



# **Gender Equality Plan 2024-2027**

**The Department of Occupational Medicine  
and Public Health, The Faroe Islands**

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**This Action Plan for Gender Equality and Diversity for the period from 2024 to 2027  
was acknowledged on 05 August 2024.**

**Maria Skaalum Petersen  
Head of Department**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maria S. Petersen" with a stylized flourish at the end.

## **Preamble**

The Department of Occupational Medicine and Public Health (DfAA) in the Faroe Islands is committed to fostering true equality and vibrant diversity by actively promoting initiatives for equal opportunities, inclusion, and diversity at every level, from administration to research level. DfAA works to ensure that these values are embedded throughout the community.

The Action Plan for Gender Equality of DfAA sets out the key principles, objectives, and measures to promote equal opportunities for all genders. The plan's primary goal is to ensure balanced participation of women and men in the professional life of the DfAA. This involves fostering equal representation, eliminating gender-specific disadvantages, ensuring that job openings are filled fairly based on applicant qualifications, and improving the work-life balance for DfAA's employees. Additionally, specialized training modules will raise awareness of gender-related issues in research.

The data collection results, along with the objectives and actions outlined, will be integrated into DfAA's ongoing efforts to advance equality and diversity. This first Gender Equality Action Plan spans from 2024 to 2027. A comprehensive review and update will be conducted by summer 2027, based on a new baseline analysis. The Action Plan for Gender Equality is available to all staff and the public in both Faroese and English on our website [www.health.fo](http://www.health.fo).

## **Legal and Policy Framework**

The Faroe Islands have put in place anti-discrimination legislation and policies designed to protect individuals and particular groups of people against discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, color, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, national or social origin, political, philosophical, or other opinion, union or other organizational affiliation, association, or other status. The legislation and policies, which are rooted in the principle of equality, include the laws, directories, and regulatory bodies enclosed, which all apply to public institutions, such as DfAA. Please see Annex I. There is no legislation regarding gender equality in the area of research or research funding organizations in particular. The DfAA is however committed to live up to and comply with the highest of European standards on the issue of gender equality and indeed to promote equal opportunity in general.

## **Baseline Analysis**

To ensure a targeted effort and valid monitoring of the effects of initiatives made, it is important to base the gender equality effort on qualified knowledge and data. The following indicators for gender equality form the basis for our baseline analysis and provide the background for our Action Plan objectives. The data below are the latest available from 2023.

Disaggregated data 2023	N=	% ♂	% ♀
Leadership	1	100%	0%
Administration	4	75%	25%
Scientific staff	2	0%	100%
Ph.D. students	2	0%	100%
Researchers (external)	2	50%	50%

DfAA is small and is therefore vulnerable to any changes in the balance of men and women affiliated with the department. We are aware of this challenge and acknowledge that this requires strategic planning and committed action.

## Objectives

In the long term, the organizational and scientific culture at DfAA shall be designed to be family friendly and to provide equal opportunities for both genders. With the Action Plan for Gender Equality, DfAA seeks to implement the following objectives:

- Ensure equal opportunities through equal treatment of women and men regarding work and career
- Continue raising awareness about gender policy at all levels in our organization
- Aim for equitable representation of all genders in research teams and leadership roles, ensuring diverse perspectives contribute to decision-making processes and project development
- Integrate gender perspectives into research methodologies and topics, ensuring that research outputs consider gender diversity and inclusivity where relevant
- Create a fair and transparent system for assigning research projects, funding opportunities, and career advancement, ensuring that all genders have equal access and support
- Monitor the state of gender equality and its progress in all areas, to register it, and to keep improving at monitoring and registering
- Ensure broad involvement of the entire department in relation to goals and direction of the gender equality effort
- Enhance organizational awareness of gender equality and unconscious bias, while strengthening the workplace culture, with a particular focus on preventing and addressing offensive behavior

**Based on the analysis, the compiled data, and legal requirements, DfAA has identified the following areas of intervention to be addressed to achieve our objectives:**

- Equal opportunities in recruitment, promotion, and career development
- Raising awareness and education on gender equality and unconscious bias
- Ensuring gender balance in leadership roles and research teams
- Incorporating gender perspectives into research methodologies and outputs
- Establishing fair and transparent processes for project assignment, funding distribution, and career advancement
- Ongoing monitoring and assessment of gender equality progress
- Fostering an inclusive workplace culture and preventing offensive behavior
- Encouraging broad involvement and shared responsibility in gender equality initiatives

**To achieve our objectives as laid out above, DfAA will:**

- Publish DfAA's Action Plan on the web
- Implement gender-neutral hiring, promotion, and performance evaluation practices to ensure equal opportunities for all genders
- Provide regular training and workshops on gender equality, unconscious bias, and inclusive practices for all staff and students
- Set targets for gender balance in leadership positions and research teams, ensuring diverse perspectives in decision-making processes
- Integrate gender-sensitive approaches in research design and encourage research projects that promote gender inclusivity
- Establish transparent criteria for the fair distribution of research projects, funding, and advancement opportunities, with regular audits to assess equity
- Develop a gender equality monitoring framework to track key metrics and regularly report progress.
- Strengthen workplace policies and reporting mechanisms to address harassment and offensive behavior, promoting a culture of respect and inclusivity

**Timeline**

This Action Plan for Gender Equality was adopted by the DfAA on 5. August 2024. Effects from the measurements and other developments regarding gender equality will be assessed on an annual basis in August 2025, 2026, and 2027. In April 2027, at the latest, the Action Plan will be reviewed, revised, and updated for the next action plan period (2028-2031).

**Division of responsibilities**

In charge of implementing the stated measures: DfAA's leader, Maria Skaalum Petersen.

In charge of statistics, annual assessments, and reporting: Marita Hansen.

## Legal Framework

The Faroe Islands anti-discrimination legislation and policies include the following laws, directories, and regulatory bodies:

1. Law of the Løgting No. 52 of 3 May 1994 on equality between women and men, which
  - ❖ outlaws all gender-based discrimination with the exception of positive discrimination aiming to reach gender equality. The law specifies, that women and men are to be provided with equal opportunity regarding education, employment, and professional and cultural development
  - ❖ specifically prohibits any direct or indirect gender-based discrimination with respect to employment and all related aspects such as discharge, work assessment, wage, relocation, promotion, leave, work conditions, and privileges
  - ❖ stipulates equal pay and benefits for equal work and equal career development opportunities, including education, training, re-education, participation in courses, and other skills development
  - ❖ provides for the right of absence during pregnancy, childbirth, and post-childbirth without any loss of seniority
  - ❖ prescribes all material for the education and upbringing of children to be consistent with the principle of equality, including equal selection of learning materials
  - ❖ commands equal gender representation in all public committees, councils, representations etc. appointed by national authorities
  - ❖ appoints the Gender Equality Council, which is tasked with:
    - monitoring compliance with this law
    - advising authorities, institutions organizations and individuals on gender-equality issues
    - making recommendations regarding gender-equality issues
    - collecting and resolving any complaints concerning gender-based discrimination
2. Law of the Løgting No. 48 of 3 April 2001 on parental leave, which
  - ❖ prohibits the discharge of any worker for making use of their right to parental leave, or due to pregnancy, birth, or child-adoption
3. Law of the Løgting No. 63 of 26 May 2011 on disability discrimination in the labour market, which

- ❖ prohibits all disability-based discrimination, positive or negative, by employers against employees or job applicants in the context of employment, discharge, transfer, promotion, wage, or employment conditions;
  - ❖ prohibits the mentioning of disability in job postings, whether it be an advantage or otherwise
4. Law of the Løgting No. 132 of 10 June 1993 on administrative law, which
    - ❖ prohibits any disclosure of information on race, religion, colour, political or other organisational affiliation, gender, sexual orientation or any punishable circumstance to other administrative bodies
  5. Law of the Løgting No. 80 of 7 June 2020 on data protection, which
    - ❖ prohibits the processing of information regarding colour, race, or ethnicity, political, religious, or philosophical belief, union affiliation, genetic or biometric data for personal identification, medical information, information on gender, sexual orientation, punishable circumstances or information on significant social issues and other private affairs
  6. Directory No. 8000 of 15 January 2020 on public employment discharge, which
    - ❖ prohibits discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, age etc.
  7. Circular No. 9001 of 26 November 2018 on law-making, which
    - ❖ prescribes gender-neutral language to all legal texts and public promulgations

Moreover, the Faroe Islands have ratified:

8. The European Convention on Human Rights, which in article 14
  - ❖ prohibits all discrimination on the ground of sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, or other status
9. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which in article 3 promotes inter alia:
  - ❖ non-discrimination
  - ❖ full and effective participation and inclusion in society
  - ❖ equality of opportunity
  - ❖ equality between men and women

In addition to said legislation and conventions, the Faroe Islands Government has appointed:



10. The Committee for the promotion of gender equality in politics, *Demokratia*, composed of
- ❖ one member from each political party
  - ❖ one from the Municipalities' Association
  - ❖ one from the National Women's Association, and
  - ❖ one from the Gender Equality Council. *Demokratia* is tasked with:
    - ❖ organizing cross-party initiatives to promote a more equal representation of the sexes in politics
    - ❖ enhancing women's influence in political decision-making, and
    - ❖ increasing the number of women in parliament and in local government, so that women's representation in the Faroe Islands will resemble that of the rest of the Nordic countries more

Lastly, all public institutions of the Faroe Islands have signed:

11. The "Active Staff Policy Agreement", which expands institutions' options regarding measures to improve their policies regarding:
- ❖ skills development
  - ❖ elderly staff
  - ❖ work-life balance (family policy)
  - ❖ gender equality