



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF UKRAINE
MARIUPOL STATE UNIVERSITY

Gender Equality Plan of Mariupol State University 2026-2029

Kyiv 2026

FOREWORD

The implementation of the Gender Equality Plan (hereinafter – GEP) at Mariupol State University (MSU) is a strategic step aimed at creating an inclusive educational and research environment free from any forms of discrimination, bias, and stereotypes. This document has been developed based on a comprehensive analysis of national legislation and international legal acts that define the principles of equality of rights and opportunities.

Legal Foundation and the Principle of Non-Discrimination

The regulatory framework of the GEP is the Law of Ukraine "On Principles of Prevention and Combating Discrimination in Ukraine" (No. 5207-VI). According to Article 2 of this Law, the University's activities are grounded in the principle of non-discrimination, which entails ensuring equality of rights and freedoms, equality of all participants in the educational process before the law, respect for human dignity, and the provision of equal opportunities for self-realisation.

In accordance with Article 6 of the Law, a strict prohibition of discrimination is established within the institution. The GEP provides for the implementation of positive actions (pursuant to Part 3 of Article 6 and Article 7 of the Law), which consist of special measures to eliminate disparities and provide additional guarantees to specific categories of persons.

Gender Equality in Education and National Strategy

Ensuring gender equality within the educational environment is currently one of the most pressing issues. The MSU GEP has been developed in compliance with the Strategy for the Implementation of Gender Equality in Education until 2030 and its operational action plan.

Furthermore, the document is aligned with the State Strategy for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men for the period until 2030. The development of the GEP directly contributes to the realisation of the state's strategic goals regarding the functioning of the national equality mechanism, combating violence, ensuring human development, and supporting economic activity—factors that are critical for Ukraine's resilience in the face of the Russian Federation's aggression.

International Standards and Global Goals

The preparation of the GEP takes into account fundamental international documents that shape the global human rights agenda:

- The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which sets forth the international legal standards for protecting women's rights and ensuring gender equality;
- UN General Assembly Resolution No. 70/1 of September 25, 2015, which defines the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (specifically Goal No. 5: Gender Equality);
- The Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024–2029, which outlines the priorities for protecting women's rights in European countries at the current stage.

European Integration and Research Area

Given Ukraine's European integration course, the MSU GEP is based on the European Commission's Recommendations on the implementation of Gender Equality Plans within the framework programs for research and innovation (Horizon Europe). The integration of a gender-sensitive approach is part of the national policy for the recovery of Ukraine and the fulfilment of requirements for accession to the European Union.

Additionally, the plan incorporates:

- The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women (Istanbul Convention) regarding the creation of a safe academic space;
- The European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life and the principles of the Beijing Declaration (1995).

The objective of the GEP implementation is to ensure the sustainable development of MSU and to build a modern, competitive higher education institution that meets the highest international standards.

SECTION 1: STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Values and Mission

MSU regards human potential – including students, academic and research staff, and employees – as the foundation of its revival, resilience, and success. Building an academic environment dominated by respect, inclusion, and equality is an integral part of our institution's corporate culture. The GEP for 2026–2029 serves as a practical tool for creating a barrier-free space. The University guarantees the necessary institutional support and resources for the implementation of the planned steps, which fully align with the objectives of the MSU Strategic Development Plan and the principles of the European Research Area (ERA).

Situational Assessment and Analytical Workstreams

As this GEP is the first comprehensive document of its kind for MSU under the conditions of relocation, its implementation begins with a thorough study of the current state of affairs. During the first stage of implementation, primary focus will be placed on the following analytical workstreams:

- **Statistical Analysis:** Researching the gender composition of staff (academic, administrative, technical) and the student body across various levels of study.
- **Opportunities Audit:** Examining the needs of the academic community regarding work-life balance in the context of remote and hybrid work environments.
- **Career Monitoring:** Reviewing procedures for appointments to senior positions, the formation of academic boards, and career advancement processes to ensure the absence of hidden barriers.
- **Ethical Audit:** Developing tools to identify and prevent manifestations of sexism, gender stereotypes, or any forms of psychological pressure. This research will ensure that subsequent GEP measures are highly accurate and tailored to the needs of each specific university department.

Implementation Mechanism and Responsibility

The Gender Studies and Education Centre of MSU serves as the institutional guarantor for the implementation and monitoring of the GEP. The Centre becomes the primary expert platform where scientific knowledge and practical activities for building equality converge. The implementation process is based on the following principles:

- **Collaboration:** The Centre ensures continuous interaction with the administration, faculties, and structural units to integrate equality standards into the institution's daily practice.

- **Regular Analysis:** Experts from the Centre monitor the achievement of target indicators and prepare annual reports for the Academic Board and the Rectorate.

- **Transparency and Accountability:** Progress in the GEP implementation is open to the entire MSU community and is published as part of the university's annual public reporting.

SECTION 2: PRIORITY AREAS AND MEASURES (2026–2029)

Transformation of Internal Organisational Culture

The objective is to foster a learning and working environment that is inclusive and supports the development of every participant in the educational process.

- **Formal Status Assignment:** Publication of the GEP as a core regulatory document, mandatory for review by all staff members.

- **Educational Activities:** Delivery of a series of training sessions, webinars, and workshops for senior management and academic staff on overcoming gender stereotypes within the academic environment.

- **Gender-Sensitive Communication:** Implementation of non-discrimination principles across visual content, official documentation, and the university's external communications.

Equal Access to Governance and Career Support

Stimulating balanced representation in decision-making processes and professional growth.

- **Objective Recruitment:** Adherence to transparent selection criteria for appointments to managerial and academic positions, based exclusively on professional competencies.

- **Gender Parity on Boards:** Regular monitoring of the composition of the Academic Board, as well as competitive and expert committees, to ensure the representation of both genders.

- **Support Programmes:** Development of mentoring tools for early-career researchers (ECRs), aimed at encouraging their participation in international grant projects.

Work-Life Balance Integration

Development of a support system that enables the successful combination of work or study with family responsibilities.

- **Flexibility and Remote Work:** Formalising opportunities for hybrid work and flexible scheduling, which is critical for a displaced higher education institution.

- **Methodological Assistance:** Development of an information package regarding leave entitlements, social guarantees, and distance learning.

- **Maintaining Connection:** Establishing "soft return" mechanisms to academic activity for individuals following career breaks related to childcare.

Counteracting Discrimination and Safety Measures

Establishment of a system for rights protection and ethical oversight.

- **Consultancy Support:** Enhancing the roles of the Ethics Committee and the Gender Studies and Education Centre as bodies where confidential advice can be sought regarding instances of sexism or unethical conduct.

- **Response Algorithms:** Development and dissemination of clear instructions for actions in conflict situations related to gender discrimination.

- **Information-Based Prevention:** Regular coverage of ethics and academic integrity issues across the university's information resources.

Monitoring, Reporting, and Resource Allocation

Ensuring the sustainability of changes through continuous oversight and the allocation of resources.

- **Statistical Accounting System:** Implementation of gender-disaggregated data collection within the annual internal reporting of all departments.

- **Public Reporting:** Preparation and publication of an annual analytical report by the Gender Studies and Education Centre on the progress of GEP implementation.

- **Financial Sustainability:** Planning expenditures for educational activities and the administrative support of the GEP within the annual university budget and through secured grant funding.

SECTION 3: MSU OPERATIONAL ACTION PLAN (2026–2029)

No.	Area of Activity	Key Measures	Timeline	Responsible Departments / Guarantors
1	Organisational Culture	Publication of the GEP; delivery of a series of training sessions and workshops for staff; implementation of non-discriminatory communication.	2026–2029 (annually)	Gender Studies and Education Centre, Information and Public Relations Department
2	Governance and Career	Monitoring the composition of academic boards; ensuring transparent recruitment; launching mentoring programmes for early-career researchers.	2026–2027	Academic Board, Human Resources Department, Centre for Human Potential Development,
3	Work-Life Balance	Regulating hybrid/remote work; developing an information package on social guarantees; supporting individuals following childcare leave.	2026–2028	Legal Department, Educational and Methodological Department, Trade Union
4	Safety and Ethics	Strengthening the role of the Ethics Committee, developing response algorithms for sexism, and engaging with the student community.	2026–2027	Ethics Committee, Centre for Social and Educational Work, Gender Studies and Education Centre
5	Monitoring and Resources	Collection of gender-disaggregated statistics; preparation of an annual report; monitoring of international standards.	2026–2029 (annually)	Gender Studies and Education Centre, Centre for International Education

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