

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN (GEP)

University of Southern Denmark

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Introduction

SDU's Gender Equality Plan (GEP) provides the framework for SDU's equality work and ensures systematic coordination, direction, and ongoing support and qualification of the initiatives that take place in the organization. It is targeted at SDU's leaders, administrators and GE-organization.

SDU's GEP is supplemented by a process plan and thus comprises a formalized, processual framework, and support for and quality assurance of SDU's collected GE efforts. The objectives and coupling to SDU's vision, mission, and strategy are described in SDU's GE vision statement below.

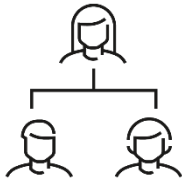
The process plan provides an overview of the GEP annual cycle and activities, as well as involved actors' role, responsibility and tasks.

SDU's GEP follows EU's recommendations for assuring quality in GE endeavors.

SDU's GEP – at a glance

Formal, public documents

- SDU's GE vision statement
- GEP process and annual cycle
 - SDU's web information

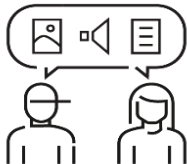


Organization and dedicated GE resources

- SDU's GE Committees
- SDU's Gender Equality Team, GET
- SDU's International Gender Advisory Board, IGAB

Data collection and monitoring

- SDU's Gender Statistics
 - SDU GEP
- Annual critical friend visits by IGAB and by Central GE Committee



Training and capacity building

- Tailored initiatives to SDU's Departments and Faculties with bias focus
- Workshops, presentations, interventions, observation, and feedback
- GE consultations to leaders, representatives, staff and students

Work-life balance and working environment

- Inclusive working environment: Interactions, collaboration, meetings, and meeting culture
- Workshops on work-life balance for junior researchers



Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

- Unconscious bias and inclusivity awareness raising for leaders, staff and students

Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

- GE in recruitment: from job announcements to onboarding
- Workshops, mentoring, consultations for junior staff, managers, and supervisors



Integrating the gender dimension into research and teaching

- GE in funding applications: collaboration with pre-award
- GE and unconscious bias awareness raising for teachers and students

Measures against gender-based violence, incl. sexual harassment

- Ethical infrastructure and response mechanisms
- Workshops, interventions and bystander training



SDU's GE vision statement

SDU's GE vision statement

SDU is a diverse organization, where inclusive and welcoming conduct is promoted and where there is room and respect for differences. We continuously strive to minimize bias in decision making. We actively, purposefully and continuously strive to be an organization free of sexism, unwanted sexual attention, and all other types of harassment and discrimination.

Resting firmly on the principles of free, independent and critical research, SDU's strategic Gender Equality (GE) focus contributes to SDU's overall strategic goals so that "SDU is recognized for a motivating university framework for talented people and outstanding environments characterized by excellence, complementarity and diversity" and can thus "create value for and together with society; develop talents that encourage unique, innovative solutions; and contribute to breaking down barriers and shaping a sustainable future."

SDU's strategic GE-focus includes all diversity parameters through an explicit attention to gender equality and inclusion and is based upon research-based interventions and strategies. GE at SDU applies to all aspects of SDU's endeavors: through its close coupling to specific challenges and considerations, SDU's GE efforts support its study- and working environments as well as the execution of the university's primary tasks. SDU continuously works to offer structures and terms that promote equality and inclusion in our study- and working environments and in our research and teaching – and to continuously convey these aspects in our endeavor to attract talented students and employees. SDU's GE efforts ensure that SDU meets external requirements – nationally as well as internationally.

SDU acknowledges that striving for increased gender equality is an endeavour that involves the entire organization and requires necessary structural changes. That is why SDU's GE efforts are research-based and thus informed, consistent and conscious efforts with an ambitious, persistent and long-term perspective:

- Informed equality work rests on extensive, relevant GE data and knowledge from SDU as well as collaboration with national and international experts. This includes continual qualification through updated GE research
- Consistent equality work is achieved through continuous supporting of SDU's primary tasks and functions and through the ongoing and systematic follow-up on GE-initiatives across organizational levels provided by the quality assurance framework of SDU's Gender Equality Plan (GEP) and process plan.
- Conscious equality work is achieved through targeted dissemination, explicit leadership for GE and systematic application and development of methods that promote equality and ensure access

to the entire talent pool. This also includes ensuring visible and continuous development of processes, procedures and practices.

- An ambitious, persistent, long-term focus on GE is achieved through dedicated internal expert resources that support the organization's GE efforts; through structural embedding of GE in work cycles and procedures; through systematic follow-up on data and efforts; and through targeted communication practices that further GE and inclusion and contributes to visibility and transparency.

SDU's strategic GE-focus: Approach and principles

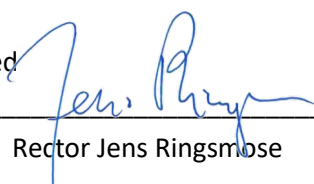
SDU's strategic GE-focus covers the entire organization and aims for long-term, sustainable development of SDU as a university and as a study- and workplace – based on an explicit focus on equality. The GE-perspective serves as the starting point for attention to other diversity parameters such as age, gender identity, ability, socio-economic and educational background, nationality, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation categories. SDU's strategic GE-initiative is a long-term cultural and organizational development change effort which takes as its point of departure:

- local, situated contexts and specific problems and tasks as crucial reference points
- embedding of initiatives, measures and solutions in processes, procedures, and practices
- prioritizing dialogue and involvement of stakeholders

The following general principles apply to SDU's strategic GE initiative:

- Several parallel and mutually complementary initiatives are simultaneously advanced and coordinated across the organization
- Analyses based on high quality data combined with local experiences and expertise form the basis for focused and tailored action, initiatives, and interventions
- GE-perspectives integrated in organizational structures, systems and procedures ensure long-term, sustainable implementation
- Systematic follow-up through SDU's Gender Equality Plan (GEP) and ongoing dissemination of initiatives, solutions and impact take place at all organizational levels
- Responsibility and progress are ensured through engaging management in formulating and implementing measures in and across academic and administrative units
- leaders are responsible and accountable for their GE-efforts
- Focus on possible actions and what works combined with local anchoring of initiatives and local commitment to improving issues form the basis of mutual learning and capacity building across the organization
- SDU's Gender Equality Team (GET) serves as strategic and operative expert-resource to the rest of the organization, providing faculties, departments, units and cross-sectional functions with professional, research-based support based on locally defined needs and requirements

Conceded



Rector Jens Ringsmose

What is a GEP?

SDU's GEP follows the EU's (European Institute for Gender Equality, EIGE¹) recommendations of embedding, data-supporting, monitoring, and systematizing GE initiatives in the academic sector.

With the GEP, SDU lives up to EU's [Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#)² and complies with the objectives of increased gender equality, diversity and inclusion at European universities throughout the European Research Area (ERA). SDU's GEP thereby contributes to ensuring that SDU lives up to eligibility requirements posed by larger research funders, such as the framework program Horizon Europe's eligibility-criterion, that stipulates that the integration of GE perspectives be documented.

Aligned with these larger international framings, SDU's GEP is a **model to quality assure** SDU's collected equality initiatives and strategies. SDU's GEP frames, operationalizes, and follows up on measures and initiatives in order to ensure equality and equal opportunity at all SDU's organizational levels. This includes the specific task of preparing the annual GE Status Report (2-pager) at the Faculty-/ Central Administration level and the public GEP Monitoring Report at the SDU-level.

The objectives of SDU's GEP and the process plan for GEP implementation are to support SDU's strategy and:

- Ensure implementation, documentation, and quality assurance of SDU's collected equality endeavors for students and employees
- Structure and support ongoing initiatives
- Inform relevant and prevailing issues and provide knowledge, perspective and attention to how to promote equality, diversity and inclusion
- Ensure that initiatives and measures respond to and reflect local and specific contexts, challenges and requirements
- Further career possibilities and inclusive working, research, and study environments

SDU's GEP gathers elements essential for GE work into one comprehensive model to ensure ongoing strategic focus and regular status on initiatives. It also provides an overall strategic framework that lays out the plans and objectives for addressing and acting on identified challenges.

SDU's GEP addresses three organizational levels of responsibility:

- The executive, strategic SDU-level involves SDU's top management and the Central GE Committee. The Executive Board defines GE Target Areas every 4th year according to GEP requirements. The result of the GEP-work at this level is the public GEP Monitoring Report.
- The faculty- and central administrative level involves the Deans, university Director and management level and the local GE Committees. They define the GE Target Areas for their main area. The result of the GEP-work at this level are the annual six faculty / central administrative GE Status Reports (2-pager) compiled annually by GET into one GE Status Report.

¹ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/what-gender-equality-plan-gep>

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

- The level of department-/administrative units involves Heads of Department /Heads of Units with support from the local GE Committees. The result of the GEP-work at this level is the implementation of concrete GEP activities according to the GE Target Area at faculty/central administration level combined with the local needs at department/unit levels.

The responsibility for SDU's GEP implementation activities is unequivocally placed with SDU's executive board and is supported by SDU's Gender Equality Team (GET) as described in SDU's Strategic Development contract 2022-2025 with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

General principles of SDU's GEP

The following three principles apply to SDU's GEP:

The principle of DIALOGUE: Involvement through dialogues at faculties and central administration

It is crucial to ensure dialogue, sparring and knowledge exchange between management and members of faculty and staff in the GEP implementation process. GET serves as the expert resource and sparring partner to the organization.

The principle of EMBEDDING: local initiative and ownership

It is crucial that initiatives are relevant and make sense locally in order to ensure support at all levels. The responsibility for initiating measures is therefore placed at the local main area and department/unit level. Through the dialogue principle, relevant stakeholders across levels are involved, which ensures that relevant and prevailing areas of attention and obstacles may be identified in order to define contextually important objectives and measures. This in turn ensures that the implementation of initiatives is relevant and makes sense to the people affected by the work.

The principle of NETWORKING: dialogue and sparring across the organization

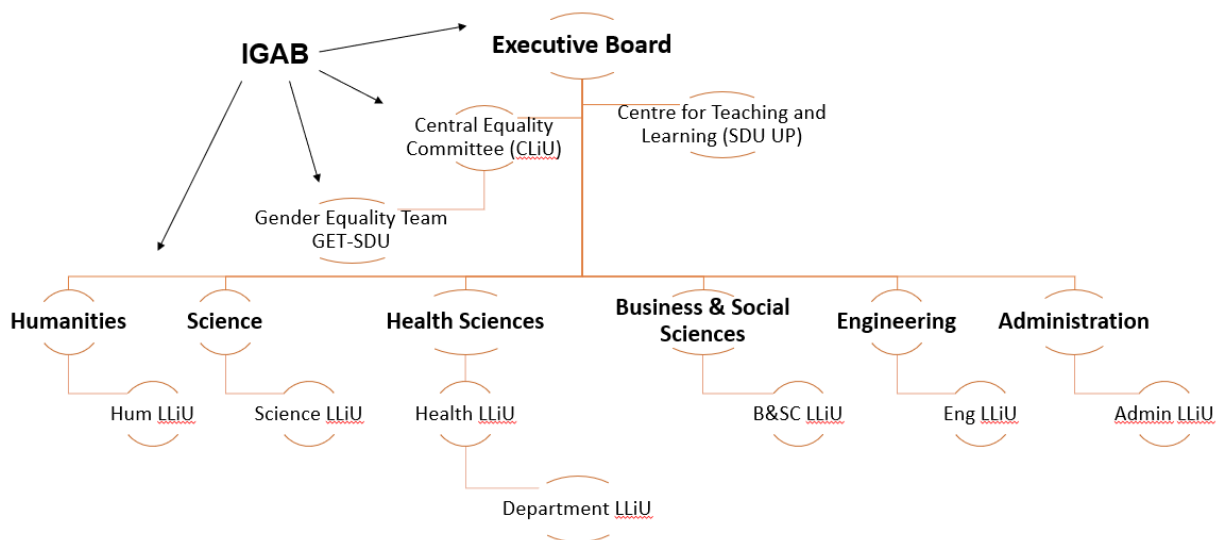
As a supplement to the principles of dialogue and embedding, support is offered as part of the GEP implementation, so that activities and reporting obligations are not executed in isolated vacuums. Instead, all involved actors are offered support, sparring and inspiration from the wider GE organization, which includes sparring across local GE Committees, support, and consultancy from GET and annual input from IGAB. Interaction and facilitated knowledge exchange across faculties and local GE Committees are important aspects of SDU's equality work – a strong foundation for mutual inspiration and cross-organizational coordination of concrete measures.

SDU's GE resources

The following diagram illustrates the organizational anchoring of SDU's equality endeavors. Each faculty and the central administration have their own local GE Committee. SDU has a central Gender Equality Committee (CLiU) with members appointed by SDU's Rector. CLiU comprises representatives of all main faculties as well as unions and student bodies.

GET is SDU's GE expert-resource and collaborates across the organization. GET serves as consultant, advisor and strategic and operative support to units, leaders and SDU's central and local gender equality committees. GETs work and the gender equality work at SDU is qualified by a group of international experts in the field, who comprise SDU's IGAB. Chair for CLiU is appointed from members of the Executive Board.

Moreover, SDU's Center for Learning and Teaching (SDUUP) offers insights and resources on bias aware teaching, learning and assessment.



Data

Collecting, analyzing and disseminating aggregated data on diversity parameters is a core component of SDU's work with gender equality, diversity and inclusion. SDU needs clear data reporting the gender equality situation in the organization in order to have a proper, informed baseline for its GEP activities. To this end, SDU has established Gender Statistics, a data platform encompassing quantitative data about SDU's research personnel – and in near future administrative personnel.

The purpose of the dashboard is consequently to help faculties and departments establish a benchmark for their new initiatives; furthermore, it makes it possible to monitor progress and changes across a variety of data filters and over several years. Among other things, it contains gender aggregated data on the number of employees, new employees, management positions etc. across all of SDU, and also provides a breakdown on the aggregated data at each faculty. SDU's Gender Statistics is accessible from SDU's intranet for all employees (requires login).

Overview

The Gender Statistics dashboard is based on several internal data sources:

- SDU's annual report to the Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science on academic recruitment
- Data from SDU's staff payroll database
- Data from SDU's own PhD database
- Self-reported data on management positions from SDU's faculties and Central Administration

In accordance with data protection legislation and ethical guidelines on handling data, the data is anonymized, cleaned, and streamlined by SDU Analytics.

Student data

Moreover, SDU Analytics collects comprehensive gender-disaggregated data on our student population, which facilitates e.g., a systematic identification of study programmes with pronounced gender imbalances. In accordance with data protection legislation and ethical guidelines on handling data, the data is anonymized, cleaned, and streamlined by SDU Analytics.

Training and Awareness Raising

Being unaware of hidden biases and operating on autopilot in decision making processes can lead to results that do not take all possibilities and perspectives into account. In SDU's work with unconscious bias, we focus on how leadership can ensure decision making processes where more aspects and perspectives are included, and work to understand how norms affect hidden biases. This typically entails changes in who university leadership look to for advice, how and where leaderships seek inspiration, and who gets included in which tasks and committees, etc.

Awareness raising/training on diversity, inclusion and unconscious gender biases for staff and decision-makers is a core task for SDU's GET and this work comprises tasks like:

- tailored measures to SDU's departments/units and faculties/central administration
- workshops, presentations, interventions, observation, and feedback
- GE consultations to leadership, representatives, staff, and students

Furthermore, SDU's Center for Learning and Teaching offers insights and resources on bias aware teaching, learning and assessment. The center offers a website, [Unlimited Thinking and Teaching](#), which is designed to support university teachers, however the resources are more widely applicable for those involved with teaching, training, recruitment, leadership and management.

EU recommended GEP content focus

Work-life balance and organizational culture

SDU actively works to foster a positive organizational culture and a good work-life balance for all staff and students. As such, SDU works with a range of initiatives across the different organizational levels and individual levels.

With regard to organisational culture, SDUs Gender and Equality Team offers presentations and interactive workshops on topics such as inclusion, equity and discrimination as they relate to work-life balance and inclusive organizational culture both in general organisational contexts and specifically within academia. These activities are aimed at both leadership and staff. In addition, GET conduct observations and provide feedback to support the development of more inclusive and effective meeting cultures at the research group level.

To promote better work-life balance, the team facilitates Mentoring programmes for junior researchers, addressing the specific challenges they face in managing their professional and personal responsibilities.

Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making

The university's *Gender Statistics* portal provides data on the gender balance in senior leadership and is monitored on a yearly basis.

Awareness-raising on unconscious bias constitutes a central element of GETs approach, implemented through targeted training formats such as presentations, workshops, and the provision of constructive feedback on relevant documentation. These measures address both senior management and the broader staff body.

Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Progression

There are numerous advantages to incorporating a gender equality perspective in all aspects and steps of academic recruitment processes. At SDU, SDU's Gender and Equality Team consequently collaborates closely with faculties and departments concerning their academic recruitment processes. The team offers advice tailored to local requests, provides workshops focused on preventing bias throughout the recruitment process and offers advice on questions related to evaluation criteria and candidate interviews. Analyses of job announcements are conducted regularly, resulting in tailored recommendations to ensure inclusive language that appeals to underrepresented genders and minority groups.

In addition, we support equality in career progression through a dedicated mentoring programme aimed at junior researchers. This programme facilitates reflection on and navigation through academic structures and cultures. Furthermore, we are actively developing knowledge and implementing measures to address the issue of the “leaky pipeline,” ensuring sustained career advancement opportunities for underrepresented groups.

Integration of the Gender Dimension into Research and Teaching Content

SDU’s Research and Innovation Organisation (SDU RIO) and SDU’s Gender and Equality Team collaborate together in development of resources, tools, workshops and targeted consultancy to support researchers who seek to integrate systematic analyses and other research methods that take diversity parameters – including sex and gender – into account in research design, method, data, output and impact. Training and workshops are offered regularly and as part of SDU’s internal competence building.

SDU Centre for Teaching and Learning (SDUUP) is steering the national network Bias Aware Teaching and Learning (BATL). BATL resources, designed for different teacher groups, are gathered and shared here: [BATL resources](#). Here you will e.g. find an oral exam checklist for bias aware assessment to guide teachers in connection with oral exams. Bias training resources can also be found on: [Unlimited](#) also developed by SDUUP.

Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

SDU is dedicated to a healthy and safe mental work and study environment with a work and study culture that emphasises equality and respect in all contexts: at individual level as well as at group, management and organisational level. SDU strives for an atmosphere based on decency and characterised by a human approach that shows respect for diversity and the integrity of the individual. SDU does not accept any kind of violence, including bullying, sexual harassment or other behaviour that offends employees and students.

Management, employees, students, occupational health and safety organisation and liaison committees have a joint task of creating and maintaining good mental work and study environment. This work is anchored in SDUs Occupational Health and Safety Unit in HR. GET supports the work by facilitating workshops on sexism, offensive behavior and discrimination as well as bystander training for both staff and leadership, aimed at enhancing the ability to recognise and appropriately respond to sexism and other forms of inappropriate conduct in the workplace.

Monitoring

SDU's GEP is realized in a fixed annual cycle, which frames the involved activities and administrative procedures, and ensures systematicity, ongoing follow-up and monitoring, in turn ensuring comprehensive quality assurance of SDU's equality initiatives.

Critical Friend visits:

It is important to foster a constructive dialogue between the different stakeholders – at department and division levels as well as across different groups, such as staff, units, management, (union- and safety- & health-) representatives, collegiate bodies, CLiU-members, etc. This enables an ongoing opportunity to disseminate, discuss, and qualify cross-cutting GE initiatives and GEP activities.

Critical Friend:

A person (or group) of trust, who supports another's learning through critical questions, data and an outsider's perspective.

Each year representatives from CLiU and GET meet with faculty/central administration management and local GE Committees (LLiU) in the capacity as a 'Critical Friend' to discuss and assess their GEP implementation activities and discuss issues in relation to their GEP implementation (NAT, SUND, SAMF in even years, TEK, HUM and FO in odd years). These visits are the backbone of the follow-up of SDU's GEP implementation activities.

IGAB visit:


Each year SDU's International Gender Advisory Board visits SDU and meets with and GET, the central gender equality committee, and conducts a Masterclass for all gender equality committees at SDU. IGAB meets with SDU's Executive Board every second year.

Two yearly reports:

The two annual reports, GE Status Report (2-pager) and SDU's public GEP Monitoring Report, frame and anchor the structuring, reporting and follow-up of initiatives at all organizational levels:

- The GE Status Reports (2-pager) is an internal document, which serves as an inspiration for the local gender equality committees. It reports on the local gender equality initiatives and status at faculty, department, central administration, and unit levels.
- The public GEP Monitoring Report for the EU (EU GEP requirement), which also includes data and is uploaded on SDU.dk.

SDU's GEP approved by SDU's Executive Board December 12th, 2024



Rector Jens Ringsmose

SDU Target areas 2022-2025

Target areas, activities, and indicators

During the Action Plan Period 2022-2025, GE initiatives at SDU will focus on the following four target areas:

1. Target area 1: Gender Equality Plan (GEP)
2. Target area 2: Integration of the gender dimension in research and teaching
3. Target area 3: Recruitment and career progression
4. Target area 4: Working environment

TARGET AREA 1: GENDER EQUALITY PLAN (GEP)			
Objective 1 (O1): Full implementation at all organisational levels and first review of SDU's GEP Objective 2 (O2): Gender Statistics - review and integration of additional data sources			
Measure/activit	Indicators	Timeframe	People responsible
1.1 GEP process initiated at all departments and units (O1)	All Faculties and central administration have specified 1-2 goals to work on	2024	Deans, University director
	Meetings have been conducted with all Head of Departments and Head of units (2023: 36 in total)	2024	Central GE Committee (CLiU)
	All departments/units have decided on 1-2 activities to work on	2024	HoD/units, Deans, University Director
1.2 GEP review and development of a new SDU action plan (EU GEP monitoring) for 2026-2029 (O1)	The action plan has been approved by the Executive Board	2025	Executive Board
1.3 Annual update of SDUs Gender Statistics dashboard (O2)	Procedure for updating data on research personnel annually in Spring is implemented	2024	SDU Analytics

TARGET AREA 2: INTEGRATION OF THE GENDER DIMENSION IN RESEARCH AND TEACHING			
Objective 1 (O1): Training and resources for researchers and funding advisers			
Objective 2 (O2): Training and resources for teachers			
Measure/activity	Indicators	Timeframe	People responsible
2.1 Implementation of structure for network meetings and workshops for sharing knowledge, supervision etc. with research supporters (RIO employees + funding advisors at faculties) (O1)	2 network meeting conducted annually	2024	Research and Innovation Organization (SDU RIO)
2.2 Bias Aware Teaching and Learning (BATL)- disseminate BATL resources, publications, and information about relevant events (O2).	Open access to BATL resources	2022	SDU Centre for teaching and Learning (SDUUP)
2.3 Lecturer Training Programme for Assistant Professors and other SDU researchers engaged with teaching - includes mandatory course on Students as Learners and addressing bias (O2).	Bias awareness in teaching is part of the mandatory lecturer training programme.	2022-2023	SDU Centre for teaching and Learning (SDUUP)

TARGET AREA 3: RECRUITMENT AND CAREER PROGRESSION			
Objective 1 (O1): Mentoring programme (Mentoring for Change pilot)			
Objective 2 (O2): Unconscious bias awareness			
Measure/activity	Indicators	Timeframe	People responsible
3.1 Design and implementation of a pilot regarding Mentoring for Change programme for younger researchers (O1)	Mentoring for change pilot for 14 researchers has been completed	2022-2023	Dean, Health Sciences
3.2 Developing resources to help incorporate gender equality perspectives in all aspects and steps of academic recruitment processes (O2)	Recruitment portal established.	2022-2023	HR
	Procedure for continuous qualification of the gender aspects in SDUs recruitment portal	2024	HR
3.3 Development of bias awareness tools in relation to recruitment (O2)	Bias awareness tools available on SDUs recruitment portal	2023-2024	HR
	Communication campaigns for awareness of the tools	2024	HR

TARGET AREA 4: WORKING ENVIRONMENT			
Objective 1 (O1): Review of SDU's infrastructure for handling offensive behavior for employees and students.			
Objective 2 (O2): General bias awareness training for leaders and employees			
Measure/activity	Indicators	Timeframe	People responsible
4.1 Organizational set-up for ensuring a healthy and safe work and study environment free of offensive behavior (O1)	Overview of organizational set-up established	2022-2023	HR
4.2 Development of guidelines for ensuring a healthy and safe work and study environment	Guidelines developed	2022-2023	HR

free of offensive behavior (O1)			
4.3 Review of SDU's infrastructure for handling offensive behavior for employees and students (O1)	SDU's infrastructure for handling offensive behavior for employees and students reviewed and implemented.	2024	HR
4.4 Development of Bias awareness training for leaders (O2)	Bias awareness training is developed and easily accessible for leaders.	2025	HR and Gender Equality Team