

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN 2025–2029

Gender Equality Framework Plan
English version for reference only;
not legally binding

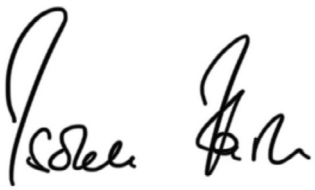
Dear members of Ruhr University Bochum,

Equality and equal opportunities are core values of our university. They constitute the foundation of an inclusive and innovative scientific culture in which every individual, regardless of gender, has the opportunity to reach their full potential.
In recent years, we have achieved a great deal in terms of gender equality. Currently, approx. 50% of our students and graduates are female. The progress in professorships is particularly encouraging. The percentage of women holding lifetime professorships has increased from 11% in 2004 to 33% today. In 2023, the percentage of newly appointed female professors was as high as 47.2%.
This Framework Plan provides specific recommendations for action in order to consolidate this progress and continue hitting our equality goals successfully and sustainably. We would like you to actively participate in this process and to support our shared objectives. Only by working together can we nurture a culture of equity and respect, strengthening our university as a place of equal opportunity and cooperation.
Together, we are shaping a university that embraces diversity and equal opportunities – a university that promotes inclusive, fair and respectful cooperation in studies, research and teaching.

Yours sincerely,



Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Martin Paul
Rector



Prof. Dr. Isolde Karle
Vice-Rector Diversity, Inclusion and Talent Development

For data monitoring for this Framework Plan, see appendix: "Gender Equality Framework Plan 2025-2029, Appendix A: Data Monitoring and Quality Development and Appendix B: Supplementary Tables"

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FOREWORD

For Ruhr University Bochum, standing up for equal opportunities and reducing the disadvantages that women still face is a fundamental objective. Equal opportunities are therefore embedded at all levels – both centrally in the Vice-Rectorate for Diversity, Inclusion and Talent Development and the Central Equal Opportunities Office, as well as decentralized in the faculties. Current developments clearly show that our perception of equal opportunities and the reconciliation of professional and private commitments cannot be limited to gender differences. Rather, an integrative understanding of equal opportunities that considers other intersecting issues is required. The complexity of equality-related tasks has increased due to factors such as intersectionality[1] and internationalization. At the same time, the demand for a clear stance on gender equality policy has grown – due to both growing anti-feminist sentiment and public discourse on sexualized discrimination and violence. Gender equality work is a cultural, institutional and strategic intersectional task that opens up new perspectives. Ruhr University Bochum stands for diversity and equal opportunities, not least because participation not only enhances an individual's opportunities for self-fulfillment, but also strengthens the performance of the university community as a whole. Therefore, we understand excellence at RUB as inclusive excellence in line with RUB's diversity strategy. The "**Joint statement on our commitment for equality, diversity and excellence in research"**, signed by Ruhr University Bochum in 2022[2], ensures that all research participants can compete for excellence regardless of their social characteristics. At the same time, the statement expands the definition and collective dimension of institutional excellence by recognizing the contributions of all members of the university community. It is based on the principles of gender equality and diversity.

The legal framework for the Gender Equality Framework Plan is set out in the German Constitution (GG), the Gender Equality Act of North Rhine-Westphalia (LGG) and the Higher Education Act of North Rhine-Westphalia (HG). The guiding constitutional mandate and aspiration is the **implementation of equal rights for women and men, as well as the elimination of existing disadvantages in academia and the higher education system.** Moreover, **women and men** should **have equal opportunities for professional development and participate equally in planning and decision-making processes.** The LGG establishes two objectives with regard to equality: The first is the **elimination of discrimination based on gender and the second is reconciling professional career and family responsibilities.** Gender-related disadvantages, such as underrepresentation in managerial and higher-level positions, are evident among female employees. **In this respect, the objective of "eliminating disadvantages based on gender" relates to women as the target group. Still, the goal of reconciling professional career and family responsibilities applies to all employees, even though** women routinely bear a disproportionate burden of care responsibilities for children resp. relatives compared to their male colleagues. To do justice to the complexity of developing gender equality work, this Gender Equality Framework Plan contains a number of specific elements.

[1] The concept of intersectionality refers to the analysis of overlaps and the interaction of different forms of discrimination. The terms "intersectionality" and "intersectional feminism" were introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw. The intersectional analysis of social realities assumes that disadvantages on several levels (e.g. gender, sexuality, ethnicity, age, etc.) are intertwined and shape our social, political and economic status as well as our political fields of action. [Source: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung]

[2] https://wereset.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/D6.5_Joint-statement__update2024_submitted.pdf

These include requirements for a gender equality plan in accordance with EU guidelines (“Gender Equality Framework Plan”, see International Requirements Gender Equality Plan according to Horizon Europe), identification of elements of the EU project RESET (Redesigning Equality and Scientific Excellence Together), and the overlap of intersectionality aspects with other diversity aspects and anti-discrimination work, as outlined in the RUB’s diversity strategy. Different symbols are therefore used throughout the Framework Plan to identify equality components:

GEP

Gender Equality Plan
EU requirement

RESET

EU Project RESET
Redesigning
Equality & Scientific
Exellence Togehter



Intersectionality/
Diversity

This statutory Framework Plan remains in effect for a period of five years, from 2025 to 2029. The Framework Plan will be updated for all status groups of Ruhr University Bochum, including employees in research and in technical and administrative positions, as well as students – based on previous equal-opportunities initiatives. In addition to the content-related objectives, this Framework Plan aims to provide university members and affiliates with an overview of updated, ongoing and planned equality measures. It also aims to provide comparative statistics and an overview for equality control and monitoring, which will be updated annually during the plan’s term. This Framework Plan (equality plan) is drafted based on the applicable legal requirements. The plan draws on publications and statements by the German State Conference of Equal Opportunities Officers at Universities and University Hospitals in North Rhine-Westphalia (LaKof) and the German Federal Conference of Women’s and Equal Opportunities Officers at Universities (bukof).

PRINCIPLES OF THE GENDER EQUALITY FRAMEWORK PLAN 2025-2029

The principles of the Gender Equality Framework Plan 2025-2029 reflect the general consensus on the overarching gender equality goals during the Framework Plan's five-year term at RUB, continue the existing gender equality goals, and develop them further. These principles apply to all RUB members and affiliates. **The English version of the Framework Plan** will be published for reference in the first year of the internationalization strategy.

Self-Image and Mission

As an integral principle of our university's development, we promote and design structures that advance equal opportunities for our members and affiliates. In addition to successfully implementing equity goals, we are committed to a positive and supportive approach to recognizing the diversity of our members and affiliates. This commitment is outlined in the Ruhr University Bochum's **Code of Freedom and Diversity** and developed in RUB's diversity strategy. In accordance with the legal mandate for equality, we actively and specifically commit to equal opportunities for men and women as well as to the reconciliation of professional and family obligations. Furthermore, **institutionalization of gender competence**[3] is a decisive step towards promoting equality and diversity in the academic environment. This includes integrating gender perspectives into teaching, research, transfer and administrative practice from an intersectional perspective.

Another central aspect is communicating current developments and content in gender studies. To this end, existing structures in research and teaching in the field of gender studies must be sustainably secured and expanded – for example in science communication. The same applies to further training on gender competence for employees of all status groups. Creating structures and processes that promote the gender competence of all university members fosters a lasting awareness of gender-specific differences and discrimination. By promoting the visibility of gender equality and diversity research, we make sure that gender and diversity competence is acquired. This helps foster an inclusive and fair university culture where all members enjoy equal opportunities and support regardless of their gender.

[3] Gender competence defines the comprehensive knowledge of gender theories and the perception of gender relations and structures as social construction processes. It includes the ability to apply and reflect on this knowledge in everyday life in order to question and break down one's own ideas of gender roles. [Source: Gender Competence – Bielefeld University]



In line with the principle of gender **mainstreaming**[4] and the guiding principle of gender equality, four identified fields of action underpin and develop the measures promoting equal opportunities for all RUB members and affiliates:

Fig. 1: Equal opportunities are to be pursued through four overarching fields of action: A) Quality assurance including monitoring, analyzing and assessing equality parameters through targeted and comprehensive data provision in the areas of university governance, research and teaching. B) Promoting academic careers, ensuring equal opportunities in selection procedures and further developing professional identities through targeted training and development measures. C) Promoting the reconciliation of research/studies and caring responsibilities to ensure equal opportunities for all genders. D) Factoring in other categories of discrimination in addition to gender inequality through an intersectional perspective and anti-discrimination work.

[4] Gender mainstreaming is based on the realization that there is no gender-neutral reality and that men and women can be affected by political and administrative decisions in different ways. Gender mainstreaming is enshrined in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). The German Basic Law obliges the state to actively promote equal rights for women and men. For the practical work of the Federal Government, the guiding principle of gender equality is agreed in the Joint Rules of Procedure of the Federal Government. The term gender mainstreaming has become internationally established since the United Nations World Conference on Women (UN) in 1995. [Source: BMFSFJ]

While implementing university gender equality structures in governance[5], it is essential that central processes and measures are closely interlinked and complement each other to provide well-founded support for institutional change management by incorporating multiple aspects: The **HR Excellence in Research** project (formerly the HRS4R-Award/Human Resources Strategy for Researcher Award) was successfully implemented at RUB and earned the **HR Excellence in Research Award** in 2024. As a mentor in the **EU project Redesigning Gender Equality and Scientific Excellence (RESET)**, RUB supported partner universities within the EU between 2020 and 2024.

In addition to providing support, RUB led the development and integration of measures into its own structures. In 2024, RUB became the first German university to join the global **Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)**, which aims to promote a cultural shift in research assessment. In early 2025, RUB successfully underwent the **Stifterverband's diversity audit** and was awarded the **"Shaping Diversity" (Vielfalt gestalten) certificate**, which includes gender-related components of equal opportunities work. Following these developments, a **diversity strategy** was adopted in 2025. In addition, RUB was successful in the first selection round of the federal and state government's **Program for Women Professors 2030** and was consequently awarded the **title "University with Strong Gender Equality"**. In 2025, RUB joined the pledge **"Towards more gender equality in professorial appointments"** adopted by the German Rectors' Conference. Thus, RUB has reaffirmed its goal of creating equal opportunities in appointment procedures and further reducing structural gender inequalities. While we can conclude at this point that RUB has pursued a successful equal opportunities policy, we are determined to forge ahead on this path with the same level of commitment.

GEP

[5] In a university context, governance refers to the structures, processes and mechanisms used to control, manage and administer the university. It encompasses decision-making processes, the distribution of responsibilities, and the collaboration approaches of individual stakeholders within the university, including the administration, faculty, students, and other interest groups, to achieve the institution's goals and missions. [Source: https://www.che.de/wp-content/uploads/upload/Governance_als_institutionelle_Aufgabe_von_Universitaeten_und_Fachhochschulen.pdf]

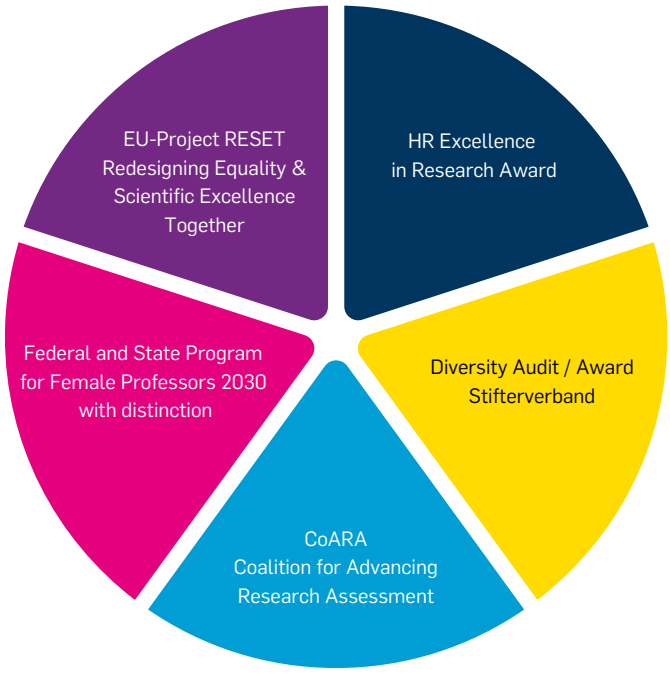


Fig. 2: Institutional change management at RUB takes gender equality aspects into account in different contexts: The HR Excellence in Research Award, CoARA, the Diversity Audit of the Stifterverband, the EU project RESET and the successful application within the Federal and State Government's Female Professors Program 2030.

FIELD OF ACTION: MONITORING & QUALITY DEVELOPMENT IN GOVERNANCE, RESEARCH & TEACHING

The "Monitoring & Quality Development in Governance, Research & Teaching" field of action is central to our university's Gender Equality Framework Plan. It involves systematically collecting and analyzing data on gender equality to identify and highlight both progress and the need for action. Through regular monitoring, targeted quality development measures can be implemented and directed in governance, research and teaching. This is essential for the sustainable promotion of equal opportunities and the removal of structural barriers. Ongoing monitoring and adjustment of the strategies ensures that the university effectively achieves its equality goals. In addition, gender competence is integrated into university structures and management processes in order to continuously promote a sustainable and comprehensive gender-equality culture at Ruhr University Bochum.

Data Monitoring & Quality Development

Data monitoring constitutes a fundamental part of this Gender Equality Framework Plan and is available in the appendix "**Data Monitoring Gender Equality**". During the term of this Framework Plan, data monitoring will be implemented on an ongoing basis in the internal systems for gender equality figures, as well as in a database for the target agreements for gender equality. An **annual publication of basic gender equality data** will be made transparently and freely accessible to the public.

GEP

Appointment Policy

A key component of a **gender-equitable professorial appointment policy are the faculty-specific quotas for the appointment of female academics** – a planning instrument firmly embedded in the perspective agreements entered into with the faculties and in the **target agreements on gender equality.**

Increasing the percentage of female professors requires strategic appointment procedures. For this reason, we will maintain our strong focus on **appointment management** going forward. The Rectorate assigns Appointment Officers as lay members to Appointment Committees, where they are tasked with ensuring compliance with the procedural rules, in particular with regard

to gender equality. Each appointment procedure for a university professorship is overseen by an Appointment Officer (professorships in salary level W1TT, W2 and W3). Appointment Officers complete training with the Appointment Management Team and access information packages via the RUB Serviceportal. The Rectorate and the Vice-Rectorate for Diversity, in collaboration with the Central Equal Opportunities Officer, host an annual meeting where participants share experiences from appointment procedures, identify best practices and discuss current problems and the phenomenon of unconscious bias. In accordance with legal requirements, the Central and Decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers must be allowed to actively participate in appointment procedures. The Appointment Management Team prepares members of the Appointment Committees for their role on the Appointment Committee by providing handouts through accessible portals, e.g. the Serviceportal. This includes an appointment wizard that explains the formally correct procedure for an appointment step by step. To increase applicant satisfaction, it is necessary to make **selection procedures more transparent**, for example by allowing candidates to view the current status of the process. At the suggestion of the Appointments Officers, a quality circle is being set up that will take place once a semester as a space for peer-led case discussions. When selecting Appointment Officers, the Rectorate is pursuing gender parity. There are also plans in place to revise the information with a focus on diversity sensitivity in order to better support the members of the Appointment Committees. In cooperation with the student senate faction and on behalf of the Senate and Rectorate, the Appointment Management Team has revised the appointment regulations to include aspects relevant to gender equality (https://public.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/ab/Lists/ab/Attachments/2037/AB-1679.pdf).

- **Gender-sensitive phrasing:**
  The appointment regulations are phrased in a gender-sensitive manner throughout.

- **Binding guidelines:**
  University committees receive binding guidelines for promoting internationalization, diversity and gender sensitivity, particularly when selecting third-party experts and staffing Appointment Committees.

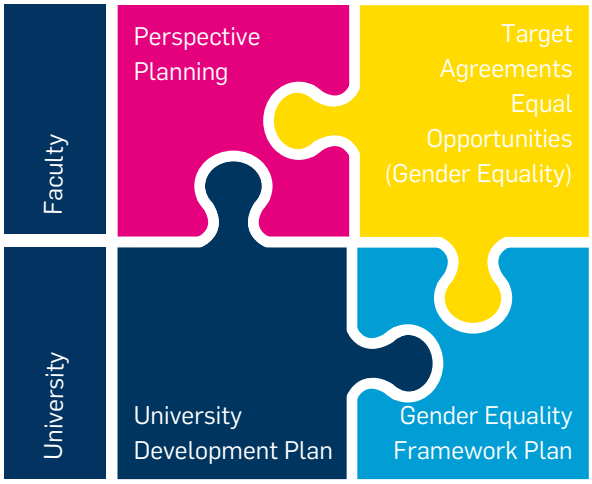
- **Gender-balanced selection:**
  The selection of third-party experts should be gender-balanced and diversity-sensitive wherever possible.

- **Diversity Officers involvement:**
  Diversity Officers are explicitly mentioned in the appointment regulations and can participate in the procedure if they are nominated by the faculties as members of the Appointment Committee.

- **Dynamic adjustment of the rules on bias:**
  These rules ensure procedural security, quality assurance and transparency.

Instruments of Strategic Management at RUB

Ruhr University Bochum consistently uses a number of **strategic tools and agreements** to manage, promote and ensure equal opportunities and equity. The University Development Plan encompasses the entire university and defines the central development goals. In this context, the promotion of equity and gender competence is defined as one of the shared fundamental responsibilities. In addition, the central Gender Equality Framework Plan establishes and monitors university-wide goals for equity and serves as a guideline for all faculties and central academic institutions (ZWE).
Through a dialog-based, participatory process, the Rectorate and the respective faculties resp. ZWEs reach agreements that define the main development goals for the term of the agreement, which is usually five years. These perspective agreements commit the faculties resp. ZWEs to achieving these goals. In addition, target agreements on gender equality analyze gender relations at all academic qualification levels from students to professors as well as among academic support staff and define binding gender equality targets.



Measures

Target agreements on gender equality are an instrument for implementing equality measures and are based on the legal option of using an “experimentation clause” in accordance with Section 6a Gender Equality Act of North Rhine-Westphalia (LGG NRW) for the equality plan. Following the previous Framework Plan, each faculty resp. department with 20 or more employees will conclude a target agreement on equal opportunities as part of the continuous updating process during strategic perspective planning resp. dialog discussions. These agreements include measures to promote equality and reconciliation of work and family responsibilities and to reduce the under-representation of women. RUB uses the experimental clause in state law and replaces equality plans with these target agreements between the Rectorate and faculties resp. ZWEs. Seeing as the target agreements are dialog-based, this approach allows for a more tailored development tool.
Regarding the timeframe, the target agreements on equal opportunities are aligned with the beginning of the strategic perspective planning process resp. dialog discussions with the departments, and they cover a period of up to five years.

Milestones

- **Target agreements:** The Rectorate continues the successful gender equality measure and concludes **binding target agreements on equal opportunities** with the faculties, central academic institutions, central operating units and the university administration **during the term of the Framework Plan** (continuation of the measure). The target agreements **name the persons responsible for implementing the measures;** in case of absence or career change, responsibility initially transfers to the current dean or director (new measure). The target agreements take all status groups into account.

- At the professorship level, the gender equality quota in accordance with § 37a HG NRW is binding. The long-term **goal is to achieve gender parity at all career levels** (continuation of the measure).

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- **Coupling perspective planning and target agreements:** Target agreements on equal opportunities are linked to the faculties' strategic perspective planning for the term of the Framework Plan. This approach embeds gender equality objectives firmly in perspective planning dialog, thus increasing the ability to plan for the attainment of objectives. Appointment procedures stemming from strategic perspective planning may only be initiated six months after the conclusion of the perspective agreement, provided that the target agreement on equal opportunities is in place. This ensures greater commitment and parallel terms of both perspective agreements and target agreements on equal opportunities. Halfway through the five-year term, the **university administration evaluates the target agreements and presents them to the Equal Opportunities Commitee.** The Equal Opportunities Committee plays a central role in the target agreement process as a quality assurance body. The Committee monitors the establishment, implementation and updating of the target agreements. If necessary, the target agreements between the faculty management and the Equal Opportunities Committee can be discussed and adjusted made through an additional, dialog-oriented process.

- Quality assurance through **continuous stock-taking and analysis of the employee structure for the target agreements** on equal opportunities as well as regular updates and transparent information regarding the employment structure at RUB through **continuous in-house equality monitoring and control.** This includes an **annual revision and publication of basic data** as an appendix to the Framework Plan during the five-year term (new measure). To ensure gender equality controlling, the central Gender Equality Office collaborates closely with the Department of University Development and Strategy to update the comprehensive and ongoing monitoring of gender-specific information as part of strategic management and to expand this monitoring process as required based on the tracked parameters (new measure).

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- Resources for equity and diversity work through the **Lore Agnes Vision program:** The Decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers and the Decentralized Diversity Officers are provided with annual funding of €150,000 according to a transparent distribution formula (continuation and expansion of the measure).

- **Lore Agnes Vision Award:** The Lore Agnes Award of €7,500 is awarded annually at the Academic Year Celebration to individuals who have shown outstanding commitment in the field of equality, diversity and inclusion at RUB through activities independent of their employment. The Rectorate awards the prize based on proposals from the Equal Opportunities Committee and the University Committee for

Diversity (continuation and expansion of the measure).

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- **Evaluation of the Framework Plan:** There will be mid-term and final evaluations of the Framework Plan for equal opportunities and needs-based management if targets are missed (as is only to be expected) in 2027 and 2029, respectively (continuation of the measure).

- **Transparency and present-day relevance of gender equality work:** The Gender Equality Framework Plan, including the data on gender equality monitoring, the target agreements on equal opportunities, (intersectional) gender equality projects and handouts, will be made public on central RUB websites and updated on an ongoing basis (continuation and expansion of the measure).

- **Participation in committees:** We consider equal participation of the genders in university decision-making at the university to be a given, and we strive for a balanced representation of women and men in our central bodies and committees and their chairs. Female professors who are disproportionately involved in academic self-administration are eligible for **compensation measures.** During the term of the Framework Plan, relevant measures for female academics, members of technical and administrative staff and students will be developed, reviewed and implemented (new measure).

- In order to give highly committed female professors the freedom to conduct research, a **compensation model for female professors is planned** and will be developed by the midpoint of the Framework Plan's term: They should be able to earn credit points for specific activities that promote equal opportunities. These points could then be used to reduce teaching load. In addition, credit points can be saved up for an extraordinary research sabbatical semester (new measure).

Reducing the Gender Pay Gap

GEP

Based on the results of the Gender Report, which identified a gender pay gap affecting female professors in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), the Ministry of Science and Culture of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia initiated a dialog with universities and colleges. The main reason for the salary discrepancy is variable, performance-related pay. As a result of this process, a joint declaration was signed on April 8, 2022.
Various measures derived from this declaration will be consistently applied and, if necessary, continuously optimized during the term of the Gender Equality Framework Plan. These new measures are as follows:

- **Sensitization of the university management:** The university management is made aware of the issue before a decision is made on the amount of appointment and retention benefits to be awarded.

- **Writing down and publishing the regulations:** The guideline for performance-related remuneration was published in 2024. It contains flexible regulations with discretionary powers for **awarding benefits for special achievements.** Moreover, it takes into account aspects of equal opportunities, such as delays or limitations due to pregnancy, childcare, care responsibilities, (chronic) illnesses, travel restrictions and similar circumstances. Additionally, the guideline addresses demonstrable imbalances in the remuneration of men and women in the **gender pay gap.**

These measures aim to reduce the gender pay gap and ensure fairer remuneration at universities.

Equal Opportunities Officers at RUB

In accordance with Section 24 of the Higher Education Act of North Rhine-Westphalia (HG NRW), our university appoints **Central and Decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers.** The election, appointment and terms of office of these officers and their deputies are regulated by the election regulations for the election of Equal Opportunities Officers at RUB. The rights and duties of the Equal Opportunities Officers are regulated in Section 17 of the Gender Equality Act of North Rhine-Westphalia (LGG NRW) and in Section 24 HG NRW.

The **Central Equal Opportunities Officer** supports and advises our university and is involved in the implementation of the LGG NRW as well as all regulations and measures that have or may have an impact on gender equality. She looks after the interests of women who are members or affiliates of the university and works to uphold the equality mandate of our university – most importantly, by ensuring that gender equality considerations are incorporated into academic, administrative and technical work, development planning, personnel and structural measures and in the performance-related allocation of funds. To this end, she may participate in the meetings of the University Electoral Assembly, the Senate, the University Council, the Rectorate, the Faculty Councils, the Appointment Committees and other bodies with the right to propose motions and speak; she must be invited and informed in the same way as a member. She also advises and supports employees on gender equality issues.

Relief and resources for the Central Equal Opportunities Officer. The Central Equal Opportunities Officer will be completely released from her previous duties. Upon request, her deputies will be granted time off from work for at least half of their regular working hours. The Equal Opportunities Officer is provided with sufficient personnel and material resources to effectively fulfill her mandate.

Our faculties, ZWEs and central operating units with at least 20 employees appoint **Decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers** and their deputies. These officers work to incorporate equality-relevant aspects in the fulfillment of the faculties'

and institutions' duties. The Decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers are involved in the target agreement process for equal opportunities at an early stage and in a binding manner by their respective supervisors. They act in an advisory and initiating capacity for the supervisors. They may attend faculty resp. institutional committee meetings on behalf of the Central Equal Opportunities Officer with the right to submit motions and speak. They must be invited and informed in the same way as a member. Decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers are informed by the university administration about internal university calls for tenders for equal opportunities (e.g. Lore Agnes Vision Award and call for tenders for the office of the Central Equal Opportunities Officer). They are the contact persons in their respective faculties resp. institutions for individual consultations on gender equality issues. After elections or personnel changes, the faculties and ZWEs inform the Central Equal Opportunities Officer about the responsible elected Decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers.

Relief and resources for Decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers. In order to fulfill their duties effectively, they are relieved of their other official duties to an appropriate extent. The respective management provides the necessary financial and physical resources (e.g. material resources, student assistant hours for student Equal Opportunities Officers, rooms for confidential consultations). The scope of the relief and the resources provided is outlined in the target agreement on equal opportunities. In addition, the Lore Agnes Vision program provides funding for the measures of the Decentralized Equal Opportunities and Diversity Officers.

Coordination and cooperation. The Central Equal Opportunities Officer chairs the plenary meeting of the Decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers. This meeting serves to coordinate, network and provide mutual support for equal opportunities work at various levels and in the institutions of our university. The Central Equal Opportunities Officer and the Decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers have equal authority to convene these meetings. In addition, the Central and Decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers agree on rules for cooperation, mutual information and representation. The Equal Opportunities Office provides **guidelines to support the work** of the Decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers. In addition, during the term of this Framework Plan, newly elected Decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers will receive an **information package. This package** will be continued during the term of the Framework Plan through annual **training courses for Decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers** at RUB. The courses are specifically tailored to the requirements of the Decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers and are conducted jointly with the Equal Opportunities Officers of the UA Ruhr. If required, the Equal Opportunities Office can also offer training courses on gender equality to other target groups. The Equal Opportunities Office also promotes the **intersectional work of the Decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers through networking with the Decentralized Diversity Officers.**

Milestones

- During the term of the Framework Plan, a plenary meeting of the equal opportunities officers shall be held at least once per semester (continuation of the measure).

- The **Equal Opportunities Committee** advises and supports the university and the Equal Opportunities Officer in fulfilling the equal opportunities mandate. It performs the duties outlined in the rules of procedure of the Equal Opportunities Committee (continuation of the measure).

- **Transparency of gender equality work in the faculties and ZWEs:** Gender equality information, including objectives, initiatives and contact persons for gender equality work, is presented on an ongoing basis at the faculties as well as in the ZWEs and operating units on their respective websites (continuation of the measure).

- **The magazine Chancen= increases the visibility of equal opportunities activities** at RUB; it was created and consolidated as part of the Lore Agnes program. The magazine informs the university community about various equality issues. In addition, a dedicated social media channel of the Central Equal Opportunities Office expands the public relations portfolio (new measure).

- In addition, there is **intersectional cooperation between the Central and Decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers, the Anti-Discrimination Office bodies, and the elected Decentralized Diversity Officers** at the faculties and ZWEs. When networking with the Decentralized Equality and Diversity Officers, these bodies take intersectionality into account, i.e. by addressing multiple forms of discrimination in addition to gender-based discrimination.

The Central Equal Opportunities Officers and the Anti-Discrimination Officer have initiated, conceptualized and implemented a joint Lore Agnes project, namely **the Equality Network**. This project will be consolidated during the term of the Framework Plan with the aim of holding an annual networking meeting for, among other things, joint projects of the Decentralized Equality and Diversity Officers (new measure).

- As part of the University Alliance Ruhr (UA Ruhr), which has existed since 2007 and is carried out jointly with TU Dortmund University and the University of Duisburg-Essen, there are also **cross-university equality activities**. The UA Ruhr universities have received several awards for successfully implementing their gender equality strategies in accordance with the DFG's research-oriented gender equality standards and the BMBF's program for female professors. Together, the UA Ruhr universities have broken new ground in promoting young female academics: The **Research Academy Ruhr** offers the first jointly managed professional development program for female researchers in the German university landscape. Moreover, the UA Ruhr's **gender research** provides sound scientific foundation for examining social structures and processes from a gender perspective. The Central Equal Opportunities Officers and their deputies jointly promote **gender equality as a strategic goal throughout the UA Ruhr**, collaborating closely on current higher education policy developments at the three universities and devising **cross-university activities** (continuation of the measure).

- As part of the Horizon 2020 project RESET (Redesigning Equality and Scientific Excellence Together), RUB supported the development of equality strategies at partner universities in the EU together with the University of Oulu in

a mentoring capacity. The project aims to promote equal opportunities for all genders without neglecting other dimensions of diversity. RUB has developed and implemented an integrative understanding of research excellence, taking the collective dimension of excellence at the institutional level into consideration. This goal is supported by the **RESET "Joint Statement"**, which was signed by all university leaders in the consortium in 2022 (new measure).

- RUB took on the sub-project **"Promotion of equality and diversity-sensitive governance"**, developing content to promote an inclusive campus culture. Results from RESET were incorporated into the RUB's handout on **gender-inclusive language**, for example. In addition, a handout for **gender and diversity-sensitive visual communication** will be developed and made available by the midpoint of the Framework Plan's term based on the results obtained (new measure).

- Another key component of the implemented package of measures is the report **"Diversity in gatekeeping positions: guidelines and lessons learned"**, compiled at RUB. Adopting the "fix the institutions, don't fix the women" approach[6], the report proposes measures to increase the percentage of women in decision-making positions. The report is based on the results of focus group discussions, workshops and expert interviews with women in managerial positions. Developed at RUB, the toolbox "**boost and mentor the young generations"** contains approaches for promoting diversity and equality at early career stages, taking into account the importance of networks and institutional support. To increase the visibility of women, the "FACES OF CAMPUS" media campaign was developed in 2022 and 2023 and implemented in collaboration with the administration, the academic community and the Corporate Communications Department. The campaign aimed to promote recognition of women's contribution in research-related activities and to address issues such as work-life/study-life balance and parenthood in studies and academia. Plans are in place to continue and continuously expand **activities that promote the visibility of women in the science ecosystem and address the issue of reconciling professional career with caring responsibilities** during the term of the Framework Plan (new measure).

[6] Laura Bates, Simon and Schuster, May 12, 2022

Quality Development in Teaching

GEP

Founded in 2019, the **Marie Jahoda Center for International Gender Studies** (MaJaC) expanded the RUB's existing gender studies activities in teaching, research and transfer. RUB has professorships with an explicit gender focus at three social science and humanities faculties, as well as an active network of collaborating researchers in various disciplines. These professors are consistently involved in the **two (international) Master's programs** (single subject and double subject degrees) in Gender Studies, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2025. The single-subject Master's degree has a strong international focus and requires students to spend a semester abroad; students thus have the opportunity to complete a double degree, i.e. to simultaneously obtain a degree at both RUB and the University of Graz, Austria. The curriculum also reflects the extensive global networks and long-standing international teaching and research collaborations between the participating chairs. RUB is continuing the traditional Marie Jahoda Visiting Professorship through the Marie Jahoda Fellowship Program. Since 2023, the program has also been open to early career researchers, in addition to established interna-tional researchers. Consolidated under the title **"Geschlechterforschung an der Ruhr"** (Gender Research in the Ruhr area), MaJaC cooperates closely with gender researchers at TU Dortmund University and the University of Duisburg-Essen. Another focus at the MaJaC is the transfer of gender knowledge into practice. This involves developing and implementing concrete programs, for example by creating gender-equitable resources in the field of **entrepreneurship education** for prospective female founders at universities and designing suitable municipal measures for gender parity in committees. Appropriate and professional communication of teaching, research and transfer activities in the field of gender research at RUB is currently becoming increasingly important. Even in the face of declining student numbers, communicating subject and course-related information on social media (e.g. Instagram or LinkedIn) is essential and must be ensured through appropriate public relations work in the long term.

Milestones

- A key objective is to firmly embed **gender competencies in teaching,** involving both lecturers and students, and to contribute to a teaching and learning environment that is free of gender stereotypes and characterized by self-determination, trust and inclusivity. This objective is supplemented by the handout on how to handle sensitive content in teaching. Additionally, courses on diversity competence that take gender competence into account are integrated into the Optionalbereich (elective module) for the acquisition of a microcredential resp. diversity certificate.

Developed as part of the European University Alliance UNIC (European University of Cities in Post-Industrial Transition), the new Master's degree course SEOS: **Superdiversity in Education, Organizations and Society,** offers students a unique opportunity for practical and intercultural exchange. Eight universities in eight different countries are jointly implementing a study program (new measures).

- **Faculty activities:** Our faculties contribute significantly to equal opportunities in higher education by offering a wide range of courses. They participate in the central equal-opportunities activities and develop their own projects. In the target agreements, they describe and reflect on their resources for prospective students and students at all stages of their academic career. They also address measures that contribute to achieving a balanced gender ratio in the subjects (continuation of the measure).

- The content developed in the RESET project for **integrating the gender dimension into research and teaching (Gender Impact Assessment, GIA)** has been adapted to RUB-specific requirements in a separate guideline. These requirements will be continuously applied and considered by the midpoint of the term in synergy with the **teaching mission statement**, taking into account gender aspects and gender competence (new measure).

FIELD OF ACTION: RECONCILING RESEARCH/STUDIES & CARE RESPONSIBILITIES

All RUB members and affiliates should have the opportunity to reconcile family responsibilities, studies, and career. Ideally, care work should be collectively organized and distributed equally among all genders. In order to reduce the multiple burdens on women, who often perform this work unpaid and invisible to society, RUB's gender-equitable mission statement is built on a variety of support measures.

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The **Family-friendly University Management Support Unit** was firmly established in the RUB Human Resources Department in 2015. It is responsible for promoting the reconciliation of studying, teaching, career and caring responsibilities, thus driving the strategic development of a family-friendly university culture in academia and administration. The unit's work is reflected in the **"Family in the University"** seal, which it has held for several years since joining the Germany-wide association of the same name. The management support unit is heavily involved in this association and networks with family offices at other universities, first and foremost with the aim to exchange best practice. Together with the other two UA Ruhr universities, RUB joined the seal of the NRW program "Reconciling career & care" in 2024. Thus the university has expanded its range of resources for employees with care responsibilities by providing a number of tools and training opportunities. RUB successfully completed the "audits familiengerechte hochschule" (family-friendly university audit) certification for the first time in 2006. As part of the re-audits in 2009 and 2012, RUB implemented numerous family-oriented measures for students and employees. By signing the charter of the Best Practice Club "Familie in der Hochschule" (family at university) in 2015, RUB has firmly incorporated family focus as part of its profile. The university has thus reaffirmed its commitment to promoting the reconciliation of family responsibilities with studies, teaching, research and research-related activities in accordance with ongoing requirements. The UniKids daycare center run by AKAFÖ has been helping employees and students on campus to balance family responsibilities with career/research/studies since 2011. In many cases, it contributes to the recruitment and retention of high-potential individuals. UniKids is geared toward the requirements of university operations: for example, it has established bilingual groups and offers opening hours that are convenient for academics, with childcare available during off-peak hours. In addition to the existing services such as mobile playrooms, family rooms and the large UniKids campus daycare center, as well as an extensive range of advice on parental leave, maternity leave and caregiving, the management support unit is developing projects that promote a family-friendly university. A quantitative survey of all employees on the subject of flexible child-care and emergency care, carried out in early 2021, revealed a high demand for flexible solutions beyond the existing range of daycare services, especially for visiting academics who arrive at RUB in the current daycare year. Based on these results, the **option of emergency care** by a third-party provider has been available since early 2023. With this extensive range of services on offer, childcare issues (e.g. daycare center strikes,

sick childcare provider) can be resolved at short notice, even during business trips. This service is available to all employees free of charge. In addition, **RUB has been providing childcare during school holidays** for around 20 years, and it remains in high demand. In 2023, this service was professionalized and expanded and is today carried out at RUB with the help of a third-party provider.

- Childcare spots were purchased for RUB employees at the Villa Luna daycare center at the nearby Mark 51°7 site, home to various RUB research facilities. This expansion meets the need for child-care in an academic context for members, including students, technical and administrative staff, academic staff and professors.

- In addition to the parent-child rooms already established in the existing buildings, parent-child rooms are now included in the design of every new building. The family-friendly infrastructure on campus and on off-campus premises is constantly expanding. A daycare center is planned to open in a new research building.

- The partnership with the third-party service provider has been renewed. This partner supports all employees in their search for daycare spots and other childcare solutions. The measure is also an important step toward providing daycare places in the current year, as well as a range of advice and placement services for primary caregivers.

In addition, there are opportunities to reconcile studying and caregiving responsibilities through a student network (in cooperation with the AStA and the AKAFÖ). The network provides various services for students such as the **Care Café**, the **Care Lunch Meeting** and the student-organized **parent-child group Campus Stars**. In addition to these resources, there is the option of family-friendly working hours in a part-time model in accordance with § 11 TV-L, e.g. **remote work/working from home** and **bringing children on business and research trips**. RUB is also a member of the interuniversity **Dual Career Network Ruhr.** With regard to family commitments, RUB advocates proactively scheduling committee meetings in time slots that are family-friendly. Overlaps between semester periods and school breaks in NRW should also be avoided. If overlaps do occur, the dean's offices provide information on flexible options for adapting the workday and teaching schedule and help find solutions.

Measures & Milestones

- **Daycare spots:** Despite RUB's significant efforts, there are still too few childcare spots available. Demand is very high. RUB is therefore committed to providing more childcare facilities in the coming years (new measure).

- **Support for parental leave and business trips with children:** The Serviceportal pages of the management support unit will be revised during the term of the Framework Plan. In addition to providing information in English, guidelines for applying for parental leave and business trips with children at RUB will be established and additional information will be made available (new measure).

- **Information about the care system in Germany** and the associated social benefits should be revised for international newcomers to RUB. In cooperation with the DFG Gender and Diversity Consulting, a new category on RUB's family-friendly resources for guest researchers will be created in the Serviceportal (new measure).

- **Promoting active fatherhood and the visibility of fathers:** A kick-off event on the subject of active fatherhood was held as part of a Lore Agnes-funded project. Follow-up events will be offered to interested fathers during the term of the Framework Plan. Simultaneously, networking opportunities will be initiated and, if necessary, permanently incorporated (new measure).

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- **Counseling services** are offered at a decentralized, visible and accessible level. If necessary, referrals are made to central advice centers.

FIELD OF ACTION: ACADEMIC CAREER, SELECTION PROCESS, PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY & TRAINING

This field of action highlights central aspects of academic careers and professional development in academia. The focus is on designing fair and transparent selection procedures, fostering a professional identity and providing continuous training and development opportunities. The aim is to ensure equal opportunities, promote diversity and improve the quality of academic work through targeted programs and initiatives. Implementing these strategies is intended to provide female researchers with the best possible support and strengthen their career paths in the long term. Academic careers should thus become more predictable, more transparent and more equal in terms of opportunities. Various control elements, projects and organizational development processes at Ruhr University Bochum are working towards this goal.

Academic Careers

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Central elements include applying **gender equality quotas according to the cascade model** to ensures a proportional representation of women at all academic career stages as well as using an appointment management system that ensures that gender equality aspects are taken into account. Other strategic management tools, such as **gender-equitable active recruitment in the STAR program** (Strategic Active Recruitment, the successor to the OpenField program), are being updated and continuously optimized in order to specifically address and recruit outstanding female reseachers. Among other things, this stipulates that the relevant positions in the faculties must be filled on a gender-balanced basis. By the middle of the Framework Plan's term, a **guideline on the recognition of care periods when determining academic age** will also be developed in order to improve career opportunities for researchers with family obligations.

Active recruitment involves targeted measures and strategies to attract qualified students, researchers and staff to the university. This includes participating in education fairs, organizing information events, using social media and online platforms and approaching potential candidates directly. The aim is to develop a **guideline for active recruitment**, increase the diversity and quality of the academic community and the percentage of women, and strengthen the competitiveness of the institution by the midpoint of the Framework Plan. Since January 4, 2024, RUB has successfully completed the process of developing an **HR Excellence in Research Strategy (formerly Human Resources Strategy for Researchers, HRS4R)** and has been granted the 'HR Excellence in Research' seal by the European Committee. The seal identifies institutions that create excellent framework conditions for researchers. As part of this initiative, RUB has pledged to implement a university-wide policy that ensures **open, transparent and merit-based recruitment and hiring procedures** (OTM-R Policy) for academic staff. This policy aims to

reduce discrimination through transparency, increase equal opportunities in the recruitment process and promote equal opportunities for underrepresented groups.
The project "**New Career Paths at RUB**" provides yet another vital boost. Equal opportunities in academia are directly linked to the structure, transparency and connectivity of scientific career paths. RUB is therefore driving the development of new career paths in science through collaborative processes. Pilot projects are testing and evaluating new career paths and permanent job models beyond the professorship. Equal opportunities are an integral part of New Career Paths and are primarily realized through the **professionalization of selection procedures and feedback structures as well as systematic career support**. Since October 2024, the project has been implemented and evaluated in collaboration with several pilot departments and faculties.
Ruhr University Bochum has joined the international **Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment** (CoARA). In December 2023, RUB became one of the first German universities to sign the corresponding Agreement for Reforming Research Assessment. The National Chapter Germany of CoARA was cofounded in January 2024. CoARA members share the common goal of recognizing the diversity of research contributions and careers, as well as developing a sustainable system of qualitative performance measurement and performance parameters. This system addresses the transparency of procedures and career paths and gives greater consideration to diversity and equality aspects. Following its membership in CoARA, RUB has developed a plan with defined milestones and measures that describe how RUB intends to shape research performance and careers in the future. Central aspects of this action plan involve critically reviewing existing evaluation processes at RUB to achieve nuanced and fair assessments, particularly with regard to gender equality and diversity. This means that the measures within the CoARA framework fit seamlessly into existing RUB efforts such as the new career paths concept. In December 2024, the **CoARA ExPECT** project was launched in cooperation with the Finnish universities of Oulu and Tampere. The project aims to develop targeted, gender and diversity-sensitive information and training materials for the **fair assessment of research performance.** These materials are intended to consistently foster the cultural shift towards unbiased, qualitative assessment of research careers and achievements.
RUB offers a wide range of training and further education courses. An important basis for these programs is the EU project "**RESET"**, which was successfully concluded in December 2024 and systematically links equality and diversity policy objectives with talent development. **RUB's in-house training programs** also cover gender equality and diversity. The "Equal Opportunities, Inclusion & Diversity" training range has its own budget and offers career development and academic career planning, equal opportunities measures in DFG-funded programs and practice-oriented courses that support dealing with diversity in the workplace. The prevention of violence is also part of the service portfolio. Formats on these topics are also an integral part of the Strategic Personnel and Talent Development Department's portfolio and are financed on a sustainable basis. **Equality and diversity** are just as much a part of the design principles of personnel development programs as are evidence-based and scientifically sound resources, transparency and the inclusion of participants' experience and knowledge. These principles apply to all training courses and formats, not just those covered by 'Equal opportunities, Inclusion & Diversity'.
The **training programs,** which are freely accessible to all employees, are supplemented **by targeted and demand-oriented resources,** most importantly gender equality-oriented mentoring programs for early career female academics. This includes both interdisciplinary and subject-specific programs for female physicians working in clinical environments.
The basic principle of the targeted resources, specifically those targeting women, is to **strengthen the resources, visibility and networks of female employees.** Various forms of networks have been established at RUB: Founded in 2015, the **Women Professors Forum,** for example, offers female professors at RUB the opportunity

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for personal exchange and is involved in gender equality policy. Female scientists at RUB are given annual **networking opportunities as part of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.** This event aims to promote interdisciplinary exchange and to create and expand networks. As part of the Women's Week, the annual event "**Am Puls der Zeit**", which offers a variety of training elements, is organized for female employees in technical and administrative positions. Raising awareness and training employees of all genders – especially those in managerial positions – to **prevent bias and discrimination and to promote a working environment that is conducive to equality, diversity and inclusion** is likewise key. This also includes constructively addressing challenges to equality and inclusion that are not specific to RUB, but affect organizations throughout the entire academic system ('fix the system'). RUB actively participates in policy discussions on gender equality and the promotion of diversity both across universities and in-house, including within the UA Ruhr, LaKof and bukof, and transfers the results and findings from these discussions into its personnel development initiatives.
The program is planned in consultation with the central equality and diversity stakeholders at RUB, most notably the Equal Opportunities Office and the Anti-Discrimination Office.
In addition, the **Department of Strategic HR and Talent Development** advises interested institutes and teams, as well as research projects with third-party funding (as part of in-house **gender and diversity consulting**) on the planning and implementation of their own gender equality and diversity-promoting training, events and awareness-raising measures. These resources are for the most part event-related, target group-specific and financed independently; they also serve as experimental spaces for specific resp. innovative topics and formats. The responsible department connects the stakeholders, advises on conception, organization and quality assurance and ensures the transfer of knowledge in order to incorporate successful pilot project experiences into the organization. The same applies to the transfer of knowledge and experience from individual decentralized projects promoting equality and diversity, which were initiated and implemented as part of the newly launched Lore Agnes Vision program. The systematic consideration of **intersectionality in equality-oriented HR development**, as well as the systematic consideration of equality aspects in training and further education courses on diversity, will continue in the coming years.
In particular, plans are in place to focus on the issues of mental health and neurodiversity as well as on raising awareness of abuse of power. The critical and constructive handling of unconscious bias in leadership, cooperation, selection procedures and recruitment will be consistently strengthened and intensified.
Status group diversity – i.e. the heterogeneity of requirements and needs depending on affiliation with science, technology and administration as well as specialist and management levels – is increasingly being taken into account and specifically addressed, as it is closely interwoven with aspects of gender equality and equal opportunities. Managers and multipliers, for example the Decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers and the Decentralized Diversity Officers, are addressed through personnel development measures and included as equal opportunity advocates. Finally, the established **mentoring program** is complemented with brief insights and information on the strategy of the so-called 'sponsoring'. While mentoring focuses on sharing (implicit) knowledge and experience, 'sponsoring' in the context of personnel development refers to the sharing of concrete resources, visibility and opportunities. Examples include targeted visibility of colleagues, public recognition and appreciation of achievements, publication opportunities and much more. Referring to it as 'sponsoring' acknowledges existing informal structures of mutual support and provides an opportunity to review one's own sponsoring activities in terms of their benefits for equality and diversity-related goals. Unlike mentoring, sponsoring does not primarily address the information and learning requirements of underrepresented groups, but rather their achievements.

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In addition to the training courses, learning formats and exchange forums, RUB offers an extensive **internal advisory network.** This network provides experts who advise on **equal opportunities, anti-discrimination, conflicts and abuse of power** as well as on mental health, sexual harassment and violence, gender-specific discrimination, gender and diversity-sensitive leadership and career planning. Of particular note in the context of equality is the **Our Campus** project, which focuses on sexism and sexualized violence and runs relevant campaigns, as well as the **Anti-Discrimination Officer.** The latter is involved in an advisory and training capacity with regard to conflicts, discrimination and abuse of power, which often have an equality component. All counselors make the framework conditions (e.g. regarding impartiality) of their counseling transparent and are subject to confidentiality resp. non-disclosure, depending on the task. Counselors receive regular professional training, e.g. on how to deal with stressful situations.

Measures & Milestones

- Key elements of a gender-equitable professorial appointment policy: RUB has firmly anchored **faculty-specific quotas for the appointment of female academics** as a university planning instrument in its long-term planning and in the **target agreements on gender equality with the faculties**, and **tenure-track concept** (continuation of the measure).
- **Gender-equitable digitalization of selection procedures:** RUB is introducing the electronic application management system **BITE** as a digital application management system. All application procedures are fully mapped, managed and documented. By using it, the recruiting departments receive a framework, orientation and support for carrying out the selection procedures. Furthermore, it ensures transparency and traceability for all parties

involved. The system forms the basis for **establishing a reporting system for evaluations, including for gender-equitable recruiting**, within the term of the Framework Plan. In 2025, application measures for all status groups, including professorships, will be implemented in BITE (new measure).

- RUB's successful application to the **Women Professors Program 2030** offers the opportunity to receive up to three start-up grants for the initial appointment of women. In addition, the "Gleichstellungsstarke Hochschule" Award ('university with strong gender equality') enables the funding of an additional position for a female junior researcher, leading to a permanent professorship going forward. RUB is committed to parity and has submitted a program in its funding application that aims to improve equality for women in academia in a sustainable manner. The successful competition entry for the Women Professors Program with distinction is therefore an essential component for promoting gender equality and requires the implementation of the developed measures (new measures).

FIELD OF ACTION: INTERSECTIONALITY & ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

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Discrimination is based on dimensions other than gender; we therefore advocate for equal opportunities for all social groups in the university context, including the right to access and promotion. Since August 2006, the **legal foundation of equal treatment and the resulting protective provisions** have been defined in the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG), a federal law that applies throughout Germany, including at university level. However, as the law only applies to employment relationships, students are excluded from the protection offered by the AGG. This gap results in a need for individual universities to control the situation, which we at RUB address in our **anti-discrimination guidelines.** In order to achieve equal opportunities for all RUB members and affiliates, targeted measures, processes and structures must be implemented to strengthen gender, anti-discrimination and diversity issues.

For this reason, all parties involved in equality, diversity and anti-discrimination work at RUB have been closely cooperating at central and decentralized levels for some time in order to exploit synergy effects and promote peer-led exchange on intersectional issues of equal opportunities. The following initiatives, projects and contact points are currently active:

Since 2021, the **Vice-Rectorate for Diversity, Inclusion and Talent Development** has been part of the Rectorate, managing central strategies and processes related to diversity, inclusion and talent development. The Vice-Rectorate is also strongly committed to gender equality issues and equitable appointment procedures. The basis for governance is the diversity strategy adopted by RUB in 2025. In September 2022, the **Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Office** was established, **along with the position of an Anti-Discrimination Officer.** This created a central advice, mediation and information point for employees, students and other members of the university. The office advises and supports individuals who experience or observe discrimination, as well as those who have questions about diversity and anti-discrimination. The Anti-Discrimination Office also develops strategies and measures for a discrimination-sensitive university, advises the university management and RUB institutions, and provides professional training for all university members. The Anti-Discrimination Officer reports annually to the Rectorate and Senate on the activities of the staff unit and documented cases of discrimination. All advice centers have documented these cases anonymously since 2024.

Since 2023, there have also been **Decentralized Diversity Officers** in all RUB faculties, whose role includes acting as multipliers for diversity and anti-discrimination issues and serving as the first point of contact for advice requests.

As part of **"The Equality Network"** project, a permanent networking format guided by workshops was created in 2024 to strengthen cooperation between the Equal Opportunities Officers and Diversity Officers across faculties. In addition to best practice examples from other federal states, its scope included basic knowledge on the evolution, structures and legal conditions of equality and diversity work at universities as well as joint fields of activity and concrete case work. The participant evaluation revealed that such exchange formats are considered beneficial for the office holders and should therefore be continued in the future.

Since the beginning of 2023, RUB has stood for diversity and equal opportunities based on the anti-discrimination guideline "Fair treatment at work and study places". The university places great importance on non-discriminatory treatment in the workplace and academic setting. The **University Committee for Diversity** was established in 2023 as well. Headed by the Vice-Rector for Diversity, Inclusion and Talent Development, the Committee advises the Senate and the Rectorate and serves to permanently embed diversity work at RUB. It consolidates the work of the **Diversity Think Tank**, which has been identifying and discussing diversity-related issues and challenges with the Vice-Rector since 2021. Through the **Code of Freedom and Diversity**, RUB affirmed its strong commitment to the values of **academic freedom and diversity** in 2022. In September 2023, RUB also signed up to the **Declaration of Commitment on Dealing with Abuse of Power at Universities in North Rhine-Westphalia.** Any indications of abuse of power are resolutely investigated and any such incidents are sanctioned. The anti-discrimination working group also brings together various stakeholders in the field of advice and complaints management in order to ensure transparent advice chains through networking and exchange, as well as to develop recommendations.

In order to enable intersectional and effective equality and diversity projects, the Lore Agnes program was replaced in the summer of 2024 by the new "**Lore Agnes Vision**" program. This program provides faculties, central academic institutions and the central administration with a total of €150,000 per annum for their equity, anti-discrimination and diversity work. Depending on their size, the facilities receive between €3,000 and €11,000 euros. These funds are made available annually for the summer semester and are divided equally between the Decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers and the Decentralized Diversity Officers. The aim is to p**ermanently integrate equality and diversity objectives** and to structurally anchor an **intersectional approach** to funding in order to address the need for and increased social awareness of multiple discrimination. Decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers use the funds with reference to the target agreements of their institution to promote equality. Decentralized Diversity Officers use the funds for measures that promote diversity, inclusion and anti-discrimination. All decentralized officers record the needs of their respective facilities and exchange information on cross-institutional needs.

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"Unser Campus – gegen Sexismus an der RUB!" ('our campus – against sexism at RUB') is a **prevention project aimed at raising awareness** about sexism and sexualized discrimination. Funded by RUB and AKAFÖ, the project is overseen by the Management Support Unit for Diversity and Anti-Discrimination. The project aims to raise awareness, share knowledge and prevent violence with regard to sexism, sexualized violence and abuse of power. Through a campus-wide campaign, intensive public relations work online and offline, educational and awareness-raising formats as well as **advice and support during awareness processes**, Unser Campus promotes inclusive and discrimination-sensitive interaction among all university members. An **awareness handout for student-organized events at RUB** has already been compiled, and a handout for **awareness in the context of scientific events** is in the pipeline. The Round Table on Sexism meets twice a year to discuss current developments at RUB and to network with stakeholders in the field. Across all projects, RUB is committed to protecting all RUB members and ensuring they feel safe on campus.

RESET

In spring 2023, the Rectorate adopted a handout on **gender-inclusive language.** The handout is recommended for use by all university members. It defines gender-inclusive language and provides concrete suggestions on how to create a respectful linguistic environment for all genders. As part of the EU RESET project, a comprehensive toolbox of measures was also developed, including a handout on **gender and diversity-sensitive visual language.** This was implemented at RUB in 2025 as part of the diversity audit.

As part of the "**Ko-Labor Unconscious Bias"** project, the RUB has extensively addressed the effects of "unconscious bias". Funded by the Foundation of the German Rectors' Conference with BMBF monies, the project was developed by the Department of Strategic Personnel and Talent Development in cooperation with the Vice-Rectorate for Diversity, Inclusion and Talent Development and the Anti-Discrimination Officer and was launched in 2024. **Unconscious bias** refers to unconscious distortions of perception and judgment that can lead to discrimination, especially against underrepresented groups. These biases intersect with group dynamics and university-specific power structures. In order to make the state of research on bias visible across disciplines and to create a variety of learning resources, two short educational videos were produced for the target group comprised of students, managerial staff and Appointment Officers, a scientifically based e-tutorial was developed, training and exchange formats were tested and an interdisciplinary lecture series was offered. This concept is a valuable addition to existing diversity discourse and targets all university members. All newly appointed professors are asked to participate in **unconscious bias training.**

To ensure the equal participation of people of all genders (including transgender, intersex, agender, queer and non-binary individuals), a total of 23 **all-gender toilets** were installed in 2023, in addition to existing women's and men's toilets. Depending on location-specific conditions, these toilets have different features; some all-gender toilets provide changing tables and menstrual hygiene products. Changing rooms for all genders have also been installed in some sports facilities, and an all-gender single shower is being planned. Before the Self-Determination Act took effect in late 2024, a guideline for transgender, intersex and non-binary employees and students at RUB regulated that first name and/or gender entry can be adapted to match an individual's gender identity regardless of a legal change.

Starting in 2022, RUB underwent the **'Vielfalt gestalten' (Shaping Diversity) audit process** of the Stifterverband. The audit was successfully completed in February 2025 with the award of the audit certificate, striving to address university-specific challenges and opportunities in the fields of strategy and structure, studies and teaching as well as internal communication in terms of diversity policy. The audit aims to embed diversity in the university's long-term structures, to promote close collaboration at UA Ruhr level, to establish a more diverse university culture and to recognize outstanding commitment to diversity. Following the certification, RUB developed its diversity strategy.

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Complaints options: The RUB **Complaints Office** was set up in accordance with the **AGG** as an invaluable resource for all university employees who have experienced discrimination or unequal treatment and who seek support. The Complaints Office is an overarching committee that deals with complaints regarding workplace conflicts, bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination. It is comprised of representatives from the Human Resources Department, the Staff Councils, the AStA, the Representative for Employees with Severe Disabilities, the Anti-Discrimination Officer and the Central Equal Opportunities Officer. The way the Complaints Office operates is governed by the "**Dienstvereinbarung zur Umsetzung des Beschwerdemanagements nach dem AGG sowie zum Schutz der Beschäftigten gegen Mobbing am Arbeitsplatz**" (service agreement on the implementation of complaints management in accordance with the AGG and the protection of employees against workplace bullying). In accordance with the AGG and the **RUB guidelines on protection against unfair treatment, discrimination, sexualized violence and bullying**, incoming complaints are examined and, if necessary, suggestions for further measures are made to the department. Complaint proceedings can take place in parallel with a lawsuit. Complainants and supporting persons must not suffer any disadvantages as a result of exercising

their right of appeal. Individuals affected by these issues may submit their concerns verbally or in writing to a member of the Complaints Office. Complaints against RUB students are addressed to the "**Regulatory Committee for Complaints against Students**". In legally defined cases, the committee deals with violations of regulations by students and decides on possible sanctions in accordance with the Higher Education Act NRW (HG NRW) § 51a HG NRW.

Measures & Milestones

- The AGG Complaints Office is committed to providing its members with further training on a regular basis (new measure).
- In 2023, an **anti-discrimination guideline** was adopted that distinguishes between counseling and complaints procedures, specifies prevention options and governs the duty of care on the part of university management and executives (continuation of the measure).
- General **promotion of cooperation** between stakeholders in the field of equity, anti-discrimination and diversity (use of synergy effects, cooperation between decentralized diversity and equality officers, establishment and continuation of intersectional projects, new measure).
- Expansion and addition of **all-gender toilet facilities** and changing rooms, as well as the provision of free menstrual hygiene products in all-gender and women's toilets, where needed (continuation of the measure).
- Sustainable continuation of the project Unser Campus – aimed at combatting sexism and sexualized discrimination at RUB (continuation of the measure).
- Prevention and support services will be reviewed, improved and strengthened in accordance with the "**Selbstverpflichtungserklärung der nordrhein-westfälischen Hochschulen zum Umgang mit Machtmissbrauch**" (Declaration of Commitment on Dealing with Abuse of Power at Universities in North Rhine-Westphalia) signed by RUB in 2023, and any form of abuse of power will be combatted (new measure).

Continuation and continuous application of the training material and activities on **unconscious bias**. All new managers are required to take part in unconscious bias training. Unconscious bias workshops for HR managers ensure the acquisition of gender and diversity competence and are secured in the long-term by appropriate resources (new measure).

INTERNATIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE HORIZON EUROPE GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

Within the framework of the European requirements for the European Research Area (ERA), gender equality goals can be achieved through a structured approach and holistic participation at the organizational level, involving funding organizations, national political efforts and the European Commission. Implementing and updating a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) supports these efforts. A guide with requirements for GEPs at EU level can be found at: Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans – Publications Office of the EU

The EU requirements for a GEP within the Gender Equality Framework Plan are as follows:

At EU level, the following four requirements are mandatory as building blocks of a GEP: 1. A publicly accessible document on the institution's website, signed by the top management and actively communicated within the institution; 2. Dedicated resources and expertise in gender equality as a basis for implementing gender equality measures; 3. Data collection and monitoring: Gender-disaggregated data on staff and students must be collected and reported annually using indicators; 4. Training measures to raise awareness and provide training in the area of gender equality. These four obligatory cornerstones are part the Ruhr University Bochum's Framework Plan and are indicated by the symbol "GEP".

The four mandatory requirements are complemented by five additional recommended categories:

Work-life balance and organisational culture (implemented in this Framework Plan under the 'Reconciliation of Research/Studies & Care Responsibilities' field of action); gender balance in leadership and decision-making and the integration of the gender dimension in research and teaching (implemented in this Framework Plan under the 'Monitoring & Quality Development in Governance, Research & Teaching' field of action); gender equality in recruitment and career progression (implemented in this Framework Plan under the 'Academic Career, Selection Process, Professional Identity & Training' field of action); measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment (implemented in this Framework Plan under the 'Intersectionality & Anti-Discrimination' field of action). All recommended subject areas are part of the RUB Framework Plan.

In addition, as a mentor in the EU project Redesigning Equality and Scientific Excellence Together (RESET) with European partner universities, RUB has (co-)developed a number of instruments for gender equality and inclusive science within the university context during the project period 2021 to 2024 and integrated them into this Framework Plan and existing structures. For more information on the project, visit https://wereset.eu/



GEP