

South East Technological University (SETU)



Report of the Expert Group on Horizon Europe Gender Equality Plan (GEP) Eligibility Requirements at SETU

Contents

Introduction	3
Expert Group Review	6
a. Conduct an internal review of existing plans or actions to ensure that the mandatory GEP requirements, and recommended areas, are being addressed.....	7
b. Address any gaps that may be identified in existing plans and policies when reviewed against the eligibility criterion and the recommendations set out in Horizon Europe GEP guidance.....	18
c. Publish a short statement, endorsed by the Head of Institution, identifying the institutional plans and activities that meet the mandatory requirements and which form the GEP for the purposes of eligibility for Horizon Europe.....	18
Conclusion.....	18
Appendix 1	19

Section 1: Introduction

Under Horizon Europe, having a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is now an eligibility criterion for certain categories of legal entities (i.e. public bodies, research organisations and higher education establishments) from EU Member States and Associated Countries. This requirement will apply to all calls for proposals with a deadline from January 2023 onwards. The European Commission has identified a set of essential elements – or ‘building blocks’ – for effective GEPs. To meet the eligibility criterion, a GEP must fulfil 4 mandatory process-related requirements which are detailed in Section 2 of this report.

SETU has been working for a number of years on a variety of gender equality initiatives which are summarised by way of introduction below.

Athena Swan & Gender Equality Action Plan

SETU was formed on 1st May 2022, by the amalgamation of Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) and Institute of Technology Carlow (ITC).

Prior to the formation of SETU, both IT Carlow and WIT had comprehensive Gender Equality Plans (GEP's) in place within their respective institutions, which were aligned to national policy on gender equality in higher education and to the Athena Swan Charter. Both partners had published their respective GEPs in 2018, and in 2019, IT Carlow received an Institutional Athena Swan Bronze Award (expanded charter) for their work in this area. In 2022, the Department of Computing and the School of Engineering in IT Carlow also received Departmental Athena Swan Bronze Awards, the first Departmental awards in the Technological Higher Education Sector.

From 2018 to present, both partners have worked to implement their respective GEPs and to embed a culture of gender equality on their campuses through the creation of new structures, offices, committees, the introduction of new policies, training, support and networks, and data informed reporting and reviews of progress. Both partners carried out comprehensive reviews of the implementation of their GEPs in 2021, identifying key success, challenges and priorities for future action.

Both partners are also signatories to the new Athena Swan Ireland Charter, the principles of which will be embraced by SETU and will form the basis for much of the gender equality work in SETU going forward. SETU is now applying for an Athena SWAN Legacy Logo and will begin to work towards an Athena Swan Ireland Bronze Award for the new university. This is likely to take approximately 24 months from the date of formation of SETU.

Prior to the creation of SETU, a comprehensive process to ensure that specific actions and initiatives in the legacy Gender Equality Plans would continue in SETU was agreed as follows:

Phase 1: (Q 3 & 4 2021) Progress Reports and Reviews of Existing GEP's

Both partners undertook a comprehensive review of their GEPs in Q3 and Q4 of 2021. The objectives of these reviews were to identify key:

- Successes and progress made to date
- Challenges and barriers to implementation where they occurred

- Actions for inclusion in the SETU GEP

Phase 2: Identification of Key Priorities and Actions by Cross Campus SETU GEP working group (Q1 2022)

Upon completion of the reviews, a cross SETU working group was established to begin preparing an initial draft of SETU GEP priorities and actions. Membership was drawn from the Athena Swan SAT/EDI Committees from both partners. After reviewing the Progress Reports, and the HE Gender Equality policy framework, along with staff and student data, the group identified key priorities and actions for the draft SETU GEP. These were largely based upon the existing IT Carlow Action Plan, which had received an Athena Swan Bronze Award, as well as reflecting best practice examples from the WIT plan, along with emerging issues such as sexual harassment and violence and intersectionality, for example.

Phase 3: Consultation (Q2 & 3 2022)

This phase saw cross campus consultation on the draft GEP for all university staff, along with further consultation with the EDI Committee and Athena Swan SAT, Staff and Student Unions and the EMT.

Phase 4: Adoption of SETU GEP (Q 4 2022)

Following the incorporation of feedback from the consultation phase, the final SETU GEP draft has been prepared and is currently being costed. It was approved and adopted by the Executive Team in November 2022.

HRS4R - Human Resource Strategy for Researchers Action Plan 2020-2023

In 2014, SETU's Waterford Campus became the first (then) Institute of Technology in Ireland to be awarded the "HR Excellence in Research" designation. Over the last eight years, continuous progress has been made in how we support and develop research staff and in improving the research environment in which researchers work, demonstrating our commitment to the European Charter for Researchers & the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (The Charter and Code). This award reflects the University's commitment to empower and support all Researchers to conduct research at the highest level, and to support Researchers in terms of building, enhancing and sustaining their careers.

In 2021, following an external virtual site visit conducted by EU Assessors, SETU's Waterford Campus became the first (then) Irish Institute of Technology in Ireland to renew the HR Excellence in Research Award at the award renewal stage. As part of our successful renewal, we have committed to a detailed action plan that outlines what we will do to further HR Excellence in Research at our Institution. Our plan describes how we will refine existing practices and adopt new ones that ensure we:

- nurture researchers' careers by providing the right opportunities and support for all researchers at the right times in their careers
- recruit the very best talent from amongst the widest possible candidate pools to continue to improve diversity of our research community
- ensure researchers can flourish and that their efforts are recognised and rewarded via the Research Excellence Awards scheme

- develop research leaders particularly women
- address the gender dimension across course curriculum
- implement an Open Transparent Merit Based Recruitment policy (OTM-R)
- launch a 'women in research' network
- address our pipeline challenges by improving our promotions processes.

In particular, SETU's OTM-R policy spans across many of our wider HRS4R actions, emphasising our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, well-being, work life balance and flexible working in our job specifications, Job advertisements, embedding these values in our recruitment and selection processes and practices, hence encouraging diversity among applicants and appointees. Reducing the influence of bias is maintained by competency-based shortlisting/assessment criteria. Panels are gender-balanced wherever possible and all interviewers have mandatory training, including interview training licences and unconscious bias. Our research image bank ensures our imagery presents a balance between male/female and wider demographic and protected characteristic groups, to reflect the true diversity of the institution. The Broaden Your Horizons Researcher Development programme delivers a broad range of transferable skills training to help improve career development pathways for our researchers, in line with National Career Development frameworks for Researchers.

The next phase of HRS4R at SETU will include renewal of SETU's HR Excellence in Research award in April 2025, this accreditation recognises the steps that the University has taken to support research careers including gender equality and the actions we have committed to undertake to address the gaps identified. As part of this process, a SETU HRS4R Action Plan 2024-2027 will be developed with key actions identified to address identified gaps. The development of this action plan will require the establishment of a University wide HRS4R Operational Group and a HRS4R Monitoring Group and broader consultation with all SETU research community members through various consultations including a "Research Reinvigoration" survey, focus groups and open forums. This action plan will require approval by the University Executive Management Team, chaired by the SETU President and the Governing Authority of SETU to be published on the University website. The HRS4R Operation group oversees implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan whilst the HRS4R Monitoring Group provide advice, council and guidance on the strategic direction of the plan.

Training and Awareness Raising – SETU is committed to support researchers professional development including raising awareness in the area of EDI and Unconscious Bias. SETU's "Broaden Your Horizons" Researcher Development programme covers a broad range of EDI related topics including gender, the gender dimension of research unconscious bias awareness, OTM-R for the recruitment and retention of research talent, well-being and supporting research to progress their research in challenging times post Covid. Annually there are over 30 bespoke courses offered to members of SETU's researcher community aimed at enhancing their core transferable skills.

We are committed to ensuring EDI is embedded in how we conduct our research and knowledge exchange activities at SETU. We endeavour to develop and promote a research culture that is more inclusive and equitable contributing to achieving research excellence. An inclusive research environment can only be achieved through an informed and intentional thinking on how to embed EDI considerations in research design, recruitment, selection and retention, training and development, policy and practice including best practice. Commitments have been made to support women in research and develop women leaders of the future at SETU. In 2021, 13 new Professorships were honoured at the Institution, seven of whom are women. We continue to develop and enhance supports offered to women in research at the University through a combination of courses and events both online and face-to-face delivery. SETU's Women in Research Network (WIRN) launched on

International Women's Day 2022. The WIRN for research-active women provides female and female identifying staff from the University the opportunity to connect and collaborate to help us build a more equitable and inclusive research culture at SETU. To ensure we develop an inclusive and representative network, the Women in Research Network (WIRN) encourages membership from women in our research community from under-represented groups, particularly those with disabilities, from ethnic minorities, and our LGBT+ community. The Odyssey Researcher Mentoring Programme now in its fourth year, enables early career researchers (Mentees) to receive encouragement, support, guidance, specific skills and knowledge from more experienced researchers (Mentors) to enhance the Mentees career and personal growth during their research journey. In 2023, we will cultivate a more supportive network through which women researchers can receive greater access, encouragement, support, advice to the necessary knowledge, skills and resources via dedicated leadership CPD programmes to advance their careers.

Action Plan to Tackle Sexual Violence & Harassment

Following the publication of the *National Framework for Consent in Higher Education Institutions: Safe, Respectful, Supportive and Positive: Ending Sexual Harassment in Irish Higher Education Institutions* (DoES, 2020), SETU had developed a detailed *Action Plan to Tackle Sexual Violence & Harassment*, based on existing action plans of both partners prior to merger, and in line with best national and international practice.

SETU is committed to developing and supporting a culture which is safe, supportive, respectful and positive and which actively strives to end all forms of sexual harassment and violence. It is actively working to implement the *National Framework for Consent in HEIs* and to implementing the recommendations in THEA's *Promoting Consent and Preventing Sexual Violence Report* (THEA, 2020). SETU has established a cross-institutional Ending Sexual Violence, Prevention and Support Committee (ESP Committee) in place to tackle sexual violence and harassment, and to provide support and reporting options to victims of sexual violence and harassment. SETU is currently rolling out training to all students and staff, and has launched an online anonymous report and support tool for use in the Institute also.

All of the above means that SETU is now well placed to meet the eligibility criteria set out by Horizon Europe.

Expert Group Review

The European Commission recommended that HEIs consider an internal review to ensure that existing plans meet the eligibility criterion for Horizon Europe. To that end, an Expert Group, consisting of the following membership was established in SETU:

- Dr. Allison Kenneally Vice President Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Dr. Geraldine Canny Head of Research
- Ms. Eimear Fitzpatrick HR Business Partner for Research
- Mr. Kevin Doolin Executive Director, Walton Institute

The Expert Group was asked to:

- a. Conduct an internal review of existing plans or actions to ensure that the mandatory GEP requirements, and recommended areas, are being addressed;

- b. Address any gaps that may be identified in existing plans and policies when reviewed against the eligibility criterion and the recommendations set out in this Horizon Europe GEP guidance;
- c. Publish a short statement, endorsed by the Head of Institution, identifying the institutional plans and activities that meet the mandatory requirements and which form the GEP for the purposes of eligibility for Horizon Europe.

The remainder of this report sets out the findings of the Expert Group, aligned to the Terms of reference above:

a. Conduct an internal review of existing plans or actions to ensure that the mandatory GEP requirements, and recommended areas, are being addressed

To demonstrate how SETU's existing strategies and action plans are aligned to the Horizon Europe requirements and recommendations, a mapping exercise has been conducted to identify alignment to SETU strategies and action plans. This is detailed in Tables 1 & 2 below:

Table 1: SETU Mapping to Horizon Europe GEP Requirements

Horizon Europe Requirements	PUBLICATION	DEDICATED RESOURCES	DATA COLLECTION & MONITORING	TRAINING
Further Details	The GEP must be a formal document published on the institution’s website, signed by the top management and actively communicated within the institution. It should demonstrate a commitment to gender equality, set clear goals and detailed actions and measures to achieve them.	A GEP must have dedicated resources and expertise in gender equality to implement the plan. Organisations should consider what type and volume of resources are required to support an ongoing process of sustainable organisational change.	Organisations must collect sex/ gender disaggregated data on personnel (and students, for the establishments concerned) with annual reporting based on indicators. Organisations should consider how to select the most relevant indicators, how to collect and analyse the data, including resources to do so, and should ensure that data is published and monitored on an annual basis. This data should inform the GEP’s objectives and targets, indicators, and ongoing evaluation of progress	The GEP must also include awareness-raising and training actions on gender equality. These activities should engage the whole organisation and be an evidence-based, ongoing and long-term process. Activities should cover unconscious gender biases training aimed at staff and decision-makers and can also include communication activities and gender equality training that focuses on specific topics or addresses specific groups.
SETU Gender Equality Action Plan 2022 - 2025	The SETU GEP is a formal institute plan and has been approved by SETU’s Executive Board and President. It is published and available on SETU’s website. It has 61 data informed SMART actions which demonstrate a commitment to gender equality, set clear goals and detailed actions and measures to achieve them. A dedicated section of the university’s website details the work of SETU in this regard and social media is also used to communicate SETUs commitment to gender equality, both within SETU and to key stakeholders.	The SETU GEP has been fully costed and the university has committed to putting these resources in place to ensure the plan is fully implemented. A new EDI Office, with a dedicated Vice President for EDI, a Senior EDI Officer and EDI Administrators in place and funding dedicated to supporting the effective operations of the Office. SETU has also established a formal EDI Committee of Governing Body, and an internal EDI Council, along with a Gender Equality (Athena SWAN) Self-Assessment Team to develop, implement and review actions under the GEP.	SETU’s GEP was developed and informed by an extensive range of gender-disaggregated data, both quantitative and qualitative. As per its GEP, SETU systematically collates and analyses gender-disaggregated data on staff and students, submits this to the Irish Higher Education Authority, and publishes gender-disaggregated staff and student profiles on its website. This includes gender-disaggregated details of staff by pay grade and contract type. Gender disaggregated data on all stages of the recruitment and selection process, key research	The SETU GEP contains a variety of actions relating to training and awareness raising, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unconscious bias training for SETU’s Executive Board, management team and all staff • Interview training • Training for Interview Panels on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as part of the license to interview process. • EDI in Higher Education Training for all staff • Leadership training

			<p>metrics, membership of key institutional committees, uptake of leave, grievances/complaints, etc. is also collated and reported.</p> <p>This data continuously informs the GEP's objectives and targets, indicators, and ongoing evaluation of progress.</p> <p>An EDI Report with key metrics is made to Governing Body as part of its Annual Report.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dignity & Respect Training for all staff • LGBTQIA+ training and awareness • Consent and tackling Sexual Harassment & Violence Training
<p>SETU HR Strategy for Researchers Action Plan 2020-2023</p>	<p>SETU's HRS4R Action Plan 2020-2023 is a formal university strategy. The plan is fully endorsed by SETU's President, Executive Management Team, the HRS4R Monitoring Committee. Externally, the European Commission has accepted the Action Plan at the "HR Excellence in Research" award renewal phase in July 2021. Published on SETU's dedicated HRS4R website the plan sets out 15 primary actions with relevant milestones and deliverables to be achieved by 2023. The plan is aligned to the EC Charter and Code and the EC Excellence in Research award identifying a number of Gender Equality actions, which will be met in unison with the wider Institutional GEP.</p>	<p>SETU employs a dedicated HR Business Partner for Research with the primary responsibility of managing HRS4R at the University, implementing new initiatives to support the career and professional development of Researchers, develop, and roll out an Open and Transparent Merit Based Recruitment (OTM-R) policy for the Institution.</p> <p>Specifically, SETU's OTM-R Policy for the Effective Recruitment and Selection of Funded Research Staff was introduced in 2020 to assist the Institution to better implement OTM-R practices. Structured around the key stages of the Researcher employee life cycle from Pre-recruitment to Appointment. The focus is to ensure that SETU always aims to recruit the best person for the position and that all our recruitment procedures are based on principles of equal opportunities for all candidates (both internal and external).</p> <p>SETU employs a dedicated Research Recruitment Officer to support the research community with all aspects of the</p>	<p>Consultations with stakeholders is a vital component in implementing our HRS4R Action Plans. Consultations comprised a variety of methods including one-to-one conversations, focus groups, opinion surveys and open forums. Data gathered, informed the content of the HRS4R Action Plans and wider Research Strategy "Research Fusion A Strategy for Connected Impactful Research 2020-2023". The nurturing of Researchers' careers, developing research leaders, implementation of OTM-R, and the provision of adequate professional development opportunities for Researchers with a particular spotlight on women in research are the cornerstone of existing HRS4R Action Plan (2020-2023). Key objectives have focused on addressing the leaky pipeline, precarity of research careers; the effects of the Covid19 pandemic on researcher careers, work life balance and researcher wellness.</p> <p>A new SETU HRS4R Action Plan (2024-2027) will be developed for submission to the European</p>	<p>The Office of Research, Innovation and Graduate Studies provide training on Understanding Gender in Research – the Gender Dimension on your Research Project and Looking at Gender Balance within your Research team, which are expanded upon each year.</p> <p>In line with HRS4R Action item 3.2 "Aim to foster an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all our Researchers are respected." A Women in Research Network launched in March 2022, this WIRN has a strong focus on EDI and Gender. The network initiative received internal seed funding from SETU's Equality Enhancement Fund in 2022. Specific training around Gender Equality, OTM-R, and the Gender Dimension of your research are offered via the Broaden Your Horizons Researcher Development programme. The BYH programme was shortlisted for "Best Learning & Development</p>

		<p>Recruitment and Selection process including OTM-R.</p> <p>In addition, SETU also employs a dedicated Research Integrity Officer to ensure all research carried out under its auspices meets the highest standards of integrity and that an environment of research integrity prevails through the promotion of good research practices, together with the use of fair, effective, and transparent procedures to address research misconduct including equity and fairness.</p> <p>An oversight committee “HRS4R Monitoring Group” and an implementation group “HRS4R Operational group” ensure the successful embedding of the Charter and Code principles into SETU’s organisational culture and the effective implementation of the actions arising from the HRS4R Action Plans. (Both Groups will be re-established in January 2023 with new membership from across the entire SETU research community).</p> <p>Gender balance in decision-making roles has been a long-term objective of HRS4R at the Institution, the composition of the HRS4R Monitoring and HRS4R Operational Groups are equally balanced with Females and Males from levels R1 to R4.</p> <p>Action Item – 3.2 of the HRS4R Action Plan committed to developing a Women in Research Network for research-active</p>	<p>Commission in April 2025, with key actions identified to address identified gaps. The development of this action plan will require the establishment of a University wide HRS4R Operational Group and a HRS4R Monitoring Group and broader consultation with all SETU research community members through various consultations including a “Research Reinvigoration” survey, focus groups and open forums. This action plan will require approval by the University Executive Management Team, chaired by the SETU President and the Governing Authority of SETU to be published on the University website. We go forward with the aim of developing and promoting a research culture that is more inclusive and equitable contributing to achieving research excellence. An inclusive research environment can only be achieved through an informed and intentional thinking on how to embed EDI considerations in research design, recruitment, selection and retention, training and development, policy and practice and to identify areas of best practices nationally and internationally.</p> <p>Compilation of anonymized reports with consultation findings and data analysis will continue to be presented to the HRS4R Monitoring Group and Executive Management Team twice annually, a wider HRS4R Progress report will continue to</p>	<p><u>initiative</u>” at the National HR Management Leadership awards in October 2022.</p> <p>The existing action plan seeks to deliver sustainable structural and cultural change, and a working environment for researchers which exemplifies good practice and equality throughout, building on the success of the HR Excellence in Research Institutional Award.</p> <p>“The ODYSSEY Researcher Mentoring Programme” now in its fourth year is an essential part of developing a career in research. Early career researchers seek guidance to cultivate their early careers, and are paired with a more experienced, well established researchers who impart their experience, knowledge and guidance to their Mentee. The Data from previous programmes has been reviewed and will inform the future direction of the programme. The programme has been used as a springboard to build Supervisor Capacity for new Postdoctoral researchers and actively recruit female Mentors. The initiative was shortlisted for <u>“Best Public sector HR initiative”</u> at the National HR Management Leadership awards in October 2022.</p> <p>CPD module Professional Skills for Research Leaders with a focus on Women in Research will be introduced as part of the new Action Plan 2024-2027.</p>
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		women to provide female and female identifying staff the opportunity to connect and collaborate to help us build a more equitable and inclusive research culture at SETU, the WIRN was officially launched in March 2022, a WIRN Visioning Workshop was held in November 2022 with WIRN members from across SETU coming together to focus on EDI in research careers.	be circulated to all staff in conjunction with quarterly updates delivered by the VP for Research at various Researcher Get-togethers.	
SETU Action Plan to Tackle Sexual Harassment & Violence	<p>SETU's Action Plan to Tackle Sexual Harassment & Violence 2021-2024 is a formal university action plan. It contains 40 SMART actions which demonstrate SETU's commitment to tackling gender-based violence, including sexual violence and harassment.</p> <p>SETU has created publicly accessible webpages on the university's approach to preventing sexual violence and harassment. This webpage formally states senior-management support for, and leadership of, work in this area. Social media is also used to communicate SETU's commitment to tackling gender-based violence, both within SETU and to key stakeholders.</p>	<p>Responsibility for the Implementation of the SETU Action Plan to Tackle Sexual Harassment & Violence lies within both the Office for the Vice President Academic Affairs, which has a dedicated Consent Framework Administrator post in place, along with the EDI Office, with a dedicated Vice President for EDI, a Senior EDI Office and EDI Administrators in place. Funding dedicated to supporting the effective operations of the Offices and action plan are also in place.</p> <p>SETU has also established a formal cross-university Committee, the Ending Sexual Violence, Prevention and Support Committee, which reports directly to Executive Board, to implement and review the Action Plan.</p>	<p>Data on the number and nature of complaints of gender-based violence including sexual harassment and/or violence are collated by SETU annually.</p> <p>SETU also provides an anonymous online report and support tool for staff and students in SETU to disclose incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, discrimination, hate crime, coercive behaviour or control, stalking, assault, sexual assault, sexual harassment or rape. This data will be gender disaggregated, collated and analysed quarterly and formally reported on an annual basis.</p>	<p>The SETU Action Plan to Tackle Sexual Harassment & Violence contains a number of actions relating to training and awareness on gender-based violence including sexual harassment and violence, including the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SETU will provide direct student-facing activities including workshops/ classes that promote an understanding of consent; student understanding and skills for speaking up and calling out unacceptable behaviour • SETU will create and implement an education plan to ensure all staff and relevant students have at least a minimal, agreed understanding and capacity to support students; create and implement a training plan for staff and students who contribute to initiatives and services • Ongoing messaging to disseminate information consistent with the Framework aims for cultural change and awareness.

				These are being actively implemented across SETU, and we report to the Irish Higher Education Authority on Progress in this regard.
Assessment of Review Team	Requirement Met	Requirement Met	Requirement Met	Requirement Met

Table 2: SETU Mapping to Horizon Europe GEP Recommendations

Horizon Europe Recommendations	WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE	GENDER BALANCE IN LEADERSHIP & DECISION MAKING	GENDER EQUALITY IN RECRUITMENT & CAREER PROGRESSION	INTEGRATION OF THE GENDER DIMENSION INTO RESEARCH & TEACHING CONTENT	MEASURES AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE, INCLUDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT
<p>Further Details</p> <p>These are the five recommended content-related (thematic) areas that organisations may wish to consider in their GEP</p>	<p>GEPs aim to promote gender equality through the sustainable transformation of organisational culture. Organisations should implement necessary policies to ensure an open and inclusive working environment, the visibility of women in the organisation and externally, and that the contribution of women is properly valued. Inclusive work-life balance policies and practices can also be considered in a GEP, including parental leave policies, flexible working time arrangements and support for caring responsibilities.</p>	<p>Increasing the number and share of women in leadership and decision-making positions touches upon all aspects in the GEP. Measures to ensure that women can take on and stay in leadership positions can include providing decision-makers with targeted gender training, adapting processes for selection and appointment of staff on committees, ensuring gender balance through gender quotas, and making committee membership more transparent.</p>	<p>Critically reviewing selection procedures and remedying any biases can ensure that women and men get equal chances to develop and advance their careers. Establishing recruitment codes of conduct, involving gender equality officers in recruitment and promotion committees, proactively identifying women in underrepresented fields and considering organisation-wide workload planning models can be important measures to consider in a GEP.</p>	<p>The GEP should consider how sex and gender analysis will be included in the research or educational outputs of an organisation. It can set out the organisation's commitment to incorporating sex and gender in its research priorities, the processes for ensuring that the gender dimension is considered in research and teaching, and the support and capacity provided for researchers to develop methodologies that incorporate sex and gender analysis. Research funding and research performing organisations both have a role to play in ensuring this.</p>	<p>Organisations establishing a GEP should consider taking steps to ensure they have clear institutional policies on sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence. Policies should establish and codify the expected behaviour of employees, outline how members of the organisation can report instances of gender-based violence and how any such instances will be investigated and sanctions applied. They should also consider how information and support is provided to victims or witnesses and how the whole organisation can be mobilised to establish a culture of zero tolerance toward sexual harassment and violence.</p>
<p>SETU Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-25</p>	<p>The SETU GEP contains a number of actions to embed gender equality in organisational culture, and a dedicated section of the plan deals with this issue in particular.</p>	<p>The SETU GEP has numerous actions to ensure we continue to work towards gender balance in leadership and decision making, and has a specific action committing SETU to maintaining gender balance</p>	<p>SETUs GEP has a number of actions which expressly meet this requirement,</p> <p>SETU conducted extensive review of its existing Recruitment & Selection Policy and Procedure in</p>	<p>SETUs GEP has a number of actions which aim to integrate the gender dimension into the teaching and learning context. A key action is for EDI, including the gender dimension, to be</p>	<p>SETUs GEP has a number of actions against gender-based violence, including actions which provide for training for management and all staff on Consent, Bystander Intervention, and tackling Sexual Violence &</p>

	<p>Actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> focus in particular on enhancing the visibility of women in the workplace and on identifying and celebrating female role models. promoting a better work/life balance and to encourage uptake of flexible working, parental, paternity, carers and other leaves as appropriate. development of a formal set of procedures for managers to support staff with caring responsibilities, and introducing a Caring Employers Programme at SETU 	<p>on all key committees and groups, including Executive Board and Governing Body.</p> <p>Gender breakdown of the Executive Board and Governing Body is published annually.</p> <p>Other relevant actions include specific support for female career progression for SETU staff in the form of dedicated leadership training and mentorship.</p>	<p>2022 which included addressing areas for potential gender bias and to develop greater clarity and transparency around the recruitment processes Recommendations have been implemented into policy and procedure</p> <p>In addition, the SETU Senior Executive Team, and all SETU interview panel members to undertake Unconscious Bias (UB) and Interview Skills Techniques training every three years</p>	<p>considered as part of programme design and curricula review activities. This will take the form of a consultative process, with staff and students, and will be supported by training and practical guidance.</p> <p>SETU has also developed a module on EDI for transformative research, which has substantial focus on gender equality and intersectionality. This module is will offered to all structured PhD students across the university.</p> <p>SETU is also to require details of the potential gender dimension of all postgraduate research proposals submitted for approval or funding in the university.</p>	<p>Harassment. SETU will also continue to map and raise awareness on mechanisms and procedures in the university to report sexist language or inappropriate behaviour, through both formal and informal routes, and to provide trauma informed supports to those who need them in the university community.</p>
<p>SETU HR Strategy for Researchers Action Plan (2020-2023)</p>	<p>SETU is a partner in the H2020 EU Conexus European Universities Partner Alliance contributing to Deliverable D1.6 EU-CONEXUS R&I GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN, documenting best practice on the development of GEP's and contributing the development of the final GEP project template, SETU partnered with La Rochelle to work on the work life</p>	<p>SETU's HRS4R Operational Group and the HRS4R Monitoring Group are equally represented by Women and Men from across the Institution.</p> <p>The HRS4R Operational Committee Membership includes from R1-R4 levels from across the Institution. The make-up of this group is 50% Female 50% Male.</p>	<p>SETU's Open and Transparent Merit Based Recruitment Policy for the Effective Recruitment of Funded Research Staff drives the University to be Open, Transparent, and Merit-based.</p> <p>OPEN: All Research vacancies must be advertised openly and</p>	<p>As series of Podcasts 9+, workshops and events facilitated by internal and external providers have been organised aimed at helping Researchers to learn more about how to incorporate the Gender Dimension into their Research. This topic is incorporated in the Universal Pathway Modules <i>Proposal Planning and Project Management</i></p>	<p>SETU's HRS4R Action Plan is fully aligned to SETU's Action Plan to Tackle Sexual Harassment & Violence plan.</p>

	<p>balance and organisational culture action deliverable. This template will be used in conjunction with SETU's GEP to benchmark against international best practice.</p> <p>Action 4.2 of the Action Plan 2020-2023 commits to expanding our existing well-being in the workplace initiatives to incorporate a more Holistic approach to Researcher wellness. Researcher well-being is a major component of HRS4R at SETU. We have a range of wellbeing initiatives based around: Being Connected, Being Active, Being Present, Being Engaged and Being Kind. We have a dedicated Researcher Wellbeing Twitter account @WellresearchSETU promoting various aspects of researcher wellbeing and sign posting staff members to other useful wellbeing resources. All aimed at ensuring researchers are equipped with achieving a better work life balance.</p>	<p>SETU's Research Advisory Council and the Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Committees were formed to present a collective perspective of the wider research community across the University.</p>	<p>widely to ensure to reach a wider pool of candidates.</p> <p>TRANSPARENT: the recruitment process must be simple and clear. External candidates must have access to the same information as Internal candidates.</p> <p>MERIT-BASED: selection for roles must be based on the Researchers' merit. The selection panel must ensure the best possible candidate secures the position.</p> <p>The policy covers the entire recruitment life cycle including pre-recruitment; recruitment, selection and appointment. It provides guidance on the composition of interview panels, equality legislation and unconscious bias awareness.</p> <p>Action 2.0 supports the full Implementation of SETU's OTM-R policy.</p> <p>The Institutional HRS4R Action plan commits the Institution to assess the affects the Covid 19 pandemic has had on our Researchers. In particular our focus will be on Researchers with young families or other caring responsibilities, whereby Covid19 restrictions delayed vital aspects of their research. International evidence increasingly highlights the gendered</p>	<p><i>module</i> for all PhD students in SETU.</p> <p>The RSU page on the Research Staff Hub houses relevant toolkits, webinars, resources and training sessions for access by the SETU research community including EDI related topics for research.</p> <p>The RSU also provide training seminars to researchers on incorporating the gender dimension in research, the composition of your research team, research design, recruitment, selection and retention and training and development including Valuing researchers' and recognising their contributions via the annual Research Excellence awards scheme. In 2023 a new award for "Research Mentoring" will be introduced to acknowledge the valuable contribution of Mentors on the "Odyssey Researcher Mentoring" programme.</p>	
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			<p>aspect of these challenges, which have their greatest impacts on Female Researchers at an early career stage. A “Research Reinvigoration” survey will be distributed to all members of SETU’s research community seeking their contributions.</p> <p>Retention of Female Researchers in STEM at the Postdoctoral Career phase has been identified as an issue for University. Future plans are in place to address this through SETU’s Hybrid Working policy; increasing the number of women at senior leadership level, and through re-assessing the flexible working practices at the Institution. In April 2020, 13 new Professorships were honoured at the Institution, 7 of which were female, all involved in research, meeting our commitment to expanding the number of female role models at Senior levels.</p>		
<p>SETU Action Plan to Tackle Sexual Harassment & Violence</p>	<p>The SETU Action Plan to Tackle Sexual Harassment & Violence plan does not explicitly address this recommendation. However, the overall aim of the plan is to tackle and end gender-based violence and to continue to work to create a supportive, positive, safe and inclusive culture in SETU. Therefore, this plan supports the overall aim of the recommendation above.</p>	<p>The SETU Action Plan to Tackle Sexual Harassment & Violence plan does not explicitly address this recommendation</p>	<p>The SETU Action Plan to Tackle Sexual Harassment & Violence plan does not explicitly address this recommendation</p>	<p>The SETU Action Plan to Tackle Sexual Harassment & Violence plan does not explicitly address this recommendation. However, all research and training activities related to the plan will be clearly and explicitly incorporate the gender dimension.</p>	<p>The SETU Action Plan to Tackle Sexual Harassment & Violence plan contains 40 Actions which explicitly address this recommendation in detail and in a trauma informed way. Key actions in the plan relate to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structures and Supports • Policies and Procedures • Communications

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting • Supports and cover all of the recommendations in the Horizon Europe Guidance as outlined above.
Assessment of Review Team	Recommendations Met	Recommendations Met	Recommendations Met	Recommendations met and the creation of the new university presents a significant opportunity to embed the gender dimension into teaching and research of the new university.	Recommendations Met

b. Address any gaps that may be identified in existing plans and policies when reviewed against the eligibility criterion and the recommendations set out in Horizon Europe GEP guidance

The above mapping exercise has not identified any gaps in SETU's existing plans and policies against the eligibility criterion and the recommendations set out in Horizon Europe GEP guidance. That said, there are a number of areas where our actions could be further strengthened and these are outlined below:

Areas for further development/recommendations

- Ensure that the GEP is specifically referenced as a priority action in SETU's new Strategic Plan

c. Publish a short statement, endorsed by the Head of Institution, identifying the institutional plans and activities that meet the mandatory requirements and which form the GEP for the purposes of eligibility for Horizon Europe

A draft statement is provided in Appendix 1 below. The Expert Group recommend that this be signed by the President, and placed on the SETU website, along with this report.

Conclusion

The Expert Group is satisfied that SETU's existing Plans and Strategies, as detailed above, meet the gender equality eligibility criteria and recommendations for Horizon Europe.

Appendix 1

Draft Statement to be signed by the President and published online

South East Technological University warmly welcomes the introduction by the European Commission of mandatory Gender Equality Plan's as an eligibility criterion for Horizon Europe funding. South East Technological University has been working to advance gender equality through policy development, training and communications, and culture change initiatives for a number of years, and has a number of existing plans/strategies in place in this regard.

These include:

- **SETU's Gender Equality Plan 2022-2025** available at: [Gender Equality Action Plan - SETU Waterford Campus | formerly Waterford Institute of Technology \(wit.ie\)](#)
- **SETU's HR Strategy for Researchers Action Plan 2020-2023** available at: https://www.wit.ie/research/our_research/hrs4r-home
- **SETU's Action Plan to Tackle Sexual Harassment & Violence**

Having conducted a detailed internal review and mapping exercise to ensure that these SETU strategies and plans meet the eligibility criterion for Horizon Europe, I am happy to confirm that I am satisfied that all the mandatory and indeed recommended elements of the plan are in place in our existing policies and strategies, which we will continue to implement over the lifetime of those plans. I am also committed to ensuring that South East Technological University continues to work to embed gender equality into the policies, strategies, practices and culture of our new university.

Further information, if required, is available from the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Office at SETU (edi.wd@setu.ie or edi.cw@setu.ie)