultural change.

# 3 ACTION PLAN

This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) encapsulates the objectives from the fields suggested by the European Commission:

**1. Public document:** The GEP is a formal document published on the institution's website, signed by the top management and actively communicated within the institution. It should demonstrate a commitment to gender equality, set clear goals and detailed actions and measures to achieve them.

**2. Dedicated resources:** This GEP has dedicated resources and expertise in gender equality to implement the plan. This includes an internal committee to review the GEP implementation including progress based on indicators, further needs, deviations and corrective measures as appropriate.

**3. Data collection and monitoring:** Collection of sex and/or gender-disaggregated data on personnel (and students, for the establishments concerned) with annual reporting based on indicators.

**4. Training:** Gender implicit biases training aimed at staff and decision-makers will be provided in order to improve GE awareness and promote the CING GE culture.

**5. Work-life balance and organisational culture:** Promote gender equality through the sustainable transformation of organisational culture. Implementation of necessary policies to ensure work-life balance and practices, including parental leave policies, flexible working time arrangements and support for caring responsibilities.

**6. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making:** Increasing the number and share of women in leadership and decision-making positions touches upon all aspects of the GEP. Measures to ensure that women can take on and stay in leadership positions can include providing decision-makers with targeted gender training, adapting processes for selection and appointment of staff on committees, ensuring gender balance through gender quotas, and making committee membership more transparent.

**7. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression:** Critically reviewing selection procedures and remedying any biases can ensure that women and men get equal chances to develop and advance their careers.

**8. Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content:** How sex and gender analysis is included in the research or educational outputs of an organisation. It sets out the organisation's commitment to incorporating sex and gender in its research priorities, the processes for ensuring that the gender dimension is considered in research and teaching, and the support and capacity provided for researchers to develop methodologies that incorporate sex and gender analysis.

**9. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment:** To ensure clear institutional policies on sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence.

The Action Plan of the Cyprus Institute of Neurology & Genetics toward GE is outlined below.

# GENDER EQUALITY PLAN - 2024

## PUBLIC GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

Objectives	Action	Responsible Unit	Indicators	Timing	Current Status
Publicly state (internally and externally) the commitment to the promotion of equality between genders.	A formal document signed by the Chief Executive Officer and Medical Director (CEO&MD), stating the commitment of the CING to the promotion of gender equality at the Institute's website, group all emails, newsletter and social media.	To be signed by the CEO&MD	Percentage of men and women among staff that are aware of the commitment to the promotion of equality via staff survey.	By June 2022	Done
Make the GEP known, and its strategic importance for the Institute and involve staff in its implementation	Dissemination of the updated Equality Plan, its respective actions and objectives, through dissemination via email, the Institute's website and newsletter. Will also be included in the SIR and Equality Employer accreditation renewals.	GE Committee	Formulation of a Gender Equality Committee, regular emails sent to all CING staff to provide awareness regarding the updates of the GEP. Awareness via the 'SIR' and 'Equality Employer' accreditation renewals and via social media/newsletter.	By June 2022	Done and ongoing

## DEDICATED RESOURCES

Objectives	Action	Responsible Unit	Indicators	Timing	Current Status
Have dedicated resources for the design, implementation and monitoring of the GEP.	Establishing a Gender Equality Committee composed of different levels of staff, including research, academic and administrative staff as well as student representatives. The responsibilities of this committee will be: 1) ensuring and monitoring the implementation of initiatives and continuous improvement of the equality plan, 2) ensuring dissemination of the various initiatives, 3) give their input and feedback for updating and improving the GEP, 4) raise and solve any issues regarding gender imbalance	Gender Equality Committee	The expertise of the different members of the Gender Equality Committee and minutes reported from the meetings highlighting any updates, improvements and/or gender equality issues raised and actions taken	Setting up of the GE Committee: June 2022, Monitoring of effectiveness: March of every year	GE Committee established and includes: Mrs Anna Michaelidou, <b>HR Services Manager (President)</b> Dr. Stavroulla Xenophontos, <b>(Scientist)</b> , Dr Margarita Zachariou <b>(Associate Scientist)</b> , Prof. Kyroulla Christodoulou <b>(Senior Scientist/Department Head)</b> , Mr Vasilis Christofi <b>(Laboratory Scientific Officer 3)</b> , Ms Andria Ioakem <b>(Administrative Services Officer to the Postgraduate School)</b> , Mr. Stelios Papanicolaou <b>(HR Services Officer)</b> , Mr. Pavlos Polycarpou <b>(Laboratory Scientific Officer 3)</b> , Mr. Aristotelis Karamousoulakis <b>(PhD Student to the Postgraduate School)</b>



## DATA COLLECTION AND MONITORING

Objectives	Action	Responsible Unit	Indicators	Timing	Current Status
Disaggregated sex and or gender data on personnel and students and annual reporting based on indicators	To collect and monitor data regarding: 1)% of men/women in total 2)% of men/women in middle-level positions (Managers/Senior LSOs/Associate Scientists/Scientists) 3)% of men/women in senior level positions (Senior Scientists/Senior Neurologists/Financial and Administrative Director/CEO&MD/Senior Clinical Geneticist) 4)% of men/women nominated by the Scientific Council to represent the Board of Directors 5)% of men/women in students 6)% of men/women involved in the application of research grants 7)% of Men/women who got promoted since 2020 with the implementation of the Staff Promotion Scheme, 8) % of men/women involved in teaching 9) % Men/women annual staff evaluations – appraisers	HR	To monitor via a statistical analysis if there is a gender balance in leadership and decision-making, recruitment and career progression, evaluation, research and teaching through these data.	next: Every March of each year	see APPENDIX 1

## GOOD PRACTICES PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

**Training, Work-life balance and organizational culture, Gender balance in leadership and decision-making, Gender Equality in recruitment and career progression, Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content, Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment**

Objectives	Action	Responsible Unit	Indicators	Timing	Current Status
Promote a culture of equality between men and women in the workplace and work-life balance.	Development of a Gender Equality Policy. The policy will also define the complaints procedure, investigation and action to be taken for gender equality issues that may be raised. Additionally, the development of the staff satisfaction survey will also include equality aspects at work.	HR Office	Number of breaches reported annually and via staff opinion survey regarding gender equality performed every 2 years.	By September 2023	Done
Take measures against gender-based violence.	Development of a Sexual Harassment/Harassment policy To perform a dedicated staff survey covering issues such as: gender equality, harassment/sexual harassment.	HR Office	Number of breaches reported annually and via staff opinion survey regarding gender equality performed every year.	The policy is in force and reviewed every 3 years. A staff opinion survey was performed end of 2023.	The policy is in force. Staff Satisfaction survey was done. Staff survey covering gender equality issues will be performed by the end of 2024.
Promote a culture of equality between men and women in the workplace and work-life balance.	Development of policies on 'Security of Employment', 'Civility and Mutual Respect' 'Prevention and management of work-related stress', 'CING Awards Policy', 'Dependent Care Policy',	HR Office	via staff opinion surveys covering issues relating to these policies and the Institute's culture of equality between men and women.	Policies are in force and reviewed every 3 years. Staff opinion survey will be held by the second semester of	Policies are in force. Survey done

	Parental/Maternity/Study leaves which will protect and improve the work-life balance of all employees without discrimination of any kind. Remind staff about the above policies and encourage reporting any related issues. Inform newcomers accordingly during their induction process.			2022 and every 2 years	
Appropriate and attractive conditions in terms of salary and other benefits are assured to all staff regardless of their job position and gender within the Institute.	To implement the Staff Promotion Scheme and to maintain the existence of pay scales for each job position irrespective of gender. The Collective Agreement's next renewal is expected to take place within 2025.	HR Committee, BoD	Staff opinion survey.	The Staff Promotion Scheme has been in force since Jan 2020. The Collective Agreement has been renewed in April 2022.	The Staff Promotion Scheme has been in force since Jan 2020. There are pay scales for each job position in place irrespective of gender. Next Collective Agreement renewal: within 2025.
To maintain the Institute's accreditations which highlight a stimulating and favourable working environment regardless of gender, ethnicity or religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintain the accreditation for 'Equality Employer'</li> <li>- Maintain the accreditation for SIR 2014 (Sound Industrial Relations) by the Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation.</li> <li>- Maintain the 'HR Excellence in Research' accreditation</li> </ul>	HR Office	Successful renewal and maintenance of these accreditations.	Ongoing	<p>Done and ongoing. Accreditations are renewed every few years. SIR accreditation renewal: by the end of 2024</p> <p>Equality Employer accreditation renewal: by the end of 2024. In addition, we are in the process of applying to join the Athena Swan Charter pilot in Cyprus. Athena Swan is an accreditation scheme used globally for supporting and</p>

<p>An effective evaluation/appraisal system of the professional performance of all staff is equally performed.</p>	<p>To improve the annual staff appraisal procedure by reviewing the Staff Evaluation policy and the annual appraisal procedure. Also providing guidance to appraisers for improving efficiency and to obtain more objective results.</p>	<p>HR Office</p>	<p>To compare annual results' statistics.</p>	<p>November 2024</p>	<p>recognising gender equality within higher education and research.  Ongoing</p>
<p>To inform new staff regarding their contractual and legal obligations.</p>	<p>Staff at all levels to be familiar with the Institute's regulations, employment contracts, working conditions and all policies related to gender equality. One of the CING strategic objectives (2024-2027) is to enhance among CING staff and its operations. In particular: 1) to provide a comprehensive induction of the newcomer staff to all departments, acknowledging the various Departments' activities and staff members. 2) to enhance the "open doors" activities for a week every year to meet and network with staff of other CING Departments and be informed of the Departments' activities.</p>	<p>HR Office</p>	<p>Feedback received from induction trainings.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>All new employees from all levels work for a probationary period of 6 months. New employees receive a well-planned induction training program, during their probation period, in order for them to become fully operational quickly. The relevant rules and regulations (including Staff Handbook, Policy on Harassment/Sexual Harassment, Data Protection manual, Civility and Mutual Respect, Dependent Care Leave, Security of Employment etc.) are sent to them via email and they are requested to read them. A tour of the building is scheduled from each newcomer's mentor buddy.</p>

<p>Working conditions allow both men and women to combine family and work (e.g. flexible working hours and part time work).</p>	<p>To be flexible to change full-time to part time employment upon application and approval by the Head of the Department/Clinic.</p>	<p>Top management</p>	<p>Staff opinion survey, staff turnover rates.</p>	<p>Every 2 years</p>	<p>Every October of each year: "Open doors" activities are scheduled.</p>
<p>Working conditions allow both men and women to combine family and work (e.g. flexible working hours and part-time work).</p>	<p>The Institute to supplement the employees' full salary of the maternity/paternity leaves.</p>	<p>CING management</p>	<p>Payslips of women on maternity leave.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The Maternity/Paternity benefit from social security corresponds to 72% of the employee's weekly salary and the Institute co-funds the rest of the amount. Therefore, the maternity and paternity leaves are topped up and the employees are fully paid. The Institute is one of the very few organizations in Cyprus that have such a policy.</p>

<p>The Institute ensures that career advice and job placement assistance, either in the Institute or through collaboration with other structures, is offered to the CING postgraduate School students at some point in order to become permanent employees either at CING or other institutions regardless of their gender.</p>	<p>1) Training seminars to students regarding CV and cover letter preparation and interview skills, 2) To provide career advice,3) Where it is considered that existing CING staff, students, or recent postgraduate school graduates have the prerequisite skills, consideration may be given to advertising posts internally only. Moreover, fixed-term employees will be considered for vacant posts prior to internal/external advert for other non-permanent positions.</p>	<p>HR Office, Education Office</p>	<p>Training Evaluation from students, number of staff, postgraduate school students and postgraduate school graduates were hired for new fixed term positions, staff/Postgraduate School opinion surveys.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing processes</p>
<p>There is a standard complaints procedure and there is a mechanism to handle any work-related conflicts, disputes and grievances of all staff.</p>	<p>To create a Complaints/Suggestion procedure and a grievance procedure.</p>	<p>HR Office, CING management</p>	<p>Number of complaints/suggestions and grievances every year.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>In force</p>

<p>To establish recruitment procedures which are open, efficient, transparent, supportive and internationally comparable and to promote equality of opportunity.</p>	<p>To create a Staff Recruitment and Selection policy using a non-gender specific language in job announcements.</p>	<p>HR Office, BoD</p>	<p>Through the renewal of the SIR, Equality Employer and HR Excellence in Research accreditations.</p>	<p>By the end of 2024.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>The members of the selection panels are adequately trained and gender balanced. To ensure that any member of staff who is involved in interviews/ recruitment receives training and a manual in line with gender equality practices so as not to ask inappropriate questions to candidates during interviews and so as not to base their hiring</p>	<p>To develop staff who takes part in the selection panels in regards to interviewing techniques with a focus on unbiased interview approaches.</p>	<p>HR Office</p>	<p>Training and statistical analysis of men/women in selection panels every 3 years</p>	<p>By the end of 2024</p>	<p>Pending. Further to this an HR representative is always present at the interviews and coordinates the whole process ensuring that the procedure is held fairly, and candidates are treated with dignity, courtesy, fairness and confidentially at all times irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity and religious beliefs.</p>

decisions on gender bias.

Awareness raising/trainings on gender equality.

To carry out compulsory training for issues relating to Gender Equality, Sexual Harassment and Harassment in the workplace.

HR Office

Feedback received from training evaluation

By May 2023

Done

Ensure compliance with EU legislation regarding Gender Equality issues.

To monitor and get updated on the latest developments by the EU.

GE Committee

Monitoring of the European Institute of Gender Equality (<https://eige.europa.eu/about>)

Ongoing and every six months.

Done and ongoing process. Members of the staff and GEP committee (Dr Zachariou- PI and Ms Michaelidou-team member) have submitted an application to the funding call HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-11 along with partner organisations from Greece, Spain and Austria towards adopting best practices for more inclusive and diverse GEPs. In addition, in March 2024 the Institute has expressed interest to participate in the Athena SWAN Cyprus Pilot program for Gender Equality.

Women in Mathematical Sciences Cyprus (WMSC)

To host the event and to provide a platform for women scientists working in mathematical sciences in Cyprus to showcase their work and provide insights into their scientific journeys, inspired by the travelling exhibition.

Dr Margarita Zachariou

Feedback received by participants

May 2023

Done ([https://www.cing.ac.cy/easyconsole.cfm/page/event\\_viewer/event/818](https://www.cing.ac.cy/easyconsole.cfm/page/event_viewer/event/818))



# 4 MONITORING & REPORTING

The first 12 months of implementation of the GEP were evaluated by the GE Committee with success. Significant progress was made during these months and after further recommendations that were made by the Gender Equality Committee, the GEP is updated and enriched with additional objectives and good practices.

# APPENDIX 1

## DATA COLLECTION & MONITORING - 2024

CATEGORY	MEN		WOMEN	
	No.	%	No.	%
TOTAL STAFF	78	34	150	66
MIDDLE-LEVEL POSITIONS	17	50	17	50
SENIOR LEVEL POSITIONS	11	73	4	27
BOARD OF DIRECTORS	11	58	8	42
STUDENTS	15	22	54	78
STAFF EMPLOYED IN RESEARCH GRANTS	2	10	19	90
PROMOTED SINCE 2020 THROUGH STAFF PROMOTION SCHEME	9	32	19	68
STUDENTS EMPLOYED SINCE 2020	5	18	23	82
TEACHING	26	43	34	57
APPRAISERS	26	59	18	41