

**UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

**Promoting gender equality
at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of the University of
Szeged**

Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

November 2022

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This document (GEP) sets out the Faculty's objectives for promoting gender equality in line with the expectations of the European Union's Horizon Europe programme¹. The Faculty of Economics and Business Administration (*hereinafter "GTK"*) of the University of Szeged (*hereinafter "SZTE"*) is committed to achieving the goals set out in the document, devoting resources to this task to the extent possible, regularly monitoring the achievement of the goals and reviewing them if necessary.

In pursuing the objectives of the GEP, the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration will seek to build on the steps already taken to promote equal opportunities as well as maintain and support relevant elements of the organisational culture already in line with the GEP. And in areas where change is needed, it seeks to involve (internal and external) stakeholders as active participants in the process; it also aims to ensure that the implementation and regular review of the GEP is carried out in partnership and through dialogue.

The promotion of gender equality is necessarily linked to other areas of equality and diversity. The situation of an employee or student cannot usually be described well by a single dimension of equality, it is rather understood as an inter-section of several dimensions (e.g. gender, academic hierarchy, age, specific life situation, ethnic and religious background, disability, etc.). Therefore, this document also necessarily addresses some of the links related to gender equality. On the other hand, several issues that were highlighted by the analysis of the current situation but not directly related to equal opportunities (e.g. well-being at work, certain aspects of leadership and management issues) are not addressed in this document. GTK is committed to better understanding these issues through additional processes (building on the current ones) and promoting them through specific strategies.

The process of preparing the GEP was launched in May 2021. The preparation was coordinated by a working group of 3-members (Zsófia Kürtösi, Judit Juhász and Zoltán Bajmócy). The process was supported by the expertise of IFZ (Interdisziplinäres Forschungszentrum für Technik, Arbeit und Kultur, Graz Austria), the coordinator of the CHANGE (Challenging gender [in]equality in science and research) H2020 project; and namely Anita Thaler and Sandra Karner. The aim of the process is to develop a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) that meets the requirements of Horizon Europe.

The process of discussing the GEP:

- The draft GEP was written by Zsófia Kürtösi, Judit Juhász and Zoltán Bajmócy.
- The draft GEP was discussed by the Faculty management several times.
- The draft GEP was discussed by the Committee for Equality and Diversity of the Faculty on 22 September 2022.
- The draft GEP has been sent to all organisational units (Institutes, Divisions, Research Centre, Dean's Office, Study Office) and the Student Union on 12 September 2022 with the request to discuss it within the organisation unit and send feedback. The Institute of Economics and Economic Development and the Institute of Business Studies negotiated the document on an institute-level. Feedback was received also from the Student Union. Feedbacks arrived until 18 October 2022. Other organizational units did not send feedback on the document.
- The draft GEP has been sent to all employees via the Faculty mailing list, with the option to send feedback directly to the working group members. Such feedbacks arrived until 30 September 2022.

¹ European Commission Decision C (2021) 1940 of 31st March 2021. Horizon Europe Work Programme 2021-2022. General Annexes

- Based on the feedbacks received, a modified version of the GEP was prepared by 15 November 2022 for submission to the Faculty Council. The new version was also written by Zsófia Kürtösi, Judit Juhász and Zoltán Bajmócy.

1. Gender equality at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration

1.1. Regulatory and academic environment

The most important obligations of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of the University of Szeged in relation to the promotion of equal treatment and equal opportunities are derived from the respective legal provisions in effect, in particular Act CXXV of 2003 on equal treatment and the promotion of equal opportunities. In relation to ensuring equal treatment and equal opportunities, the University of Szeged sets out general rules and the most important relevant aspirations:

- in the SZTE's Terms and Conditions for Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment, and
- in the current Equal Opportunities Plan of SZTE.

SZTE operates an Equal Opportunities Committee for Employees and an Equal Opportunities Committee for Students intended to enforce the prohibition of discrimination (including gender discrimination) at the university.

This document builds on these laws and regulations to declare the objectives of GTK in promoting gender equality.

In addition to the above, this document (GEP) also takes into account the requirements of the European Union's Horizon Europe programme. This results in the following **four process criteria**:

- **Publication:** The GEP is a document formally adopted by the main decision-making body of the Faculty and published on the website.
- **Dedicated resources:** The Faculty demonstrates its commitment to the achievement of the objectives set by providing resources.
- **Data collection and monitoring:** The Faculty develops a measurement practice to describe well-being at work and gender equality; the results of the measurements will be published annually.
- **Training:** The Faculty aims to raise awareness of gender equality and reduce unconscious bias in this area by training staff and managers.

Horizon Europe also expects the GEP to cover the following areas (**content requirements**):

- work-life balance, organisational culture;
- balance in leadership and decision-making;
- equal opportunities in recruitment and promotion;
- integrating the (gender) equality dimension into the content of research and education;
- measures against gender-based violence and (sexual) harassment.

1.2. GEP as an element of the Faculty's efforts to promote equal opportunities

According to the decision of the Faculty Council of 17 July 2020, the Committee for Equality and Diversity of the Faculty was established, which is responsible for the evaluation of the Faculty processes from the perspective of equal opportunities, the promotion of the implementation of the Faculty's equal opportunities strategy and its regular review. On 12 November 2020, the Faculty

Council of the GTK adopted the document "Foundation of the SZTE Faculty of Economics and Business Administration Student Equality Strategy - Principles and Guidelines". In this document, the Faculty has set out the scope of its ambitions to promote equal opportunities, its fundamental objectives in relation to equal opportunities and the principles it applies in promoting equal opportunities. Accordingly, the Faculty's efforts to promote equal opportunities cover the following areas:

- equal opportunities for staff members;
- equal opportunities for students at the University;
- equal opportunities for the partners of the University and guests attending events; and
- the university's efforts as an "advocate for equal opportunities" to accomplish positive changes in society.

GTK follows the following **principles** in ensuring equal opportunities:

- The efforts to achieve equal opportunities go beyond the concept of "compensating for disadvantages", with a particular focus on promoting an environment that prevents the emergence of barriers.
- The addressing of the barriers requires cooperation between those affected and their environment (from understanding the situation, through formulating objectives, to implementation and evaluation).
- Equal opportunities cannot be treated in a vertical approach (as a separate set of tasks). Equal opportunities must permeate all operational processes at the Faculty.

The **equal opportunities objectives of GTK** cover four broad areas:

1. Creating an organisational framework for equal opportunities;
2. Partnership in planning, implementation and monitoring;
3. Promoting equal opportunities within GTK;
4. Undertaking a role to promote equal opportunities outside GTK;

This document builds on these principles and objectives. It also follows that the promotion of well-being at work and gender equality is interlinked with other steps taken by the Faculty to promote equal opportunities. They complement (and partly overlap) each other.

One of the most important links of the GEP is the document "Inclusive and non-discriminatory learning environment at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration – Guidelines and procedures, adopted by the Faculty Council on 18 November 2021".

1.3. Main features of the current situation

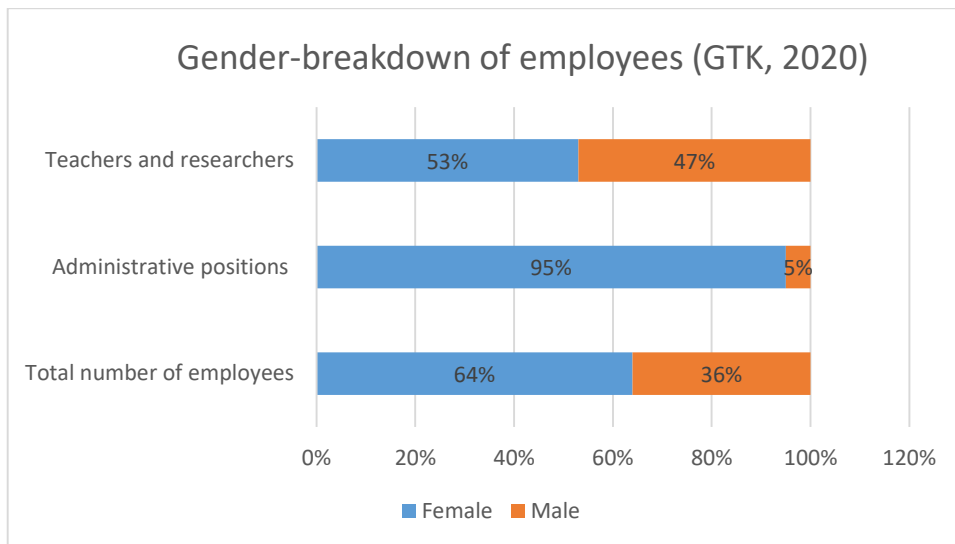
The current situation was mapped in two ways. On the one hand, by collecting "hard" data that can be used to capture and describe the organisational situation of men and women, partly for the university as a whole and partly for the Faculty. On the other hand, as a preparation for the GEP, two workshops were organised (in October and December 2021) with the participation of the Faculty staff on the topics of employee wellbeing and gender equality. The first workshop (with 12 participants) was aimed at identifying problems, the second (with 10 participants) at finding possible solutions. Below is a summary of the main findings of the background document.

1.3.1. Numerical data

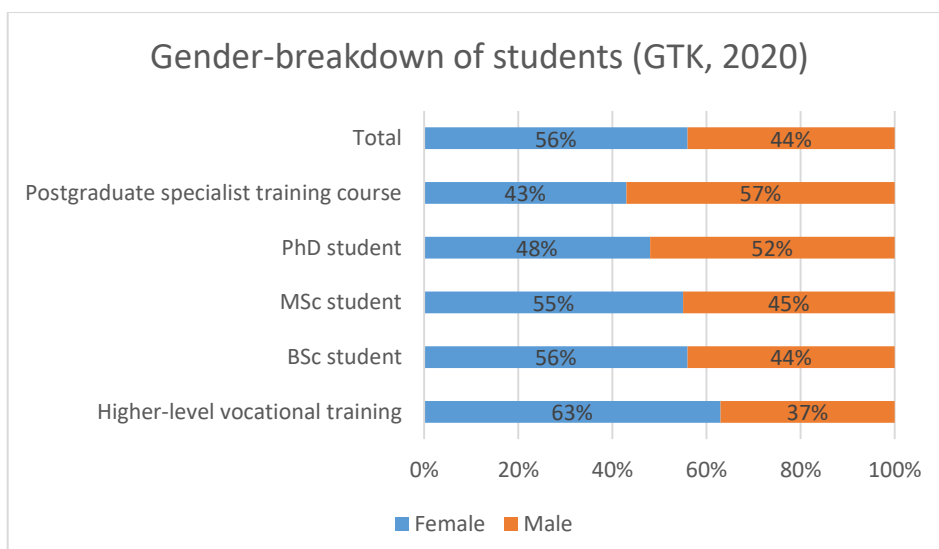
When quantifying the baseline situation of GTK we used data referring to 2020. A key finding of the data collection is the limited range of data available and the technical difficulty of data collection. It is also important to underline that in most cases the snapshot data for 2020 allow only limited conclusions to be drawn.

First, we will focus on two “characteristics” that describe the Faculty regarding gender equality in a broad and long-term perspective:

- **Gender-breakdown of employees.** While the male-to-female ratio in teaching/research positions is relatively balanced, administrative jobs are almost exclusively held by women.
- **Gender-breakdown of students.** Overall, the gender distribution of GTK students is balanced (with a slightly higher proportion of female students). However, there is also a trend as is well known in the literature that the proportion of female students at higher levels of education is decreasing.

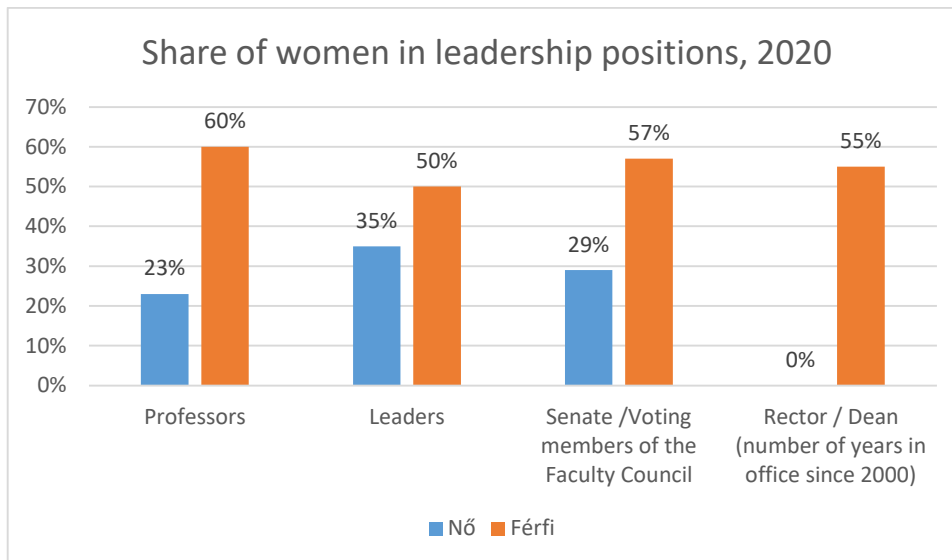


Note: administrative positions are defined as all jobs where a person is not working in a teaching/research status.



The main performance features related to gender equality that can be changed in the shorter term at GTK:

- **Teacher career progression.** The picture is mixed in this respect. In 2020, 53% of all teachers is women and 47% men. This is in line with the fact that 51% of PhD holders and 50% of the teachers with habilitation are women, so the gender ratio is balanced. However, a disparity emerges when looking at the positions. 70% of junior lecturers (assistant lecturers and assistant professors) and 31% of senior lecturers (associate and full professors) are women. Provided that there is no significant attrition in the processes of promotion and habilitation, this ratio can become more balanced in senior positions in a few years. However, if the male-to-female ratio among lower-ranking colleagues continues to follow this trend in the longer term, then over time gender balance may shift again (this time in the opposite direction). In this context, it is important to understand whether this has anything to do with the phenomenon known in the literature that the loss of prestige of a profession is associated with an increase in the proportion of women. In this case, the increase in the proportion of women may not be an indication of fulfilling potential, but rather the opposite.
- **More hidden differences in working conditions (e.g. access to resources/opportunities).** In this area, the range of data that could be extracted was partly limited and covered only a few areas. No significant gender differences were found in the proportion of people with laptops at work, the age of the laptop and the proportion of people who were involved in mobility abroad.
- **Wages.** It is important to stress that the analysis of one year's data is very limited in drawing conclusions in this respect (especially as the remuneration of lecturers has changed significantly since then).
 - o **Difference between total earnings for women and men:** Based on 2020 data (total wages including bonuses and allowances), female employees at GTK earned on average 33% less than male employees. This is mainly due to structural reasons: administrative positions are almost exclusively occupied by women.
 - o **Pay gap between employees in the same positions:** there is a small difference between the actual earnings of women and men (including bonuses and allowances) in 2020 (overall in favour of men). This is essentially reflected in two positions. On average, men earned 10% more than women among associate professors and women earned 25% more than men among assistant lecturers in 2020 (including bonuses and allowances).
- **Leadership and decision-making.** At GTK, the gender balance in management positions and decision-making bodies appears to be balanced. However, a different interpretation emerges if we compare this to the proportion of women among all employees (64%), all teachers (53%) or senior lecturers (31%). It is quite clear, however, that GTK performs much better in this respect than the university as a whole.



Note: By leaders in this survey we mean (SZTE): rector, vice rectors, chancellor, deans; (GTK): dean, vice-deans, heads of institutes

1.3.2. Results of the staff survey

Two workshops on employee wellbeing and gender equality were organised with the participation of the Faculty staff. The following themes were discussed in the workshops, in line with the GEP content requirements (although the presentation of theme 4 was limited):

1. work-life balance, organisational culture;
2. balance in leadership and decision-making;
3. equal opportunities in recruitment and promotion;
4. integrating the (gender) equality dimension into the content of research and education;
5. measures against gender-based violence and (sexual) harassment.

The main lessons learned from the workshops are highlighted below for each theme. This will draw on **the lived experiences of the colleagues** participating in the workshops. It is important to note that the way in which the data were collected affects the conclusions that can be drawn. The lived experience of the workshop participants discussed among themselves and the suggestions for solutions that emerged may allow the identification of problems in the Faculty. However, they do not allow us to infer the extent of the problems and the presence of possible differences in lived experience.

Work-life balance, organisational culture

At GTK, work-life balance is a fragile area. Low basic salaries make supplementary pay and extra work very important for employees, but this can lead to a shift in work-life balance. Also contributing to the imbalance is the fact that our organisational culture (and academic environment in general) positively rewards self-exploitation (e.g. the time and resources required for research efforts for promotion are only partially incorporated into working hours or university funding; course development, research, talent management are activities that can be developed further at any point with additional time). Colleagues are perceived as being generally overburdened and under-capacitated. Moreover, participants often feel that in their daily lives, constant availability, immediate response and taking on extra tasks are perceived as latent expectations. Many of them feel that the organisation does not

facilitate work-life balance and that the organisational culture rewards constant availability. Work-life balance is significantly affected by having children in case of both sexes. In other ways, but the fact that a colleague does not have children also has an impact. Experience shows that it is less acceptable if they refer to family reasons (even though they may have family commitments/responsibilities). They may have an expectation or "presumed expectation" to be "always available", which can lead to a life built around work.

In teaching/research positions, many employees find it challenging to dedicate longer periods of time during their working hours to engage in in-depth creative work. For many of them, uninterrupted, continuous period of time is a prerequisite for creative work (especially writing publications). Based on the workshop's findings, colleagues in higher positions have a greater opportunity to incorporate such continuous periods into their working hours.

All these issues are relevant for this plan because there may be systematic differences between employees in terms of their ability to maintain work-life balance and the boundaries they draw in this respect. This possibility, according to the results of the workshops, depends strongly on the position and the organisational unit. Colleagues (both in teaching and non-teaching positions) at the beginning of their family life are particularly exposed.

Balance in leadership and decision-making

Based on the experience of the workshop participants, decision-making processes at GTK are basically (and increasingly tending to be) transparent. The materials discussed by the Faculty Council are public and available to colleagues on Coospace. The newsletter summarizing the month's events, and the common email list also promote transparency and communication on GTK matters.

Colleagues did not report any imbalance in the composition of management and decision-making bodies. The followings have been identified as problems and may have implications regarding equal opportunities:

- lack of or insufficient consultation with those affected on certain issues related to the organisation of work tasks (e.g. the number of classes undertaken from new courses, allocation of committee tasks);
- some problems remain unresolved for long periods of time, which is compounded by the fact that it is not always clear to employees how to report the problem and who is responsible for resolving it;
- there is sometimes a lack of regular feedback and often excessive politeness can be experienced among colleagues, which can be followed by misunderstandings;
- in case of certain employees, persistent underperformance may not have long-term consequences.

Equal opportunities in recruitment and promotion

Generally speaking, GTK is a supportive environment for parents who have children. At the same time, parenthood clearly influences career paths for both women and men. According to the participants, having children can cause a major career break for women. For men, this period can also be challenging and create constraints, but less so than for their female counterparts (of course, this varies from person to person). Parents present at the workshop, regardless of gender, reported some unpleasant situations and comments from the past related to child caring or having a child. Inequalities in this dimension are partly gender-based and partly dependent on the employee's organisational unit and position.

Workshop participants did not report any gender issues related to recruitment. In this context, GTK does not currently have a conscious recruitment strategy, so the recruitment process is likely to unintentionally reproduce patterns of structural inequalities observed at the societal level (e.g. in the case of female over-representation in administrative positions).

Measures against gender-based violence and (sexual) harassment

According to the workshop participants, violence and harassment are not typical phenomena at the Faculty, but they exist as a problem. The general opinion is that it is necessary to address the issue, to deal with potential cases and prevent abuse. Abuses and crossing boundaries were discussed in several dimensions during the workshops. For example, workshop participants reported some cases when students behaved in a threatening way towards teachers/staff members: this included cornering, threatening, following, creating fear in their environment.

Sexual or gender-based abuse or boundary crossing directed at students or staff members are difficult to detect because those involved (especially students) fear retaliation and understandably avoid open confrontation. Information about these cases often reach decision-makers only through rumours, and they are often powerless to deal with the situation. This sometimes gives employees the impression that the organisation condones such abuses. It is not just the sexual type of boundary-crossing or abuse that can be a problem. Further forms of abuse of students by teachers may include plagiarism, exploitation of students through emotional blackmail or class assignments, or the confusion of educational and business interests.

2. Objectives

Below, we identify principles and objectives in areas consistent with Horizon Europe's content requirements. The principles set out the long-term direction to be followed in the area, while the objectives identify areas to be addressed in the shorter term, in line with the current intervention options. The objectives are therefore necessarily selective and need to be reviewed regularly.

As this is the first GEP at GTK, there is no established system for data collection and monitoring. The first horizontal objective is to develop this. This step is necessary to measure the achievement of the objectives and to take the necessary interventions.

2.1. Work-life balance, organisational culture

Principle: *GTK strives to create an organisational culture that enables all employees, regardless of position or organisational unit, to achieve a high level of well-being at work and create equal opportunities to achieve and maintain a work-life balance in the long term. In teaching/research positions, it allows for the allocation of a time-frame with no interruption for creative work.*

- ✓ GTK seeks to counterbalance the inequalities that often characterise the academic sector. By setting clear organisational priorities (at Faculty and institutional level), it facilitates well-being at work and work-life balance, and helps avoid burnout. It provides mentoring to help staff members starting their careers to enter the academic environment and then to develop professionally.
- ✓ GTK strives to ensure equal access to additional tasks that are not part of the job description and for which additional remuneration is paid. This does not affect employees' freedom to actually take on more or less of these tasks.
- ✓ GTK promotes formal and informal events that foster organisational cohesion, knowledge and experience sharing, contribute to well-being at work and facilitate the sharing of experiences, including work-life balance.
- ✓ GTK pays special attention to avoid/terminate the “soft” aspects of gender inequality that remain unnoticed or that are non-conscious. GTK pays attention to make the tasks of male and female colleagues equally transparent; to distribute the necessary administrative and caring tasks equally; to make equal opportunities of active participation in meetings for both genders; to evaluate the decisions made by male and female colleagues equally; to support colleagues' self-confidence in an equal way; to avoid a communication that would reinforce gender stereotypes in the workplace and in the academic life.

2.2. Balance in leadership and decision-making

Principle: *GTK ensures transparency in decision-making at both Faculty and institutional level, equal opportunities in access to leadership positions and participation in decision-making bodies.*

- ✓ Within the framework of legislation and university regulations, GTK strives to ensure that Faculty strategies are developed with the involvement of stakeholders. It is important for the institution that the framework conditions for the operation and development of the Faculty are clear and easily understood by its staff members, in particular: the university-level objectives, the expectations and opportunities shaped by external stakeholders and the university's management, and the room for manoeuvre provided by the budget.
- ✓ Within the framework of the legislation and the university regulations, GTK strives to ensure that the composition of the management, decision-making and decision preparation bodies (Faculty management, heads of institutes, voting members of the Faculty Council, chairs and members of the Faculty Council committees, professors) reflects the diversity of Faculty employees in terms of gender balance and other relevant aspects (e.g. representation of new entrants, administrative staff).

2.3. Equal opportunities in recruitment and promotion

Principle: *GTK makes a conscious effort to ensure equal opportunities at all stages of the recruitment, selection and promotion process and in access to resources/opportunities.*

- ✓ GTK will assess in detail how to ensure that the challenges associated with specific family situations (having children, raising children as a single parent, caring for an elderly relative, or taking into account the private life of those without children) do not lead to different opportunities in career progression.
- ✓ GTK's recruitment strategy is consciously designed with view to the structural inequalities in the labour market. In the recruitment process, the Faculty pays special attention to under-represented groups, aiming to reduce the systemic disadvantages they face in the labour market.
- ✓ Within the framework of the legislation and the university regulations, GTK strives to ensure that the composition of the bodies and committees that decide on the career development of employees (in particular the PhD thesis committee, the habilitation committee, the committee for the evaluation of applications for positions) reflects the diversity of the Faculty in terms of gender balance and other relevant aspects.

2.4. Integrating the (gender) equality dimension into the content of research and education

Principle: *GTK strives to promote the value of (gender) equality, combat (gender) prejudice and stereotypes, and reduce (gender-based) discrimination. Thus, in the implementation of education and research activities, it reflects the similarities and differences in the experiences and behaviour of women, men, different disadvantaged groups, people from different cultural backgrounds, and addresses the causes and consequences of inequalities in order to overcome them.*

- ✓ When creating educational content and developing curricula as well as during the implementation of education, GTK takes into account the dimension of (gender) equality, strives to avoid stereotypical content, reviews existing educational content based on a set of criteria developed for this purpose, and raises awareness among teachers in this area.
- ✓ GTK takes into account the (gender) equality perspective in its research (including design, implementation, data analysis, presentation of results, scientific events and scientific bodies), avoiding stereotypical communication and ways of working.

2.5. Measures against gender-based violence and (sexual) harassment

The efforts of GTK are complementary to the document "Inclusive and non-discriminatory learning environment at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration – Guidelines and procedures", adopted by the Faculty Council on 18 November 2021. The scope of these regulations cover:

- GTK staff members (including all teaching and non-teaching colleagues);
- colleagues not employed by GTK but who come into contact with students in connection with courses and talent management activities;
- GTK students, incoming exchange students; other students on courses offered by GTK.

Principle: *GTK expects its staff members and students to behave ethically; to consider each other as autonomous persons, regardless of gender, age and position, and respect each other's boundaries - whether physical or intellectual/personal interaction. GTK has a zero tolerance policy towards gender-based violence, (sexual) harassment and exploitation of any kind.*

- ✓ GTK communicates openly about the conditions for ensuring a non-discriminatory and harassment-free environment, the protocol for reporting and handling abuse, and the possible consequences of abuse.
- ✓ GTK will provide expert support/training to help students and teachers identify, address, and understand the background of crossing boundaries and abuses, and how to distinguish them from other challenges (e.g. cross-cultural differences).

2.6. Horizontal objectives

Regarding the area of gender equality and well-being at work, GTK has three objectives that support all activities horizontally.

- ✓ **H1: Data collection and monitoring.** This document is the first plan at GTK prepared to systematically collect information on gender equality and well-being at work. A more in-depth understanding and monitoring of the phenomena requires systematic and extended data collection (more detailed exploration of the dimensions of gender equality and inequality), establishment of indicators to be assigned to each theme and the definition of the frequency of monitoring for all objectives.
- ✓ **H2: Training.** In order to promote gender equality and well-being at work, there is a need for training and education on specific topics to raise awareness of these issues and integrate them into the overall gender equality objectives and regular/routine training of university stakeholders at the workplace.
- ✓ **H3: Partnership and commitment.** Efforts to address the complex issues of gender equality and well-being at work can be achieved through authentic knowledge on the subject, in collaboration with students, staff members and external organisations and experts with experience in the community. The values and practices of participation, partnership and engagement are consistent with the objectives of GTK.