

Czech University of Life Sciences GENDER EQUALITY PLAN 2026+ (GEP 2.0)

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of Life Sciences Prague

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Abbreviations

AGRIGEP	Assessment and Implementation of Agriculture and Life Science Universities' First Gender Equality Plans in Widening Countries
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ARWU	Academic Ranking of World Universities (Shanghai Ranking)
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRP	Centralised Development Project
CZK	Czech Koruna (currency)
CZU	Czech University of Life Sciences Prague
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FAPPZ	Faculty of Agrobiology, Food and Natural Resources (CZU)
FLD	Faculty of Forestry and Wood Sciences (CZU)
FTZ	Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences (CZU)
FŽP	Faculty of Environmental Sciences (CZU)
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GE	Gender Equality
GEP	Gender Equality Plan
GiRSN	Gender in Research Support Network (CZU)
HR	Human Resources
IVP	Institute of Education and Communication (CZU)
MATE	Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences (Hungary)
MŠMT	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (Czech Republic)
QS	Quacquarelli Symonds (World University Rankings)
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
TF	Faculty of Engineering (Technická fakulta, CZU)
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
THE	Times Higher Education (World University Rankings)
UN	United Nations
UP	University of Primorska (Slovenia)
WLB	Work-Life Balance
WG GEP	Working Group on Gender Equality Plan

Foreword from the Vice-Rector

I am aware that there are people (and I believe not a few) who might question the meaning and relevance of documents such as the Gender Equality Plan. This question is entirely legitimate, and if it were not raised, something might actually be amiss. What does this plan represent, what is its purpose, and how might it benefit our university? Since we operate within an academic environment – one that values academic discourse grounded not in assumptions or on rhetoric but in clear and verifiable data, I decided to begin by looking for answers to these questions through an analysis of official documents, such as Annual CZU Activity Reports.

The earliest electronically available Annual Report on the CZU website dates back to 2001. Viewed through a gender lens, one that examines how the images of men and women are socially and culturally constructed, the word „woman" or „women" appears only five times in that report, primarily in the context of statistical data. Gender issues are entirely absent from the narrative. The Report exemplifies the standard method of reporting at the time, with no deeper reflection on gender-related matters. Consequently, the composition of the Rector's Board or the Scientific Board of CZU did not include a single female. In the Academic Senate, which then had 23 members, there were 6 women. Among full professors, there were no women, and women constituted only 19.5% of Associate Professors at the university.

By 2017, before gender-related issues began gaining traction, particularly in relation to research projects (e.g. the requirement for a Gender Equality Plan), a noticeable shift was evident in the Annual Report. Most notably, the inclusion of gender-disaggregated statistics increased. The CZU Scientific Board had 4 female members, and the Rector's Board included 2 women. The Academic Senate had 33 members, 15 of whom were women (with changes in membership occurring over the year when men replaced women and vice-versa). In 2017, women accounted for 53% of students at CZU (55% at PEF, 75% at FAPPZ, 11% at TF, 34% at FLD, 54% at FŽP, 55% at FTZ, and 75% at IVP). Women held 21% of professorships and 14% of associate professorships.

The 2024 Annual Report, prepared during the implementation of CZU's first Gender Equality Plan, includes an entire chapter on gender issues, titled "Well-being at CZU (Gender Equality and Safe Environment)." It addresses the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence at CZU, the implementation of the aforementioned Gender Equality Plan, and the integration of gender topics into teaching and research. The Report uses gender-sensitive language. In 2024, there were still 2 women on the Rector's Board, with one additional woman joining the Scientific Board (making 5 women in total). The Academic Senate consisted of 10 women, or 30% of its members. In that year, the number of female students at CZU was 49% (PEF 44%, FAPPZ 75%, TF 11%, FLD 35%, FŽP 53%, FTZ 55%, and IVP 70%). Women held nearly 20% of full professorships and nearly 26% of associate professorships.

What do these data show? Primarily, they indicate a significant quantitative and qualitative shift, compared to the beginning of the millennium, similar to the shift that CZU has achieved in international university rankings. At the start of the 2000s, CZU did not appear in any such rankings at all. At the same time that improvements in gender equality occurred, this coincided with CZU starting to appear in international rankings. In the Times Higher Education (THE) ranking for 2017, CZU scored 19.9 points and was ranked 801st – 1000th globally (tied for sixth place among Czech universities). In that year, 1103 universities were evaluated. In the most recent ranking, CZU remains in the 801st – 1000th range globally, but was evaluated among 2855 institutions, achieving a score of 37.1 and ranking 3rd nationally.

In the QS ranking, CZU scored 10.1 in 2018, ranking 936th globally and 8th among Czech universities. In the latest QS ranking, CZU scored 23.4 and is placed between 761st – 770th globally, ranking 7th among Czech institutions. According to the U.S. News & World Report's Best Global Universities Rankings, CZU ranked 1051st in 2018 with 22.8 points (8th in the Czech Republic). In the most recent edition, it ranks 747th globally with 46 points and 4th nationally. CZU first appeared in the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU or the Shanghai Ranking) in 2018, which evaluates only scientific performance. At that time, CZU was ranked 901st – 1000th globally (tied for 5th place among Czech universities). In the latest edition, CZU improved to 801st – 900th globally (again tied for 5th place nationally).

In its core field of Agricultural Sciences, CZU ranks 24th globally and 5th in Europe according to ARWU[1]; no other Czech university has reached such a position in its discipline. In 2018, it ranked 151st – 200th in this subject. In Environmental Sciences and Engineering, CZU moved from the

401st – 500th range in 2018 to the 201st – 300th range today. In the QS ranking[2] for Agriculture and Forestry (which includes education), CZU ranks 66th globally, up from 90th in 2022.

These ranking results clearly demonstrate CZU's notable advancement of excellence in recent years. While some might argue that this is a case of false correlation, I believe that our achievements, as reflected in international rankings, are also due (albeit not exclusively) to the implementation of gender-focused measures at CZU. The textual gender-sensitive evolution in our Annual Reports coincides with our rise in international rankings. To continue progressing, it is both necessary and desirable to update this Gender Equality Plan, so that it reflects new developments and further opens windows of opportunity for our continued success. This is the main purpose and significance of this plan – to assist our university to continue to improve.

prof. PhDr. Michal Lošťák, Ph.D.
prorektor pro mezinárodní vztahy a první prorektor

[1] Academic Ranking of World Universities. https://www.shanghairanking.com/rankings/arwu/2024
[2] https://www.qs.com/rankings-performance/#rankings-portfolio

Executive Summary

The Gender Equality Plan 2.0 (GEP 2.0) of the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (CZU) represents a strategic, evidence-based roadmap for institutional change in the field of gender equality for the period 2026–2030. It builds upon the outcomes of the first CZU GEP (2021–2024), Action Plan GEP 2025, and the legacy of the AGRIGEP Horizon Europe project, which enabled critical reflection, international benchmarking, and the co-creation of innovative approaches tailored to Life Sciences universities in Central and Eastern Europe. GEP 2.0 marks a shift from compliance to deep integration of gender equality in CZU's institutional culture, policy and daily operations.

The plan is structured around eight interlinked priority areas, each addressing key institutional barriers identified through extensive data collection, focus groups, evaluations and feedback from staff and students. These areas are: (1) Recruitment, Career Progression, and Retention; (2) Leadership and Decision-Making; (3) Work-Life Balance and Caring Responsibilities; (4) Organisational Culture and Awareness; (5) Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response; (6) Integration of the Gender Dimension into Research Content; (7) Institutional Structures for Gender Equality; and (8) Agriculture and Life Sciences-Specific Challenges. Each area includes concrete objectives, actions, indicators, timelines and allocated resources.

CZU GEP 2.0 aligns with key international, EU and national frameworks, including the European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025, the Horizon Europe GEP eligibility criterion, the UN Sustainable Development Goal 5, and the Czech Republic's Gender Equality Strategy 2021–2030. It also reflects CZU's own Strategic Plan 2021+, Sustainability Strategy, and long-term vision of becoming a leading, inclusive and innovative research university in Europe.

Achievements from the previous GEP cycle include the integration of gender-sensitive recruitment policies, the establishment of a university-wide counselling centre, expanded work-life balance benefits, the launch of the bilingual "Řekni to" (Speak Up) campaign against gender-based violence, and CZU's increasing visibility in global university rankings and sustainability metrics. However, challenges persist, particularly in mentoring, achieving gender balance in decision-making, integrating interdisciplinary research, and utilising inclusive technologies in field training.

With the Logical Framework Planning Matrix as its methodological backbone, GEP 2.0 provides a clear structure for implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It formalises institutional responsibilities, introduces innovative tools (e.g. virtual reality for inclusion, AI-supported communication campaigns), and fosters a collaborative approach across faculties and departments.

GEP 2.0 is not a static document but a living strategy, regularly updated based on feedback, monitoring data and evolving institutional priorities. It reflects CZU's commitment to excellence through equality, ensuring that its academic community is diverse, inclusive and empowered to contribute to science, education and society at the highest level.

1 / Introduction

This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) of the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (CZU) builds on the first GEP (2021–2024) and the Action Plan for Gender Equality for 2025. From 2026 onwards, the new strategy, referred to as CZU GEP 2.0, integrates the outcomes of the EU-funded AGRIGEP project (No. 101094158; Assessment and Implementation of Agriculture and Life Science Universities' First Gender Equality Plans in Widening Countries, https://agrigep.eu). The title CZU GEP 2.0 was deliberately chosen to highlight both continuity and a qualitative shift, reflecting the approaches and tools piloted during AGRIGEP. These resources, openly available to other institutions designing GEPs, position CZU as a "living laboratory" for advancing gender equality in higher education. The deliverables and tools of the AGRIGEP are available on the project website.

The AGRIGEP project, a Horizon Europe-funded initiative running from 2022 to 2025, supported CZU in strengthening its gender equality strategy alongside MATE (Hungary, coordinator) and UP (Slovenia) partner universities, with the mentorship of Yellow Window (Belgium), Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (Spain), and the Association of Hungarian Women in Science NaTE (Hungary). Through mentoring, site visits, and stakeholder engagement, CZU was able to assess the implementation of GEP 1.0, identify strengths and gaps, and develop a renewed institutional framework.

For CZU, the project's main achievements include:

- Evaluating GEP 1.0 to identify strengths, risks and opportunities for institutional change.
- Building staff and student capacities through training and awareness-raising, enabling structural reforms.
- Redesigning the Gender Equality Plan, with measures tailored to the specific contexts of Agriculture and Life Sciences.
- Integrating gender perspectives into teaching and curricula, shaping the next generation of professionals, including international students.
- Embedding gender equality principles into CZU's governance structures, to ensure long-term sustainability beyond the project's lifetime.

CZU GEP 2.0 is the product of this comprehensive process. It combines lessons learned from GEP 1.0 with good practices shared by AGRIGEP mentors, laying the foundation for lasting institutional change and a stronger culture of inclusivity and excellence at CZU.

CZU GEP 2.0 is an organic part of CZU's internal strategic framework, aligned with the university's Strategic Plan 2021+ (Strategic Plan for Educational, Research and Other Activities of the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague from 2021 onward). This long-term strategic plan explicitly endorses the UN Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 5: Gender Equality, as part of the university's mission and vision. Gender dimensions are also addressed in other key institutional strategies, such as the Internationalisation Strategy, the Sustainability Strategy, and the Long-term Concept for the Development of Sport at CZU. CZU GEP 2.0 is also designed to be an integral component of the university's emerging comprehensive well-being strategy. Similar to the CZU Strategy 2021+, GEP 2.0 is designed as a long-term strategic document for the period from 2026 onwards. Each year, an Action Plan will be developed to define specific priority activities, assign clear responsibilities to the relevant CZU bodies, and allocate the necessary financial resources. The process will also include an annual evaluation of the Action Plan's implementation. Based on this evaluation, outcomes and newly identified needs can be flexibly incorporated into the Action Plan for the following period. The implementation of individual measures and activities is structured within a five-year cycle, after which a revision of GEP 2026+ is foreseen, informed by the results of monitoring and evaluation.

The plan further reflects the broader international policy framework, including the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. CZU received the HR Excellence in Research Award in 2021 and successfully renewed it in 2024. As such, the new GEP fully integrates current European gender mainstreaming policies.

As mentioned, the preparation of CZU GEP 2.0 was primarily supported by the AGRIGEP project. This initiative not only enabled an evaluation of the previous gender equality measures implemented at CZU, but also fostered the development of context-sensitive improvements tailored to the specificities of Life Sciences. The AGRIGEP project team worked closely with the university's Gender Equality Panel, an informal group initially established during the preparation of the first GEP. The collaboration was natural and pro-

ductive, given that several members were active in both the panel and the AGRIGEP project.

The purpose of this plan is to introduce measures that will support the continued advancement of gender equality policies at CZU, in line with its broader strategic objectives. The overarching and long-term aim is to foster a gender-responsive institutional culture that supports equal opportunities, particularly within the context of Life Sciences, including Agriculture, Forestry and Aquaculture.

This goal is pursued across eight thematic dimensions; each derived from the identification of barriers (or "issues") that hinder the full realisation of gender equality. For each barrier, specific objectives have been defined, specifying the desired changes and the activities needed to achieve them. These are accompanied by timelines, indicators of success, and, where applicable, allocated resources (both financial and non-financial). The methodological backbone of CZU GEP 2.0 is the Logical Framework Planning Matrix.



2 / Addressing the Legal and Policy Framework through the CZU Gender Equality Plan

International and EU Policy and Legal Framework for Gender Equality Plans (GEPs): Gender equality is a fundamental value enshrined in European Union (EU) Law and policy. At the core is Article 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which establishes the principle of equal pay for equal work between women and men. This principle is operationalised through a series of legally binding directives, including Directive 2006/54/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation. This Directive addresses issues such as equal pay, access to employment, career advancement, vocational training and working conditions, and prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination.

The European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025 provides the overarching policy framework for advancing gender equality across the EU. It promotes a dual-track approach: targeted actions to address specific gender gaps and gender mainstreaming to integrate a gender perspective into all EU policies and activities. The strategy also embraces intersectionality, recognising the compounded forms of discrimination that can affect individuals based on gender, in combination with other characteristics such as race, age, or disability.

In the context of research and innovation, the European Commission has taken a proactive stance by making the adoption of institutional GEPs a mandatory eligibility criterion for participation in the Horizon Europe programme. This policy requirement has served as a significant incentive for research-performing and research-funding organisations, including universities, to formalise and implement GEPs that are comprehensive, structured and regularly monitored.

Beyond the EU, several international frameworks to which the Czech Republic is a signatory also inform the national commitment to gender equality: CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (United Nations, 1979): Ratified by the Czech Republic, CEDAW obliges the state to eliminate discrimination against women in all areas of life and to promote equality through legal and policy instruments, education and awareness; Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development – Goal 5 (Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls): This global commitment is implemented nationally through the Czech Republic's National Action Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals, which includes measures to address gender disparities, ensure women's full participation in decision-making, and eliminate gender-based violence.

Together, these international and EU frameworks provide a robust normative and policy basis for the development and implementation of the CZU Gender Equality Plan 2.0. The plan is designed not only to comply with legal obligations, but also to reflect best practices in promoting inclusive, safe and gender-sensitive academic and research environments.

In the Czech Republic, there are several key political and strategic documents that address the issue of gender equality and equal opportunities. These documents are based on both national priorities and international commitments (e.g. EU directives and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals).

In the Czech Republic, gender equality is anchored in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, which forms part of the country's constitutional order. This fundamental document guarantees equal rights for all individuals regardless of sex and serves as a foundational legal pillar for the promotion of gender equality across public and private life. The key legislative instrument specifically addressing discrimination is Act No. 198/2009 Coll., on Equal Treatment and Legal Means of Protection Against Discrimination (Anti-Discrimination Act). This Act comprehensively prohibits discrimination on multiple grounds, including sex and gender, and mandates equal treatment in areas such as employment, education, healthcare, social security, access to goods and services, and housing. It also establishes mechanisms for legal redress in cases of discriminatory conduct. Complementing this framework, the Labour Code (Act No. 262/2006 Coll.) includes detailed provisions to ensure equality in labour relations. It explicitly forbids direct and indirect discrimination based on sex, reinforces the principle of equal pay for equal work, and requires employers to create conditions that prevent discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace.

The commitment to gender equality is stipulated in the Gender Equality Strategy of the Czech Republic for 2021–2030[1]: This strategy provides a fundamental framework for state policy in the field of gender equality. It sets objectives and measures in the areas of employment, education, health, decision-making positions, and the prevention of gender-

-based violence. For example, the strategy states: "A long-term issue negatively affecting women's employment rates and the gender pay gap is the insufficient number of places in kindergartens and childcare facilities for children under the age of three." CZU contributes to addressing this problem by establishing childcare groups and building facilities for them.

Another response aligned with this strategy is the launch of the „Řekni to" (Speak Up) campaign. The government strategy explicitly mentions: "Interesting findings on other forms of gender-based violence have emerged from research on the prevalence of sexual harassment in the Czech higher education environment, which revealed that almost 75% of students have experienced behaviours that correspond to the definition of sexual harassment (e.g. unwelcome sexual advances, coercive invitations to meetings, sexual jokes, derogatory remarks, comments on appearance). However, when directly asked whether they had experienced sexual harassment, only 3% of students responded affirmatively." This highlights the low level of societal awareness of what constitutes sexual harassment. The strategy further points out: "43% of young people who have experienced or are experiencing violence in a relationship suffer from a long-term inability to concentrate at school or during studies." For this reason, the Counselling Centre at CZU has been restructured, as academic failure in the sense of students' drop-out (which may also result from gender-based violence) reflects an inefficient use of public resources.

A key area of CZU GEP 2.0 in connection with this strategy will be **Area 8: Knowledge**. The text of the strategy makes it clear that the unequal representation of men and women in different fields of science and education also affects innovation potential and, therefore, in the light of the Draghi Report, the overall competitiveness of the Czech Republic (and, by extension, Europe). The strategy states that 27% of researchers are women (compared to 36% at CZU). Furthermore, it reports that 23% of members in decision-making, strategic, and supervisory bodies of research organisations (including universities) are women (approximately 25% at CZU). The strategy also notes that research often fails to reflect gender aspects, which, from CZU's perspective, also applies to Life Sciences (e.g. differing behavioural patterns in relation to food and nutrition between men and women). Area 8 will be the driver for CZU GEP 2.0.

Concept of Family Policy of the Czech Republic: This document contains measures concerning the reconciliation of work and family life (work-life balance) and the promotion of equal opportunities. In CZU's GEP 2022–2024, this area was identified as a key priority, and from the perspective of gender mainstreaming at CZU, it will remain relevant for the further direction of GEP 2.0 and its broader acceptance within the academic community.

The implementation of the Action Plan for the Prevention of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (2023–2026) demonstrates the Czech Republic's continued commitment to addressing gender-based violence as a key component of gender equality policy. Building upon the broader Government Strategy for Gender Equality, this plan outlines comprehensive measures for the prevention, early identification, and effective response to gender-based and domestic violence. It emphasises intersectoral cooperation, education, and institutional capacity building, particularly in health, education, and social services. For higher education institutions such as CZU, the plan serves as an important reference for developing institutional mechanisms to prevent harassment and gender-based violence on campus, to ensure safe reporting systems, and to build staff and student awareness through training and support services.

In addition, although the Action Plan for the Balanced Representation of Women and Men in Decision-Making Positions (2016–2018) is no longer in effect, it laid important groundwork for promoting gender balance in public life, including in science and higher education leadership. These themes have been further developed at the ministerial level, particularly within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MŠMT). The Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports for 2021–2024 included targeted measures for advancing gender equality in higher education, research and science, with a focus on eliminating gender stereotypes, improving institutional culture and supporting work-life balance.

The CZU GEP 2.0 draws on these strategic documents to ensure alignment with national policy goals and to implement tailored measures that promote inclusive leadership, gender-responsive governance and sustainable career development for all staff and students.

3 / Where We Stand: Gender Equality Baseline Overview

For the preparation of CZU GEP 2.0, it was necessary to conduct a detailed analysis of the situation at CZU. Both the AGRIGEP project and the evaluation of the implementation of the first GEP for the period 2022–2024 significantly contributed to this process. The evaluation of implementing GEP 2022-2024 was discussed by the relevant bodies of CZU, such as the Rector's Board, with the Academic Senate also being informed.

3.1 Research and Analysis in terms of gender issues

In 2022, a quantitative research study focusing on gender issues was carried out as part of the Centralised Development Project (CRP) "Social Safety at Universities" (a joint project involving 17 universities in the Czech Republic). In 2023, the survey among CZU employees was conducted by the Empirica agency. The last survey indicated that inappropriate behaviour (including sexual and gender-biased behaviour) was reported more frequently by women than by men (33% vs. 25%), and most frequently by employees aged 26–35 years, who appear to constitute the most vulnerable group of staff (as will also be seen further below). Compared to the overall average, employees of the Faculty of Agrobiology, Food and Natural Resources and the Rectorate reported inappropriate behaviour more often, whereas employees of the Faculty of Environmental Sciences and the Faculty of Economics and Management did so less frequently (for more details, see Figure 1). The most frequent source of inappropriate behaviour was colleagues, with 16% of all CZU employees reporting having experienced some form of attack from them. One in eight employees (12%) reported inappropriate behaviour from a supervisor, while one in nine (11%) indicated such behaviour from students. Regarding specific manifestations of inappropriate conduct, the most common forms were indirect or covert verbal behaviours such as slander, lying, or manipulative actions, reported by 18% of employees. Any type of sexual harassment or gender-biased violence was reported by only 2% (see Figure 2). In terms of faculties, 4% were reported by the Faculty of Engineering and the Rectorate. These numbers might be questionable, due to their sensitive nature. Discrimination on the basis of gender was reported by 2% of all employees. Four out of five of these cases concerned women, typically aged 26 – 45 years, with above-average frequency among employees of the Faculty of Agrobiology, Food and Natural Resources. The surveys were followed by qualitative research in the form of focus groups and individual interviews, which high-

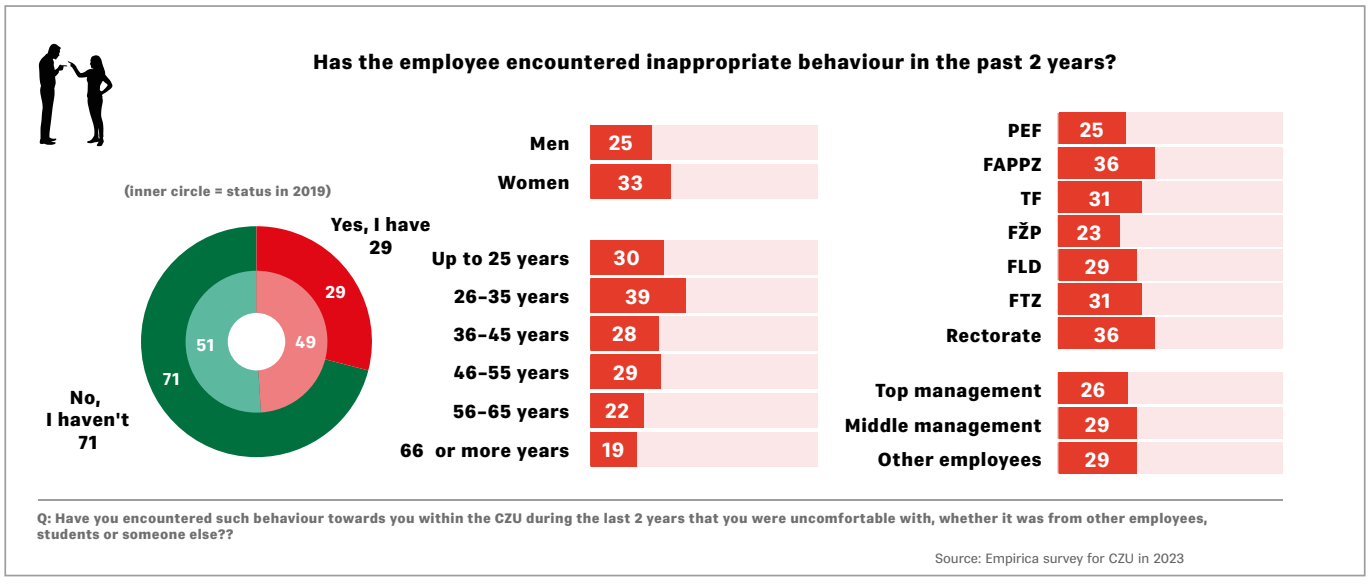

Figure 1 – Experience of inappropriate behaviour in 2021–2023

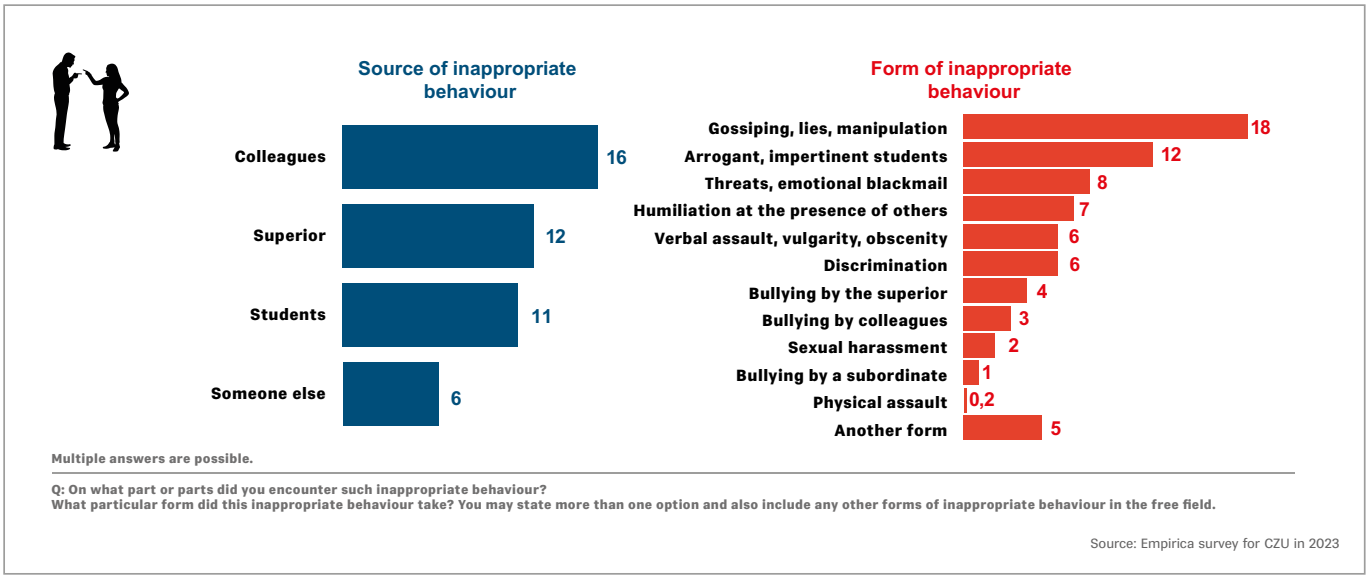

Figure 2 – Types of inappropriate behaviour in 2021 – 2023

lighted, among other findings, generational differences in attitudes toward gender-related issues among employees (younger generations tend to be more open and supportive of these topics). The findings of the studies were processed and published, forming a basis for further measures, especially in the field of Human Resource management. While CZU now has relevant empirical data on gender-related issues, there remains a need to enhance the mechanisms for their utilisation and analysis. For instance, data indicate that the proportion of females in leadership positions has long hovered around 25%, while the overall proportion of women at CZU exceeds 33%.

3.2 Career and Recruitment Processes from a gender perspective

The university introduced principles of gender-sensitive recruitment and professional as well as personal development, which were incorporated into the Career Code (specifically Article III, Paragraph 8, Item 13 – in the Czech version). These principles also reflect the need to account for parental leave in employee evaluations, especially regarding the requirements for creative (i.e. research) activities, where parental leave limits the intensity of such work. After a year of implementing these principles, it is evident that mid-level management positions (e.g. heads of departments) are still inadequately applying gender aspects in their managerial activities. Since 2023, systematic monitoring of the representation of women and men at each stage of the recruitment process, from job postings to final decisions, has been conducted, with data evaluated by the Human Resources Department. Between 2020 and 2024, the proportion of women in Associate Professor and Professor positions rose by three percentage points, reaching 23.6%. This progress is highly significant, as women in these roles play a vital part in shaping academic excellence, supervising future PhD researchers, and safeguarding the quality of core study programmes. The annual figures presented in the CZU Annual Report are available on the CZU website.

3.3 Family Support and Work-Life Balance

In 2024, a project was submitted under the National Recovery Plan to construct a new building for the university's childcare group (university kindergarten), planned to open in the 2025/2026 academic year. Childcare continues to be provided by the university's Poníček childcare group, which also organises summer day camps, in collaboration with the Prague-Suchdol House of Children and Youth. The proposed mentorship programme for young academics has been moved to the GEP 2025 Action Plan (as it was not yet finalised during the preparation of GEP 2.0). Family support and work-life balance issues proved to be critical elements in fulfilling the first Gender Equality Plan. For example, in 2024 an agreement was reached to increase the number of sick leave days from three to five, allowing their use not only for personal health issues but also for family-related matters (e.g. care for family members, administrative obligations with family members). Work-life balance might lead to thoughts of leaving CZU. The survey of Empirica done at CZU in 2023 indicated that in that year about 13% of respondents were thinking of leaving CZU for family or health reasons. In 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, this figure was only 7%. These numbers indicate the importance of family support and work-life balance measures.

3.4 Education and Awareness

A new Intranet section dedicated to gender equality, the prevention of inappropriate behaviour, and well-being was launched. In addition, a bilingual (Czech-English) campaign

called "Řekni to" (Speak Up) was introduced to prevent gender-based violence. A major milestone was the centralisation and restructuring of the Counselling Centre (primarily for students), which now also provides assistance in gender-sensitive matters. Internal documents were analysed, with the aim of implementing gender-sensitive language. Since 2023, the use of neutral and inclusive formulations in official university documents, including Annual Reports, has become standard. Training sessions for both academic and non-academic staff on the prevention of gender bias have been implemented. For example, in 2024, four such training sessions were conducted, along with three additional sessions with international experts visiting CZU within the AGRIGEP project. However, participation rates in these training programmes remain suboptimal, particularly among male employees. At the same time, successful female researchers are actively promoted through university communication channels.

3.5 International Collaboration

CZU actively participated in the Horizon Europe AGRIGEP project, which facilitated the exchange of experiences in implementing, monitoring and ensuring sustainability of Gender Equality Plans at universities (especially in widening countries – those that recently joined the EU). The project delivered best practice examples and methodological resources, which were utilised in preparing GEP 2.0 and in implementing the measures of GEP 2022–2024. As part of preparing an international project within the European University Initiative, CZU, as a member of the Euroleague for Life Sciences, coordinated a work package focused on gender equality, inclusion, and diversity at universities. Although this project was not accepted for funding, its preparation enhanced CZU's expertise in gender issues and provided further insights from the international environment.

3.6 Unfinished Activities and Future Steps

Some planned activities were not completed during 2022–2024. These include the establishment of a mentorship programme (postponed to the GEP 2025 Action Plan) and a campaign promoting work-life balance. The university plans to build on the achieved results and to extend the measures supporting equal opportunities and well-being.


AGRIGEP
ASSESSMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES UNIVERSITIES' FIRST GENDER EQUALITY PLANS IN WIDENING COUNTRIES
PROJECT NO. 101094158
EC CONTRIBUTION: € 998.237
DURATION: 36 MONTHS
1 JANUARY 2023 - 31 DECEMBER 2025
PROJECT'S GOALS
Perform a responsible assessment of widening research partn
organisations' current status on Gender Equality Plan (GEP) im
mentation
Improve capabilities through inte
Develop and implement agriculture and
GEP with sectorial-specific measures and
Integrate GEP targets into the academic training materia
of Research Performing Organisations (RPOs)
Foster and support long-term structural changes of RPOs
FOSTERING GENDER EQUALITY
IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTO
Tackling gender inequality in Research and
of the EU's top goals. AGRIGEP builds capacitie
in sector-specific and inclusive GEP issues that w
to advance inclusive gender equality within the Eur
PROJECT COORDINATOR
MATE
MENTORS
YELLOW WINDOW
UNIVERSITIES

4 / CZU Objectives and Strategic Priorities for Gender Equality Plan 2.0

CZU has identified a comprehensive set of strategic objectives and priority areas under its GEP 2.0, aligning institutional practice with national legislation, EU requirements (including Horizon Europe), and international commitments. These objectives are structured into eight interlinked priority areas that reflect both systemic barriers and opportunities for institutional change. Each area is supported by concrete actions, indicators, and timelines to ensure meaningful progress and accountability.

4.1 Recruitment, Career Progression and Retention

CZU aims to ensure that gender considerations become an integral and normalised part of career development for both academic and non-academic staff. Objectives include eliminating unconscious bias in career planning, supporting researchers returning from parental leave through return-to-work grants, and introducing formal, gender-sensitive mentorship programmes. These efforts focus on increasing inclusivity, scientific productivity, and the long-term retention of talent, especially among women and caregivers.

4.2 Leadership and Decision-Making

To address the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles, CZU prioritises dismantling stereotypes and institutional barriers that limit women's access to decision-making structures. Objectives include highlighting female role models, adapting institutional practices to accommodate diverse life situations (e.g. caregiving duties), and embedding intersectional inclusion training for leaders. A key strategic priority is the formal advisory role of the Gender Equality Working Group/Panel (WG GEP) to influence university governance.

4.3 Work-Life Balance and Caring Responsibilities

Promoting a healthy work-life balance is a cornerstone of GEP 2.0. CZU commits to raising awareness of and improving access to flexible work arrangements and enhancing support for staff and students with caregiving duties. This includes the development of on-site preschool care, the organisation of family-friendly events, and strategic communication to increase visibility of available support services.

4.4 Organisational Culture and Awareness

To transform the institutional culture, CZU will enhance understanding of gender equality among staff and students through sustained awareness campaigns, integration of new technologies (including AI), and PR training for internal communication teams. Efforts also include improving awareness of counselling services and building internal capacities for conflict prevention and resolution, including those with multicultural dimensions.

4.5 Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention and Response

Recognising the critical importance of trust and transparency, CZU will modernise its GBV reporting systems to make them more accessible, inclusive, and technology-enabled. The strategy includes multilingual communication campaigns, updated protocols for anonymous and third-party reporting, and systematic monitoring of reported cases and outcomes.

4.6 Integration of the Gender Dimension into Research and Teaching

GEP 2.0 prioritises the integration of gender perspectives into research content across all disciplines, not just the Social Sciences. Strategic actions focus on capacity-building for gender-sensitive research, internal grant requirements, and the launch of the CZU Gender in Research Support Network (GiRSN), which fosters interdisciplinary collaboration and promotes gender imagination in research.

4.7 Institutionalisation and Governance Structures

CZU acknowledges that sustainable change requires formal structures. GEP 2.0 outlines the institutionalisation of the WG GEP within the university governance framework, alongside the recruitment and professional development of a full-time Gender Equality Coordinator. These structural measures will ensure continuity, accountability, and cross-faculty coordination.

4.8 Agriculture and Life Sciences-Specific Challenges

Given CZU's focus areas, special attention is given to inclusivity in fieldwork and training within Agriculture and Life Sciences. Actions include evaluating safety protocols through an intersectional lens and implementing pilot projects, using inclusive technologies such as virtual reality to enhance the participation of women, international students and people with disabilities.



5 / Action Plan for Gender Equality

1. Recruitment, career progression and retention				
1.1 Recruitment, career progression and retention				
Issue 1.1 – Lack of integration of gender considerations in career planning by CZU employees, leading to potential unconscious bias and unequal career development opportunities.				
Objectives	**Actions**	**Period**	**Indicators**	**Allocated Resources**
Objective 1.1 Ensure gender aspects become an integral and normalised part of career design for both academic and non-academic staff at CZU, with employees and middle management aware of gender impacts and free from gender prejudices	*Action 1.1.1* Conduct targeted awareness-raising workshops for middle management and employees on gender-sensitive career planning	2026–2030	No. of workshops, No. of participants	Financial: 50,000 CZK/year for conducting the workshops in-kind: work of CZU SDGs person to monitor data for SDG 5; provision of gender equality benefits itself
	Action 1.1.2 Implement a biennial monitoring of the most frequent gender aspects in the career plans across CZU every two years, integrated into the GEP assessment	2026–2028 (first monitoring period)	Written Report available biennially	
	Action 1.1.3 Explicitly incorporate gender equality benefits as a standard part of the career plan documents	2026–2028	Revised instructions for career plan documents	
1.2 Recruitment, career progression and retention				
Issue 1.2 – Parental leave (career breaks) negatively affects the retention and career progression of researchers, especially women, leading to a loss of talent.				
Objectives	**Actions**	**Period**	**Indicators**	**Allocated Resources**
Objective 1.2 To improve the retention and scientific performance of researchers returning from parental leave, by introducing motivational return-to-work grants and improving employer attractiveness via a work-life balance (WLB) supportive environment	*Action 1.2.1* Develop a clear funding plan to secure external/internal funds for return grants, including a timeline and target amounts	2026–2027	Existing grant scheme with allocated funds	Financial: Fund with return Grants at CZU estimated 500,000 CZK/year
	Action 1.2.2 Design and implement a transparent mechanism for awarding return grants, including eligibility criteria and application procedures	2027–2030	Science and research performance of young researchers with care responsibilities	
	Action 1.2.3 Establish a monitoring framework to track uptake and impact of return grants every year	2027–2030	Monitoring data available	

1. Recruitment, career progression and retention				
1.3 Recruitment, career progression and retention				
Issue 1.3 – Absence of structured mentorship programmes limits career advancement of female researchers at CZU.				
Objectives	**Actions**	**Period**	**Indicators**	**Allocated Resources**
Objective 1.3 Establish formal gender-sensitive mentorship schemes to support career development, with trained mentors available for guidance on gender-related issues	*Action 1.3.1* Secure funding for mentorship programme development and operation	2026–2030	Existing grant scheme with allocated funds	in-kind: using mentors active in other project; financial: 100,000 CZK /year for activities of mentors
	Action 1.3.2 Develop and implement the mentorship scheme that supports diverse groups (incl. intersectional groups of women), including mentor recruitment, training, and the mentee matching process	2026–2027	Existing mentorship scheme	
	Action 1.3.3 Develop and conduct training for mentors on intersectional awareness and inclusive guidance practices	2026–2027	Training scheme and material developed, No. of training courses, No. of participants	
	Action 1.3.4 Monitor mentorship effectiveness annually and integrate results into GEP evaluation	2026–2030	Report on mentorship effectiveness available Conclusion of the Report informs GEP Annual Action Plan	

2. Leadership and decision-making				
Issue 2.1 – Underrepresentation of female candidates for leadership positions at CZU due to persistent stereotypes and structural barriers.				
Objectives	**Actions**	**Period**	**Indicators**	**Allocated Resources**
Objective 2.1 Change stereotypes and increase visibility of women in leadership roles, encouraging more women to apply and to be promoted to leadership positions	*Action 2.1.1* Regularly highlight female role models and best practices through CZU communication channels, including success stories and interviews	2026–2030	No. of PR outcomes promoting women, WLB	In-kind of the activities of PR CZU office
Issue 2.2 – *Inadequate enabling environment and institutional barriers reduce women's participation in governance bodies at various levels.*				
Objectives	**Actions**	**Period**	**Indicators**	**Allocated Resources**
Objective 2.2 Create and maintain an enabling environment by minimising barriers that prevent women's involvement in leadership, advisory boards, committees, and councils	*Action 2.2.1* Provide intersectional diversity and inclusion training to leaders, emphasising gender, disability, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation, to foster inclusive participation in leadership and decision-making structures	2026–2030	No. of respective sensitisation events	Financial to organise the training courses: 100,000 CZK/year
	Action 2.2.2 Introduce policies facilitating meeting planning to accommodate care responsibilities (e.g. flexible times, online participation)	2027–2030	Existing and shared plans for meetings to be organised in the core meeting time	
Issue 2.3 – Women are underrepresented in decision-making positions at CZU, limiting diverse perspectives in governance.				
Objectives	**Actions**	**Period**	**Indicators**	**Allocated Resources**
Objective 2.3 Dchieve balanced gender representation in decision-making roles, ensuring women's voices are effectively included in university governance	*Action 2.3.1* Conduct and publish annual gender equality monitoring reports of decision-making bodies	2026–2030	Published report	In-kind, as this work is part of drafting CZU Annual Report
	Action 2.3.2 WG GEP as an advisory board to the Board of Rector to influence governance decisions	2026–2027	WG GEP publicly announced as an advisory board/ body	

3. Work-life balance and caring duties				
Issue 3.1 – *Insufficient awareness and inconsistent application of flexible work arrangements limit employees' ability to balance work and personal life.*				
Objectives	**Actions**	**Period**	**Indicators**	**Allocated Resources**
Objective 3.1 Enhance employee well-being and loyalty by promoting and effectively implementing flexible work practices at CZU	*Action 3.1.1* Provide training and communication campaigns to raise awareness of flexible work options and their benefits	2027–2028	Increased awareness of the flexible forms of work among employees	In-kind as the activity of CZU HR office
	Action 3.1.2 Monitor usage and effectiveness of flexible work arrangements regularly, integrating findings into GEP assessment	2026–2030	Annual data available	
Issue 3.2 – Institutional support for employees with caregiving responsibilities is inadequately developed and communicated.				
Objectives	**Actions**	**Period**	**Indicators**	**Allocated Resources**
Objective 3.2 Create an employee-friendly environment by enhancing support for those with caregiving duties, contributing to overall well-being	*Action 3.2.1* Develop and implement on-site preschool care facilities	2026	Accessible preschool facilities	Financial: 150,000 CZK/year to organise the events, in-kind: wages and utilities of preschool care facilities and their staff
	Action 3.2.2 Organise informal childcare activities or family-friendly events	2026–2029	No. of organised activities	
	Action 3.2.3 Design and execute a focused communication strategy highlighting available support services	2028	Existing communication strategy	

4. Organisational culture (awareness-raising on gender biases, stereotypes, and sexism)				
Issue 4.1 – *Insufficient and ineffective communication limits understanding and engagement with gender equality policies and practices at CZU.*				
Objectives	**Actions**	**Period**	**Indicators**	**Allocated Resources**
Objective 4.1 Increase understanding and support for GE(P) agenda among CZU community through enhanced communication	*Action 4.1.1* Develop a comprehensive communication strategy specifically for GE topics	2026–2027	Existing comprehensive communication	Financial 50,000: CZK/year for the training of PR people.
	Action 4.1.2 Provide training to PR teams at the central and faculty levels to improve communication skills regarding GE issues	2027–2030	Strategy for GE topics Lower resistance by mg of faculties	
	Action 4.1.3 Integrate new technologies, including AI, into awareness campaigns and training	2027–2030	Percentage of population understanding GE importance No. of training, No. of participants Campaigns and training material developed with AI support	
Issue 4.2 – Students lack awareness of available counselling services, limiting their ability to seek help for gender-related issues.				
Objectives	**Actions**	**Period**	**Indicators**	**Allocated Resources**
Objective 4.2 Ensure students are well-informed about counselling services and how to access them	*Action 4.2.1* Maintain ongoing communication campaigns about counselling services	2026–2030	No. of campaigns	Financial: 100,000 CZK/year for the campaign and in-kind (material performance) of persons performing monitoring activities as part of their job
	Action 4.2.2 Monitor and report on service utilisation to assess outreach effectiveness	2026–2030	Annual Internal Report available	
Issue 4.3 – Lack of capacity and structures for effective prevention and resolution of conflicts, including those with multicultural aspects.				
Objectives	**Actions**	**Period**	**Indicators**	**Allocated Resources**
Objective 4.3 Establish clear mandates and strengthen university mediation bodies to prevent and resolve conflicts effectively	*Action 4.3.1* Development of a set of recommendations on appropriate behaviour (on multiple axes, race, religion, gender identity, language) for teaching, research and administrative staff	2026–2027	Existing set of recommendations published via CZU Intranet	Financial: 100,000 CZK for training
	Action 4.3.2 Develop and conduct awareness-raising sessions on these recommendations, and intercultural mediation training	2026–2030	Developed training, trained personnel	
	Action 4.3.3 Implement monitoring of conflict occurrences and resolution outcomes	2026–2028	Annual data available	

5. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment				
Issue 5.1 – Low awareness and understanding of GBV issues among the university community.				
Objectives	**Actions**	**Period**	**Indicators**	**Allocated Resources**
Objective 5.1 Increase trust and willingness to report GBV cases through sustained awareness and communication	*Action 5.1.1* Conduct continuous campaigns and regular communication to raise awareness about GBV and reporting mechanisms	2026–2027	Increased number of cases of the term „speak up" (persons exposed to GBV are free to talk about this issue)	In-kind (salaries) activities of PR office people preparing and implementing the campaign at CZU
Issue 5.2 – Limited transparency and follow-up on resolved GBV cases reduce trust in reporting systems.				
Objectives	**Actions**	**Period**	**Indicators**	**Allocated Resources**
Objective 5.2 Enhance transparency and responsiveness in handling reported GBV cases	*Action 5.2.1* Establish monitoring of reported cases and outcomes	2026–2027	Data available	In-kind: activities and salaries of Ethics Committee members
	Action 5.2.2 Develop and implement communication strategies, highlighting resolved cases and measures taken	2026–2030	Existing communication strategy	
Issue 5.3 – Although a system for reporting gender-based violence (GBV) exists at CZU, it suffers from low visibility and outdated protocols that do not leverage current technologies. This diminishes user trust and reduces the effectiveness of prevention and reporting, affecting both students and staff.				
Objectives	**Actions**	**Period**	**Indicators**	**Allocated Resources**
Objective 5.3 Modernise the GBV reporting system and update associated protocols to improve efficiency, accessibility, and trust among all CZU community members	*Action 5.3.1* Develop inclusive awareness campaigns on GBV reporting systems, tailored to the needs of diverse groups (including LGBTQ+, international students, and disabled persons), ensuring access in multiple languages and accessible formats	2026–2028	Updated communication strategy	In-kind of salaries of members of Gender Equality Panel
	Action 5.3.2 Review and update GBV reporting protocols and procedures based on evidence, lessons learned, and technological advances to be inclusive (e.g. allow anonymous or third-party reporting, multilingual access, tailored pathways for LGBTQ+ survivors, people with disabilities)	2026–2030	Updated existing Protocol to be inclusive (e.g. allow anonymous or third-party reporting, multilingual access, tailored pathways for LGBTQ+ survivors, people with disabilities)	
	Action 5.3.3 Establish a monitoring and evaluation system for GBV reporting effectiveness	2028–2030	M&E system	

6. Integration of the gender dimension into research content				
Issue 6.1 – Limited awareness and capacity among CZU researchers about integrating gender dimensions into research, with such considerations largely confined to Social Sciences.				
Objectives	**Actions**	**Period**	**Indicators**	**Allocated Resources**
Objective 6.1 Sensitise and build the capacity of research staff across all disciplines to incorporate gender dimensions in their work, fostering „gender imagination and sensitivity" that enables innovative and novel research approaches	*Action 6.1.1* Design and deliver targeted capacity-building training and workshops on intersectional gender-sensitive/responsive research	2026–2030	Strategy on training developed	
	Action 6.1.2 Launch awareness campaigns to promote the concept of „gender imagination and sensitivity" in research	2026–2027	Existing materials and examples across the fields No. of training courses detailed in the GEP Annual Action Plan	
	Action 6.1.3 Integrate gender dimension requirements and evaluation criteria into internal research proposal processes	2027–2030	Campaigns designed and released	
	Action 6.1.4 Establish a Gender in Research Support Network at CZU	2027–2030	Gender dimension integrated in the requirements and evaluation of the internal grants GiRSN CZU has own website with clear mission and vision No. of events	
Issue 6.2 – Predominance of siloed research approaches limits interdisciplinary collaboration and incorporation of gender dimensions.				
Objectives	**Actions**	**Period**	**Indicators**	**Allocated Resources**
Objective 6.2 Promote interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research teams to foster gender dimension integration	*Action 6.2.1* Raise awareness of the benefits of transdisciplinary research via training, campaigns, and showcasing best practices	2026–2030	No. of training courses, campaigns and best practices showcasing	Financial: 100,000 CZK/year for training

7. Structures for the institutionalisation of gender equality				
Issue 7.1 – The Gender Equality Working Group operates as an informal voluntary initiative, lacking formal mandate and recognition.				
Objectives	**Actions**	**Period**	**Indicators**	**Allocated Resources**
Objective 7.1 Formalise and institutionalise WG GEP within CZU's governance structure with a clear mandate and recognition (e.g. as an advisory body of the Board of Rector)	*Action 7.1.1* Develop institutionalisation scenarios and select the optimal option	2027–2028	Best scenario available	In-kind (salaries of Gender Equality Panel members)
	Action 7.1.2 Obtain approval from the Rector and the advisory boards	2029	Formal Approval of WG GEP	
Issue 7.2. – Absence of a dedicated Gender Equality Coordinator reduces effectiveness and continuity of gender-related activities				
Objectives	**Actions**	**Period**	**Indicators**	**Allocated Resources**
Objective 7.2 Recruit and train a committed GE Coordinator, with a clear mandate to oversee all gender equality activities	*Action 7.2.1* Hire the most suitable candidate for the GE Coordinator position	2028	The existing GE Coordinator position is occupied by a person with the relevant expertise	Financial: 300,000 CZK/year as 0.1 FTE (salary)
	Action 7.2.2 Provide comprehensive training and continuous professional development	2028–2030	No. of training courses Performance of GE Coordinator	

8. Agriculture and/or Life Sciences specific issues				
Issue 8.1 – Certain research and practical training activities in Agriculture and Life Sciences exclude the participation of women and disabled persons due to physical or safety constraints				
Objectives	**Actions**	**Period**	**Indicators**	**Allocated Resources**
Objective 8.1 Use new technologies, such as virtual reality, to enhance the inclusion and participation of underrepresented groups in research and training	*Action 8.1.1* With the intersectional design, evaluate current regulations and safety compliance related to inclusion	2027	Existing Report with comprehensive and clear recommendations	Financial: 100,000 CZK year for implementing the projects In-kind: work of the GE Coordinator, work of the guarantor of the Veterinary Study Programme
	Action 8.1.2 Implement pilot projects, using inclusive technologies and monitor impact	2028–2030	Existing 3 pilot projects	

prof. Ing. Petr Sklenička, CSc.
rectorate Czech University of Life Sciences Prague





Czech University
of Life Sciences Prague

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