



EQUAL4EUROPE
GENDER EQUALITY PLANS

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Checklist for Gender-Sensitive Teaching

The aim of the checklist is to help higher education teachers reflect on their teaching practice with respect to gender sensitivity. The checklist includes set of questions to be asked when designing the course and developing the content of the course curriculum or when reflecting on the classroom practices. The questions are complemented by the short explanatory notes that help the reader understand the concepts addressed in the questions and/or provide practical examples.

✓ Do you attract students of all genders to take your course?

- Yes
- No

Using gender-sensitive language (avoiding masculine generics and masculine pronouns when referring to the whole group) in the course syllabus gives the signal that everyone is welcome. E.g., instead of expressions like chairman, manpower, businessman use terms as chairperson, workforce, business agent.

✓ Are you inviting a balanced number of female and male academics for a visiting lecture at your course?

- Yes
- No

Diversity among lecturers sends positive signals to students, as they may act as role models for potential future professionals. Including into the course reader publications written by female and male experts in the field may have a similar effect.

✓ Have you included publications addressing the gender dimension of the subject in the course readings?

- Yes
- No

You may include texts that are focused on the gender dimension as the primary subject (e.g. a study investigating the impact of a public policy/medical treatment/etc. on women), or texts that have a different subject but also consider the gender dimension of the main topic (e. g. a study that is focused on a certain public policy/medical treatment/etc. and includes an evaluation of its impact on women).



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✓ Do the home assignments for students include the gender dimension?

- Yes
- No

One form of a (home) assignment may be to design a research project incorporating the gender dimension. The student should be given previous instruction on how to work with the gender dimension in research

✓ Do you make your students more aware of gender stereotypes connected to the field you teach?

- Yes
- No

Some content may appear as including the gender dimension when it somehow differentiates between men and women. But it is crucial to distinguish gender-aware content from gender-stereotypical. While gender awareness means examining the situation of people of different genders, gender stereotypes are based on unexamined, traditional views of the roles of women and men, preconceptions about their needs, etc. E.g. the famous “pink it and shrink it” marketing strategy for products designed for women is based on gender stereotypes.

✓ Do you introduce students to the gender dimension of the topic you teach?

- Yes
- No

Blindness regarding the content of education has many consequences. It may make the situation of women invisible by over-generalisation (generalizing the situation/needs/attitudes/etc. of men to the whole population) or falsely explained on the basis of gender stereotypes. An example of over-generalisation would be e. g. teaching about the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789) as stating that “human beings are born and remain free and equal in rights”, without the acknowledgment that the expression “human beings” signifies in this context only “male human beings”. An example of an explanation based on gender stereotypes would be e.g. justifying the differences in programs in women's and man's prisons by the “natural” role of women as housekeepers.

✓ Do you include examples from women's as well as men's contributions to sciences in your teaching?

- Yes
- No



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✓ Is gender considered together with other forms of social identities?

- Yes
- No

Since gender is experienced together with other socially constructed identities (social class, ethnicity, race, disability, sexual orientation, etc.), gender-sensitive teaching needs to be based on an intersectional approach. That means considering how the combination of different types of inequality (sexism, racism, homophobia, ableism...) produces specific forms of discrimination. Intersectionality may be relevant in the course content (e. g. availability of healthcare to women from ethnic minorities) as well as in the class conduct (e. g. potential barriers experienced by female foreign students).

✓ Do you reflect on your own internalised gender stereotypes or unconscious biases you might have?

- Yes
- No

Even when we are consciously trying to avoid them, we probably still have some deeply rooted unconscious gender stereotypes and biases, as a result of our socialization. We may ask students to be our allies and let us know in case they observe that our speech or action is based on gender stereotypes.

✓ Do you use gender-sensitive language and visual materials while teaching and writing course materials?

- Yes
- No

Using gender-sensitive language means addressing people of different genders equally and making them equally visible. Besides, it means also avoiding expressions that are offensive or based on gender stereotypes. There are two basic strategies for more gender-sensitive language usage – gender neutralization and gender specification. We may avoid masculine generics and overusing masculine pronouns by any of these strategies or their combination. However, less inflected languages may be prone to neutralisation, while with highly inflected languages it may be easier to use gender specification. For more information see e.g.: • The UN ESCWA guidelines on gender-sensitive language • The SUPERA guidelines for gender-sensitive communication in research and academia

✓ Do the students use gender-sensitive language?

- Yes
- No



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You may make an agreement with your students on mutual support in using gender-sensitive language by pointing out gender-biased terms and expressions and trying to reformulate them (everyone should be free to do so). Similarly, encountering gender-biased expressions in a textbook may result in a valuable exercise of trying to replace them.

✓ Do you give equal space to pose a question or to express an opinion to students of all genders?

- Yes
- No

✓ Do you give students of all genders feedback on their questions and comments of approximately the same value?

- Yes
- No

In terms of richness/brevity, additional questions, etc.

✓ Do you employ participative and inclusive teaching methods?

- Yes
- No

Using a variety of teaching methods addresses students with different learning styles and also supports them in developing various skills. If you employ group work, pay attention to the gender composition of groups; if possible, avoid gender segregation, but also try not to have only one female student among males and vice versa.

✓ Do you observe whether any form of sexism or sexual harassment is present during your classes?

- Yes
- No

The most common forms you may encounter during the classes are offensive comments based on gender stereotypes addressed to a group (e. g. “women need just short skirts to pass the exam”) or to an individual (e. g. “Julie, do not even try to understand it with your tiny female brain, you have other virtues”). Another widespread form is unwanted sexual attention – gazing at certain body parts, sexual remarks, etc. If you notice any of these, your responsibility is to act.



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✓ Do you collect feedback to your classes from the students and if so, do you look at the responses through a gender lens?

- Yes
- No

Besides the individual approach, you may look at the feedback also from the perspective of the female and the male students and check if you see any differences between these groups.

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