



GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

2022 - 2025

THE CYPRUS INSTITUTE OF NEUROLOGY AND GENETICS (CING)

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

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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 at embedding 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 postgraduate education, research and service 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 is 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 ACCREDITATIONS

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 favorable 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 in 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 and Genetics toward GE is outlined below.

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN 2022					
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 is 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 the implementation of Equality Plan	Dissemination of the Equality Plan, its respective actions and objectives, through dissemination via email, Institute's website and newsletter.	GE Committee	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.

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	Expertise of the different members of the Gender Equality Committee.	Setting up of the GE Committee: June 2022, Monitoring of effectiveness : annually starting from 2023 and every year	GE Committee established and includes: Mrs Anna Michaelidou, HR Services Manager (President) Dr. Stavroulla Xenophontos, (Scientist) , Dr Margarita Zachariou (Associate Scientist) , Prof. Kyproulla Christodoulou (Senior Scientist/Department Head) , Mr Vasilis Christofi (Laboratory Scientific Officer 3) , Ms Andria Ioakem (Administrative Services Officer to the Postgraduate School) , Mr. Stelios Papanicolaou (HR Services Officer) , Mr. Pavlos Polycarpou (Laboratory Scientific Officer 3) , Mr. Aristotelis Karamousoulakis (PhD Student to the Postgraduate School)

DATA COLLECTION AND MONITORING					
Objectives	Action	Responsible Unit	Indicators	Timing	Current Status
Disaggregated sex and orgender 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) 3)% of men/women in senior level positions (Senior Scientists/Senior Neurologists/Financial and Administrative Director/CEO&MD/Senior or 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	HR, Research Programmes Office and School	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.	By July 2022 and every year	pending

	implementation of the Staff Promotion Scheme, 8) % of men/women involved in teaching 9) % Men/women annual staff evaluations – appraisers				
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.	HR Office	Number of breaches reported annually and via staff opinion survey regarding gender equality performed every 2 years.	By first semester of 2022	Pending
Take measures against gender-based violence.	Development of a Sexual Harassment/Harassment policy	HR Office	Number of breaches reported annually and via staff opinion survey regarding gender equality performed every year.	Policy is in force and reviewed every 3 years. Staff opinion	Policy is in force. Survey is pending.

				survey will be held by the second semester of 2022 and every 2 years.	
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', Parental/Maternity/Study leaves which will protect and improve work-life balance of all employees without discrimination of any kind.	HR Office	via staff opinion survey 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 2022 and every 2 years	Policies are in force. Survey is pending.
Appropriate and attractive conditions in terms of salary and other benefits are assured to all staff regardless of their job position and	To implement the Staff Promotion Scheme and to maintain the existence of pay scales for each job position irrespective of gender.	HR Committee	Staff opinion survey	The Staff Promotion Scheme is in force since Jan 2020. The Collective Agreement has been	The Staff Promotion Scheme is in force since Jan 2020. There are pay scales for each job position in place irrespective of gender.

gender within the Institute.				renewed in April 2022.	
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"> - Maintain the accreditation for 'Equality Employer' - Maintain the accreditation for SIR 2014 (Sound Industrial Relations) by the Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation. - Maintain the 'HR Excellence in Research' accreditation 	HR Office	successful renewal and maintenance of these accreditations	Ongoing	Done and ongoing. Accreditations are renewed every few years
An effective evaluation/appraisal system of the professional performance of all staff is equally performed.	To improve the annual staff appraisal procedure by reviewing the Staff Evaluation policy and the annual appraisal procedure. Also providing interviewing guidance to appraisers for improving efficiency and to obtain more objective results.	HR Office	To compare annual results' statistics.	By August 2022 and every 3 years.	Ongoing
To inform new staff regarding their contractual and legal obligations.	Staff at all levels to be familiar with the Institute's regulations, employment contracts, working conditions and	HR Office	Feedback received from induction trainings	Ongoing	All new employees from all levels work for a probationary period of 6 months. New employees receive a well-planned

	all policies related to gender equality				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.
Working conditions allow both men and women to combine family and work (e.g. flexible working hours and part time working)	To be flexible to change full-time to part time employment upon application and approval by the Head of the Department/Clinic.	Top management	Staff opinion survey, staff turnover rates	By the second semester of 2022 and every 2 years	There is a flexible working schedule for all members of staff. In cases, where staff need to work part-time for family reasons, this may be approved for a specified period of time. Additionally, they can use the 'parental leave' according to the CY legislation. Moreover, the 'Dependant Care Policy' allows remote work for taking care of dependants without losing any annual leave.

<p>Working conditions allow both men and women to combine family and work (e.g. flexible working hours and part time working)</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) CV and cover letter preparation guidance, 2) Training seminars to students regarding interview skills, 4) To provide career advice, 5) To organize networking and other events ,6) Where it is considered that existing CING staff, or CSMM students, or recent postgraduate school graduates have the prerequisite skills, consideration may be given to advertising posts internally only. Moreover, fixed term</p>	<p>HR Office, Education Office</p>	<p>Evaluation of training 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>

	employees will be considered for vacant posts prior to internal/external advert for other non-permanent positions.				
There is a standard complaints procedure and there is a mechanism to handle any work-related conflicts, disputes and grievances of all staff	To create a Complaints/Suggestion procedure and a grievance procedure	HR Office, CING management	Number of complaints/suggestions and grievances every year	Ongoing	In force
To establish recruitment procedures which are open, efficient, transparent, supportive and internationally comparable and to promote equality of opportunity.	To create a Staff Recruitment and Selection policy using a non-gender specific language in job announcements.	HR Office, BoD	Via staff opinion survey, review of policy every 3 years	By second semester of 2022 and every 2 years	Ongoing
The members of the selection panels are adequately trained and gender balanced. To ensure that any member of staff	To develop staff who takes part in the selection panels in regards to interviewing techniques with a focus on unbiased interview approaches.	HR Office	training and statistical analysis of men/women in selection panels every 3 years	By June 2022	In force. 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

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 decisions on gender bias.					treated with dignity, courtesy, fairness and confidentially at all times irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity and religious beliefs.
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 the second semester of 2022 and every 2 years	Pending
Ensure compliance with EU legislation regarding Gender Equality issues.	To monitor and get updated on 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.

4. MONITORING AND REPORTING

The first 12 months of implementation of the GEP will serve as piloting period after which an evaluation will be performed. The outcome of the evaluation is a series of recommendations for the second year of the implementation of the plan. Additional objectives may be suggested based on the needs of the GEP.