

FORS Gender Equality Plan (GEP) 2022 - 2027

Approved by the FORS Management Board July 2022

Introduction

Equal opportunity, especially for men and women, and non-discrimination in the workplace are central values for FORS. Gender equality matters not only for FORS as a workplace, but it is also a relevant dimension in research. FORS is conscious of its responsibilities regarding equalities as a place of work and a place of learning, as well as a place of knowledge production and transfer. This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) reaffirms FORS' commitment to diversity and non-discrimination in general, and gender equality in particular.

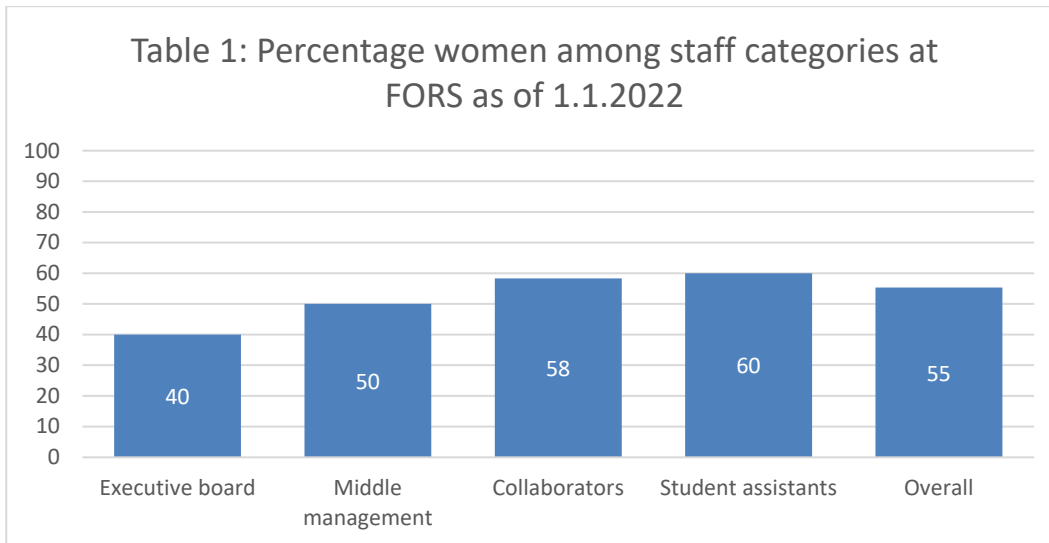
The GEP elaborates in more detail how FORS ensures gender equality in different areas of the organization. Moreover, FORS commits to constantly working towards identifying and addressing potential sources of discrimination and providing the necessary resources to support equality and update the GEP at regular intervals.

Description of FORS

FORS is the Swiss Centre of Expertise in the Social Sciences. While hosted by the University of Lausanne, FORS' legal structure is set up as a foundation. FORS implements large-scale national and international surveys, offers data and research information services to researchers and academic institutions, and conducts methodological and thematic research (see www.forscenter.ch).

As of January 1, 2022, FORS employed 56 people. Most of the staff has a permanent contract. The percentage of women is distributed as follows (see Table 1):

- 55% of all staff on FORS payroll;
- 58%, or 21 out of 36 of the collaborators (without middle management and executive board);
- 50%, or 5 of the 10 middle managers (excluding the management board); and
- 40% or 2 of 5 of the executive board.



Source: internal staff statistics.

In addition, FORS pays attention to gender balance in different governing bodies (FORS Foundation Board, FORS Scientific Advisory Board), and in the different mandated commissions (Selects commission, MOSAiCH commission, SHP commission).

FORS conducts a salary equity analysis at regular intervals based on relevant data collected by FORS. The analysis is done with Logib, the Swiss Confederation's standard analysis tool for assessing equal pay. This tool is based on classical wage regression models that take into account years of experience and hierarchy level.¹ The last analysis of the salary equity was conducted in 2019. It showed a 0.5% unexplained salary gap between men and women, which is a non-significant statistical difference.

Balancing work and family life

FORS helps staff to maintain a good balance between work and family life. This includes different measures:

- *Flexible working hours and days*: FORS staff, in agreement with the middle managers, can choose their working days and working hours in a flexible way. This includes also up to two days of mobile working on request, if an employee prefers to work elsewhere.
- *Beyond the legal requirement leaves*: FORS employees benefit from extended maternity leave (4 months instead of 14 weeks), an additional 1 month of breastfeeding leave, 20 days of paternity leave (instead of the legally required 10 days), and fathers and mothers can benefit from extended leave for sick children.
- FORS also grants on request *additional unpaid leave for personal or family reasons* if this is compatible with the tasks of a group or unit.
- FORS allows on request part-time work within a certain range for all employees, in order to adapt their employment level for personal or family reasons.

¹ For more information see <https://www.logib.admin.ch/home> and on methods <https://www.ebg.admin.ch/ebg/de/home/dienstleistungen/logib-triage/logib-modul-1/standardanalysemodell-bund.html>

Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

While FORS already has a high percentage of women overall, for some staff categories above 50%, FORS tries to ensure keeping a good gender balance at all levels and in all teams. The gender balance in a team can be adjusted especially during recruitment processes. FORS examines the gender composition in a team before every recruitment and if feasible encourages women to apply in the job ads.

FORS supports all staff to progress in their professional development. This includes the possibility to participate in events at the national and international level to build professional networks, and also the possibility of continuing education and training if beneficial for both the employer and the employee. This is especially important because FORS is a relatively small organization with limited career opportunities within the organization.

Integration of the gender dimension in research

FORS conducts social science research in all its survey projects and always collects information on the respondent's gender. Consequently, gender as an analytical category and gender-related questions are also covered in publications of FORS staff as well as publications with FORS data (<https://forscenter.ch/publications/>). Some projects have an especially strong focus on gender related aspects. For instance, the Swiss Household Panel studies family and household dynamics over time², which implicitly has a gender dimension. The ISSP/MOSAiCH survey 2022 has "Family and Changing Gender Roles" as the core topic of the survey, for the fifth time since this survey series started.³

Action to be taken in 2022 and 2023

While FORS already has a number of instruments and mechanisms in place to advance gender equality, FORS will explore if there are further needs in the organization through:

- *Raising awareness on unconscious bias in recruitment and promotion processes.* Recruitment processes are an important moment to re-balance diversity in teams and FORS at large. It is therefore important that everyone involved in the recruitment is aware of the existing diversity in a team and also understands how unconscious (or implicit) bias may influence recruitment. The gender composition of an existing team is part of the analysis of every job profile. FORS middle management will be encouraged to participate in the training on implicit bias offered by the gender equality office of the University of Lausanne. FORS staff will be informed of this possibility in 2022. Internal training for FORS middle and executive managers will take place in 2023, where we will include the issue of implicit bias.
- *Preventing sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination.* FORS will review the existing measures to prohibit and address sexual harassment. This includes making all staff aware of what sexual harassment entails and how it can be addressed. FORS also will make sure that FORS

² <https://forscenter.ch/projects/swiss-household-panel/>

³ <https://forscenter.ch/projects/mosaich/>

staff can contact the respective staff at the University of Lausanne for cases of perceived discrimination, perceived sexual harassment or gender-based violence. If this is not possible FORS will name its own person of trust, who will receive the respective training. This will be implemented in 2022.

- *Consulting FORS staff if needs currently not addressed exist concerning a gender-friendly work environment and keeping a family/work balance.* FORS will conduct an independent survey accompanied by an internal working group, which will assess the satisfaction with the work environment, possibilities to keep a good work/life balance, and possibilities for improvements. This will also include an analysis of how the transformation of the workspace in Géopolis created any gender-specific concerns. This will be completed in 2023.

FORS has all the necessary resources to implement these actions. This plan will be reviewed in 2023, where possible new actions will be identified and developed.