

Equal Opportunity & Diversity Action Plan 2021-24

Implementation Progress Report 2021-23



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Introduction

In December 2021, the EPFL Presidency adopted the Equal Opportunity & Diversity Action Plan 2021-24. Based on a number of reference documents, such as the EPFL Strategy 2021-24, the ETH Domain Gender Strategy, the Gender Monitoring and the recommendations from the Report on the Status of Women Faculty (2020), the Action Plan was drafted through a concerted effort by a variety of stakeholders, including EPFL's school deans and two college directors, along with the vice presidents, associate vice presidents, associations and heads of units tasked with specific action items.

The Action Plan represents a roadmap that articulates a strategic vision, with objectives and dedicated measures, engaging the EPFL Direction, Schools and units. While the Action Plan ambioned to be comprehensive in its scope, it was not intended to be exhaustive nor fixed.

24 months after the formal adoption of the Action Plan, the present report provides evidence on progress in its implementation from 2021 to 23. The report lists main initiatives linked to the Action Plan as implemented by central units and schools. It is in no way a comprehensive list of actions carried out at EPFL in favour of the advancement of equal opportunity and diversity.

The report is structured according to the chapters of the Action Plan. Each chapter lists the Planned Actions, describes the realizations and highlights priorities for 2024. The report serves as a basis to define objectives and elaborate action lines for 2025-28.

Feed-back to the report is highly welcome. The report will be adapted at the end of 2024.

I. Instilling an inclusive organizational culture

Planned actions 2021-24

- Implementation of Equal opportunity committees within each school and college, coordinated by the VPT
- Dialogue with Swiss and international experts and engagement in benchlearning with other universities
- Monitor performance, conduct impact assessments and issue reports

Realizations 2021-23

[Committees and representatives in Schools and Colleges & EPFL EDI Committee](#)

Advancing Equal Opportunity and Diversity by definition is a shared effort, requiring the cooperation with stakeholders across EPFL. As of 2023, most/all schools and colleges now have a committee, or a representative at the Deans' or president's office tasked with the topic. The composition, organisation and activities carried out by Diversity Committees and Offices vary from school to school. All Committees and Offices are chaired by faculty members and include representatives from all bodies. The [ENAC Diversity Office](#) for example comprises three working groups, dedicated to "Recruitment & Retention", "Onboarding & ENAC Culture", and "Communication and information". Globally, the role of EDI committees and offices in schools can be summarized as follows:

- "Locally" identify needs and relevant topics with regard to EDI
- Initiate and implement EDI (pilot) projects at the level of the school/college
- Support dissemination and implementation of EPFL wide initiatives
- Collaboration between schools and with VPT

An Equal Opportunity and Diversity Committee at the level of EPFL, coordinated by VPT-EGA, has started in 2023.

The aim of the EPFL-wide Committee is to

- Discuss EDI topics, indicators, EPFL wide initiatives & strategy.
- Invite experts and promote benchlearning on EDI with leading universities.
- Support exchange of good practice developed at EPFL schools & sections.

Monitoring advances and driving change

Guiding principles underlying EPFL's EDI policy and stance are outlined in the chapter Equality, Diversity Respect, of the EPFL Compliance Guide. This chapter was first published in 2022. It outlines a programmatic stance and engagement on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, based on Federal & International Law, with an intersectional approach, discussed in relation to the EPFL context and responsibility.

Evidence and input informing EPFL EDI policy development is also collected from surveys, studies and sectorial audits, such as :

- [Status of Women Faculty](#) (2020)
- [Survey on Harassment, Violence and Discrimination](#) (2021)
- [Enquête Santé Mentale et Bien-être](#) (2023)
- [Enquête de Satisfaction](#) (2023)
- Rapport d'auto-évaluation [EPFL sans Barrières](#).

The advancement of Equal Opportunity at EPFL is assessed via different processes. These include the

- Biennial gender monitoring & reporting. The institutions of the ETH Domain report biennially on the evolution of the gender distribution in their student population, as well as among the academic, administrative and technical staff, at all levels of seniority and schools. ETH Domain institutions also report to the ETH Board on the actions they have implemented, and the resources allocated to these actions.
- The standards for the institutional accreditation of universities in Switzerland are based on the LAEHE and comprise a standard on equality. EPFL has undergone the accreditation procedure in 2021/22. Audits of Schools, colleges and programs such as the Ecole Doctoral, also address issues around EDI. These procedures provide important feed-back.

As part of the implementation of the Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2021-24, the Equal Opportunity Office has defined a number of KPIs, to be assessed on a regular basis.

EDI Networks & Benchlearning

The EPFL Equal Opportunity Office is involved in regional, national and international networks concerned with Equal Opportunity Diversity and Inclusion. Regional networks comprise public, academic and non-academic institutions (such as UNIL, UniGE, UniFR, UniNE, IHEID, HES-SO; Canton de Vaud, Ville de Lausanne, neighboring communes), as well as private organizations (such as companies from the EPFL Innovation Parc, CSEM, etc.). On a national level, networks include IDEAS, the ETH Domain's Equal Opportunity Working Group, and networks related to specific topics (such as Academic Dual Career Network; swissuniability) . International networks include the EuroTech Equal Opportunity Working Group, the CSEAR HR Task Force and its EDI Working group.

To reflect on and critically (self-)assess their EDI strategy and practice, VPT-EGA together with other stakeholders at EPFL such as AVP-SAO and DHR engages in “benchlearning” discussions on topics related to EDI with selected universities. Since 2021, in-depth discussions have been engaged with the VPPL at ETHZ. Topics include: Institutional EDI strategies & policies; Grievance procedures & conflict management ; Respect campaigns & prevention measures; Evaluation designs for support and grievance procedures; Participative processes on Culture & Values, as well as Leadership- & staff development. In 2022, EPFL has been contacted by Aalto University to engage in a “bench-learning” exchange, as part of the University’s Quality Process. Site visits were organized at EPFL and Aalto, including VPT-EGA, TSN, DRH and student representatives. Topics included: Quality assurance in EDI Strategies ; Student involvement; Diversity offices and projects in Schools; LGBTIQ+ rights; Accessibility & Inclusion policies; HR Policies, processes and practice to improve equity; Promotion of a Culture of Respect; Commission on the Status of Women Faculty @ EPFL.

Priorities 2024

- Gender Monitoring and Discussion of KPIs
- Elaboration of the EPFL Equality Diversity Inclusion Action Plan 2025-28

II. Hiring and retaining women professors

Planned actions 2021-24

- Increase the number of women professors
- Ensure appropriate gender equality among faculty hired directly
- Introduce a dual-career program
- Increase our commitment to excellence and diversity by introducing a visiting professor and academic guest program

Realizations 2021-23

Faculty Recruitment

The EPFL *Policy for equal opportunity in faculty recruitment* ([web](#)) adopted in September 2017, has continued to be implemented. Based on four basic principles and a number of good practice standards, the policy includes an *Implicit Bias Awareness training* by Prof. Marianne Schmid Mast (HEC UNIL). The training is compulsory for chairs of faculty recruitment committees. Since 2020 it is available on-line. The policy is further supported by the target to make of 40% offers for faculty positions until 2024 to women. The implementation is ensured by stakeholders in charge of the recruitment process, including Deans, Committee Chairs, Faculty Affairs (APR) and Presidency. Synthetic reports allow a follow up by APR. Between 2017 and 2023, 131 people were hired on a faculty position at EPFL, of which 37% women. For the period 2021-23, 43% of offers for faculty positions went to women and 39% of recruitments. Data analysts at the Secretariat general of the Presidency have established [scenarios for faculty diversity](#) in the coming years.

In rare occasions, EPFL may hire faculty members directly, rather than through a regular application procedure. Between 2021 and 2023, three persons were hired in this way, 2 men and 1 woman.

- **37% among new faculty hires between 2017 and 2023 were women.**
- **In December 2023, gender balance among EPFL faculty overall reached 25%.**

Dual Career Program

In 2021, EPFL has created a formalized [Dual Career Program](#), with a 0.25% EPFL Dual Career Program Officer position attached to the VPT. Between 2021 and December 2023, 21 partners could be supported with a funded position. There is also a good gender balance among the beneficiaries of the Dual Career Program, both among the first faculty hires as among partners. Moreover since 2021 about 45 spouses of EPFL faculties have benefitted from a Dual Career program services either by following language classes, going through an interview with a job placement specialist or in taking part at a one of the networking events organized by the program.

The Action Plan foresaw the creation of a visiting professors and academic guest program. The scheme was intended to contribute to enhance diversity among EPFL faculty and provide role models for underrepresented groups. Due to constraints in resources, the project has not been pursued.

Priorities 2024

- Pursue implementation of policy and monitoring of outcomes

III. Increasing EPFL's attractiveness to women Bachelor's, Master's and PhD students

Planned Actions 2021-24

- Increase the number of women students
- Action items developed and implemented by the Science and Education Outreach Departments
- Action items developed and implemented by CAPE, LEARN and CEDE
- Seek out innovative measures EPFL can take
- Monitor the impact of our efforts

Realizations 2021-23

Between 2021 and 2023, the share of women among students at EPFL (Bachelor, Master, PhD) has evolved from 30% to 31.4%. Thus, the share of women among the student population is below the overall target set by the ETH Board, to have women make up 33% of the ETH Domains combined student body by 2024. As highlighted in the EPFL Gender Monitoring, gender composition varies across schools and sections.

Students from particular social groups have not traditionally participated equally in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education. These “non-traditional STEM students” include women students, students from lower social-economic groups and students from some ethnic minorities. This is as true of EPFL as it is of other schools.

As highlighted by EPFL Data Stories analysis on “[Social diversity among students at EPFL](#)”, while 73% of students at the end of compulsory school in Switzerland come from households in which the parents do not hold a degree from a higher education institution, only 43% of those who obtain a High School degree (maturité) with physics & applied mathematics (PAM) come from households in which the parents do not hold a degree from a higher education institution. According to the latest survey from the Federal Statistics office in 2020, 27% of EPFL students come from families in which the parents do not hold a degree from a higher education institution.

- **Women represent 31.4% of Bachelor, Master and Doctoral students at EPFL in 2023.**
- **27% of EPFL students come from families in which the parents do not hold a higher education degree, compared to 73% of students in compulsory education in Switzerland.**

The Associate Vice-presidency for Education and the Associate Vice-presidency for Student Affairs and Outreach together with their units, the Center LEARN, schools and sections are main actors in driving EPFL's efforts towards a more diverse student population, and an increase in the share of women. They have carried out an array of measures with multiple approaches to address these questions and enhance diversity in the EPFL student population.

Science Outreach Actions (SPS)

The “*Les sciences, ça m'intéresse!*” program developed by [EPFL's Science Outreach Department](#) (SPS) aims to introduce young people to science and technology, arouse their interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) fields, and encourage them to take up scientific and technical studies. The program is based on an active pedagogical approach that awakens interest in science and technology, cultivates creativity and encourages the acquisition of scientific thinking and new knowledge in STEM fields. It takes the **gender dimension into account in a transversal way**,

includes targeted actions to encourage girls, and works to raise awareness among parents and teachers.

46,000 girls and boys aged 7 to 16 benefited from the program's in-school and out-of-school activities from 2021 to 2023. **Mixed-gender** activities are **based on equal participation**. In addition, **a specific program reserved exclusively for girls** <https://go.epfl.ch/programmemintfilles> is an integral part of the "Les sciences, ça m'intéresse!" program. It aims to get more girls interested in science, mathematics and information and communication technologies. The goal of the program is to give girls confidence in their abilities, show them the usefulness of science and technology for society, and put them in touch with role models to encourage them to choose STEM fields for their studies and careers.

From 2021 to 2023, more than 9,000 girls aged 7 to 16 took part in **age-appropriate, girls-only activities** such as biannual courses in computer science (Internet & Code for Girls 9-11), in robotics (Robots are Girl's Business! 11-13) or in mathematics ("*les maths, ça m'intéresse!*" age 13-15 and "*maths en jeu*" age 11-13), science camps (11-13), computer science camps ("*Toi aussi, crée ton app*" age 12-15) and science workshops (age 7-10) or coding and mentoring activities ("*Coding club des filles*" age 11-16). Female science and engineering students and women scientists take part in the activities and act as role models. It's also worth noting that Bachelor's and Master's students who themselves took part in these activities as children or teenagers, convinced of their impact, take part in supervising the activities.

The program has been successfully rolled out in all French-speaking and bilingual French- and German-speaking cantons, as well as in several German-speaking cantons. Some activities were also organized in Ticino. As a result, the range of activities has been extended to **17 Swiss cantons** by 2023. In addition, by promoting scientific activities for girls, a real information campaign is being run to raise awareness among the girls' entourage and the media, highlighting the importance of ICT and technical science branches in our society, and the need for women to be present in these fields. The aim of the SPS communication campaign is not only to reach out to girls and give them confidence that they can legitimately take part in these activities, but also to influence a change of attitude in the girls' entourage and in society as a whole, towards the place of women in these fields, and to help encourage girls to get involved. Many articles and reports in the media reflect these activities. Communication about activities is systematically carried out through the schools, enabling information to reach all families.

Education Outreach Actions (SPE)

Within the framework of initiatives to promote/orientate/transition and enhance the value of study programs, carried out by the Education Promotion Service (SPE), particular attention is paid to diversity and inclusiveness:

- Use of **role models**: As far as possible, a balanced representation is ensured when selecting students to represent EPFL at events managed by the SPE (orientation forums, in situ information days, theme days in gymnasiums), as well as for our guest speakers.
- Development of **pre-university transition weeks between the Gymnasium and EPFL that are likely to appeal to the female public**: no program is exclusively reserved for a female target public, but **the choice of themes and content, the style of communication and the visuals** used are all elements that can have an impact on the perception of our target audiences. For example, scientific themes linked to major societal challenges, the simulation of biological

phenomena, the origin of the universe or space, have a particular resonance with the female public:

- [Nature in code](#): already 4 editions, between 50 and 70% girls
 - [Sustainability](#): 2 editions, 55% girls
 - [General Relativity](#): created in 2020, 33% girls
- **Particular care is taken to diversify examples of** research projects or professional prospects in promotional materials to increase appeal to non-traditional STEM audiences. Here are a few examples:
- [Thematic orientation tool](#) to highlight the involvement of EPFL expertise in various key areas: [sustainable development](#), [climate](#), [health](#), [entrepreneurship, etc.](#)
- The SPE is carrying out surveys (2021, 2022 and every two years thereafter) among new Swiss BA1 students (educational background), to question their study choice process. The results show clear gender differences, which will enable us to guide our future actions. The clearest result is that **young women do not dream of technical professions from an early age (unlike boys), but that their interest is aroused during the gymnasium curriculum, and that they do not make their final decision until shortly before enrolment.** Discovering the content of the field or branch of study (not on the radar before gymnasium) plays a decisive role in the choice. In addition, the segmentation of students according to their interest in science indicates an over-representation of women in the idealist group (sensitive to the major challenges facing our planet).
- Particular attention is also paid to **diversity of origin**, with a strong emphasis on promotion in Switzerland's other language regions.
- [Theme days](#) in Thun (2022) and Solothurn (2023)
 - [Pre-university weeks](#) (11) promoted in all language regions
 - [Participation in BEA](#) (2022)
 - Participation in numerous forums (14 per year in CH-DE)
 - Visits to EPFL campus by German-speaking classes (10 on average per year)

Intervention studies by CAPE, CEDE, CePro, and LEARN

Over the last years CAPE, CEDE, CePro, and LEARN have been developing and researching educational interventions to improve the retention of non-traditional students in EPFL. Non-Traditional students are often less likely to have studied high level mathematics in high school (in study 1 below, for example, 33% of women who had studied in Switzerland had specialized in Math and Physics in high school, as compared to 61% of male students). Therefore prior learning is treated as a confounding factor in this work.

Together, the results of these multiple studies demonstrate how learning sciences can contribute to EPFL education improvement by suggesting a number of pedagogical strategies for improving the retention of non-traditional students in EPFL education.

Study 1: Interactive teaching in first-year Linear Algebra

First-year basic science courses play a major role in deciding who continues in EPFL and who leaves. This study¹ aimed to explore over two years the impact of interactive teaching (flipped class format) on student attainment in a first year Linear Algebra course. Students volunteered to participate and were assigned either a control group who followed the traditional linear algebra class or to an experimental group who were taught using a flipped class format.

An analysis of exam grades for students who participated in the experiment over two years showed that: (a) the flipped format resulted in smaller differences in the achievement of women and men; (b) the flipped format resulted in smaller differences in the achievement of students with different high school backgrounds; (c) women with weaker prior mathematics attainment achieved better results in

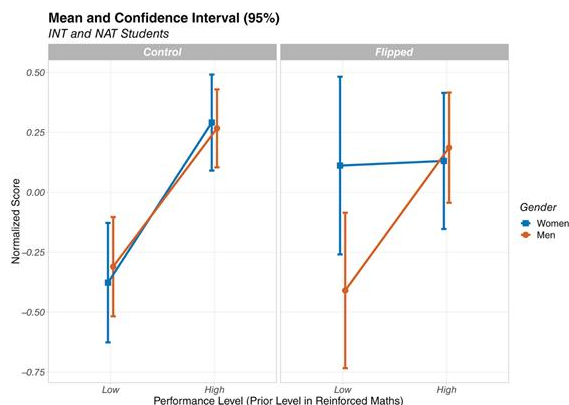


Chart 1: Differences in achievement taking into account gender and prior mathematics levels: This plot illustrates the mean score and confidence interval for the scores of students across gender, prior mathematics level, and teaching method (lecture-based or flipped).

the flipped condition (see Chart 1).

The flipped format, therefore, seems to provide a strategy to better retain both women and students with nonscientific high school backgrounds in engineering education, and therefore, increase diversity in the field.

Study 2: Time pressure in first year Mathematics assessment

When working under time pressure, prior research shows students tend to revert to the use of habitual and intuitive problem-solving (rather than attempting to work through a more procedural approach to solving problems). Time pressure can also increase anxiety among 'maths anxious' students which can also have a negative impact on their performance. These impacts are likely to be strongest among those who have not previously studied Mathematics to a high level in high school, as is the case with many non-traditional students.

In 2019-20, it was decided to reduce the time pressure in the first year Linear Algebra exam without reducing the coverage of the assessment². We looked only at those who did not participate in a flipped class (in order to ensure that there was no cross-contamination of the effects). The data showed there was no significant impact on the results of those who had previously studied a high level of Mathematics in high school (French students and Suisse PAM students in Chart 2), indicating that the exam did not become easier as a result of the reduced time pressure. At the same time, the data

¹ Hardebolle, C., Verma, H., Tormey, R., & Deparis, S. (2022). Gender, prior knowledge, and the impact of a flipped linear algebra course for engineers over multiple years. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 111(3), 554– 574. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jee.20467>

² Research work in progress by Hardebolle, C., Niculescu, A., Verma, H., Tormey, R., & Deparis, S.

did show that the impact on the attainment of those who did not have a previously high level of Mathematics (Suisse Autres in Chart 2) was significant ($p < 0.001$), and was quite large (equivalent to an improvement of almost 1 mark on a 6 point grading scale).

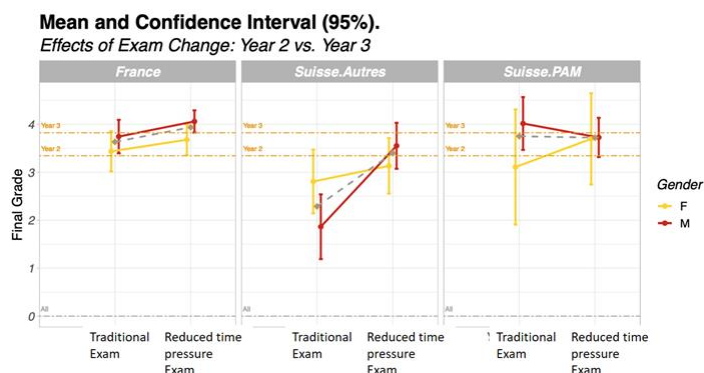


Chart 2: Differences in achievement taking into account gender and prior education type: This plot illustrates the final grade and confidence interval for the grades of students across the final gender, prior education type (French BAC, Swiss non-PAM, Swiss PAM), and exam time pressure (Traditional Exam, and Reduced time pressure Exam).

Study 3: Gender and student experiences in project teams

In addition to factors which impact on the attainment of non-traditional students in STEM education, there is also international research evidence that non-traditional students have a less positive social experience in STEM education (this is referred to by researchers as a “chilly climate”), and that this can impact on their retention in STEM education. Similar findings on the less positive social experience of women students and for those with a sexual orientation other than heterosexual have emerged from surveys on the sense of respect and engagement in the EPFL campus³.

A study on the experiences of male and female students in project groups⁴ found that, even among students in their fourth-year of study (all of whom have already passed many technical courses and all of whom could be considered to be technically competent), gendered patterns of work allocation and gendered implicit biases persist: male students are more likely than female students to report confidence in their own opinions and suggestions being valued in teams ($p < 0.01$), and were more likely to be assigned technical tasks in the team ($p < 0.001$), and less like to be assigned report writing ($p < 0.05$).

These differences appear to reflect a pattern of implicit bias giving rise to microaggressions which can play a role in undermining the confidence of female students. The data indicated that, in order to improve the learning experience for all students, there would be a value in making students explicitly aware of strategies for addressing their own implicit biases as part of student teamwork.

As a follow on from this study, an implicit bias training for engineering student project teams was developed and offered to EPFL students. The impact of the training was assessed⁵ through an evaluation of their intention to use strategies taught in the workshop, as well as a follow up survey which assessed which strategies they had actually put into practice after the workshop.

³ Tormey, R. 2021 EPFL Culture of Respect Survey Report 2021: https://www.epfl.ch/about/vice-presidencies/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Respect_Survey_Report.pdf

⁴ Aeby, P., Fong, R., Vukmirovic, M., Isaac, S., & Tormey, R. (2019). The impact of gender on engineering students’ group work experiences. *International Journal of Engineering Education*, 35(3), 756–765.

⁵ Isaac, S., Kotluc, N. & Tormey, R. (2019). Educating Engineering Students to Address Bias and Discrimination Within Their Project Teams. *Science and Engineering Ethics* 29(6). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11948-022-00426-w>

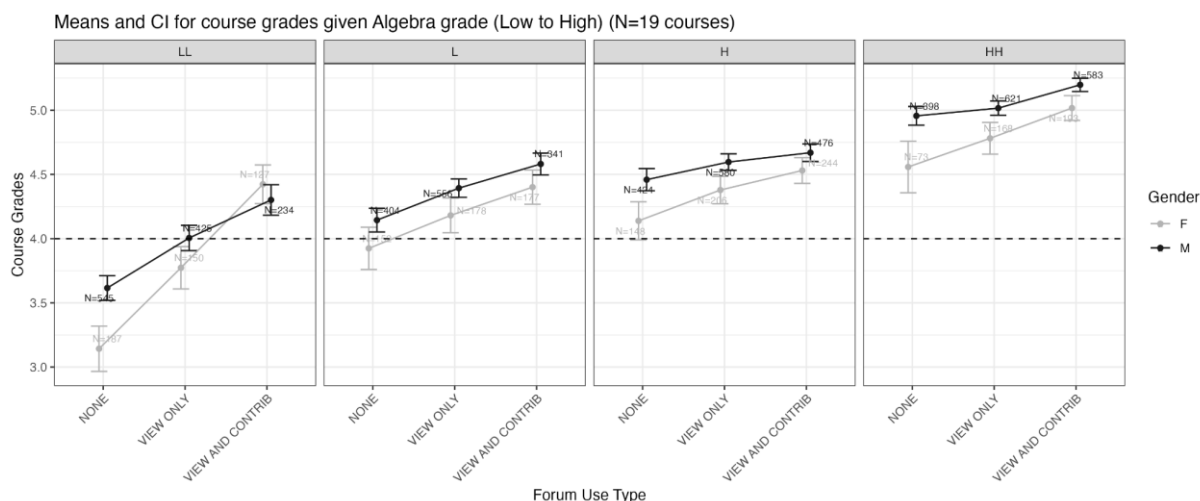
The evaluation of the workshop suggests that, even though the workshop was obligatory for the students concerned (and thus was not subject to a selection bias), the students found both onsite and online formats for the workshop to provide useful skills that they intended to apply in practice in their project teams. The follow-up evaluation suggests that the workshop did lead to behavioural change, especially the use of proactive teamwork strategies in which the team set up their work to minimise the effect of implicit biases (rather than only responding after a microaggression has become evident).

Study 4: Forum use in propaedeutic and bachelor courses

During the pandemic, asynchronous forums have played an important role in supplementing the interaction between students and instructors. The number of courses featuring a Piazza forum moved from a few to over 80. This trend now continues after the introduction of Ed Discussion which is used by more than 150 courses (especially at the propaedeutic and bachelor levels).

In this study⁶, we have observed the relation between prior mathematics level, forum use and grades in other courses. Prior mathematics level was measured by the students' grade in Algebra (MATH-111). For a clearer graphical representation, we have split this covariate with a quartile cut (LL=Lowest, L=Low, H=High, HH=Highest). A mixed effect regression model (N=2'939) reveals the following effects. First, prior mathematics level is a strong predictor of grades (LL < L < H < HH). Second, increased use of the forum is positively related to the grade (NONE means the students did not use the forum, VIEW ONLY corresponds to reading messages only, VIEW and CONTRIB means the students also asked or answered questions). Third, there is a gender difference with regards to the grades, whereby female students obtain lower grades than male students. Two interesting interaction effects indicate that the grade difference related to forum use is especially high for students with a lower prior mathematics level and higher for female students than for male students.

Overall the data shows the gender gap in attainment is reduced in the case of students who are high users of the forums.



Study 5: Programming experience

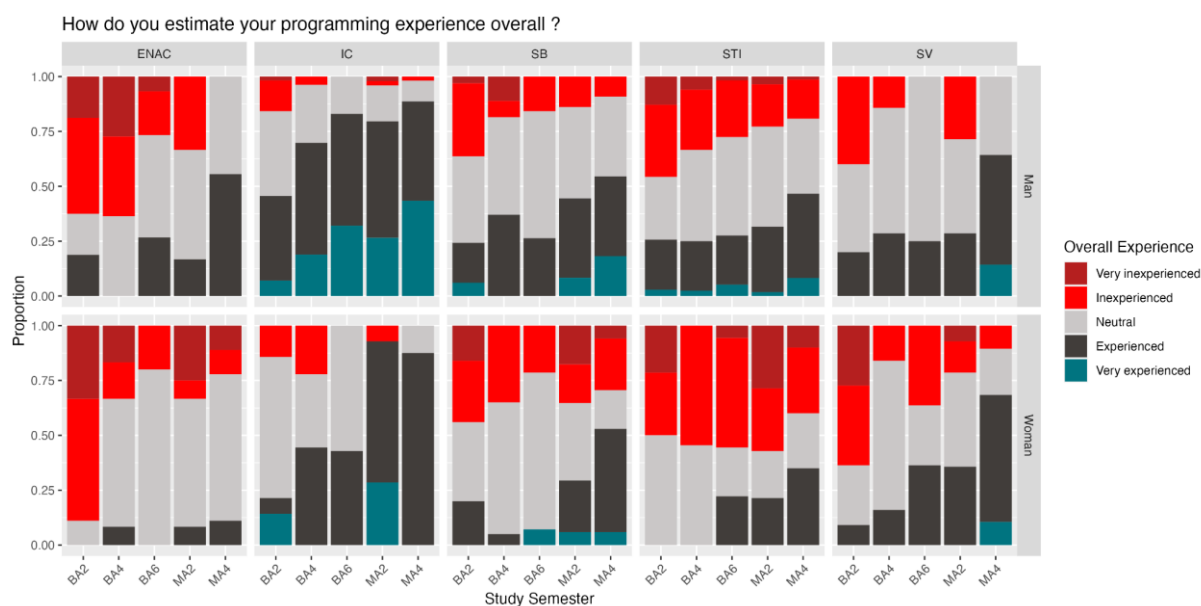
Computational thinking usually refers to the ability to conceptualise problems in terms of computational approaches (algorithms). On a more practical level, students also need programming skills to solve problems in different disciplines, including ones that are not computer science. When supporting instructors in the design of Jupyter Notebooks, we often hear that students might not

⁶ Research work in progress by P. Jermann and A. Niculescu

possess the necessary prerequisites in programming to fully take advantage of the notebooks. To find out, we ran a survey in April 2023 to identify the students' programming experience, and to ask where they acquired the skills (N=1'208, ENAC=110, IC=317, SB=241, STI=419, SV=121).

The self-evaluation of students' programming experience shows interesting contrasts. First, students from some faculties report higher experience than others: IC > (SB=SV) > (ENAC=STI). It is not surprising that IC students report the highest experience, it is however surprising to find STI among the lowest. There is also an evolution during studies, with the level of experience generally increasing as students move through BA and MA. There is however a dip of reported experience at MA2 in some faculties (ENAC, STI, SV). This could be due to students coming in from other places, where programming skills were either underdeveloped or of a different nature. Finally, female students report significantly less experience than males across faculties. It is not clear whether this stems from a bias of females underestimating and males overestimating their experience, or whether there are fewer opportunities for female students to practise programming, for example in project teams.

It is unclear whether the gender difference here is actually a difference in skill or a difference in self-efficacy beliefs about their own skill. However both possibilities are notable, since self-efficacy beliefs are associated with increased persistence and, as a consequence, with increased attainment. This suggests that an intervention focusing on computational skills, or on self-efficacy beliefs related to computational skills, could help to close the gender gap evident in the data.



Conclusion

These studies, taken together, show how learning sciences research at EPFL can help us to identify pedagogical strategies that can help to improve the retention of non-traditional students. There is good data to suggest that increased use of interactive teaching strategies such as flipped classes, the reduction of time pressure in exams, and the use of digital forum can all play an important role in improving the attainment and retention of women and those who have not previously specialised in Mathematics in high school.

These studies also highlight areas for action. Research on the gendered experience in student project teams, for example, has highlighted the need for student training on implicit biases in working in diverse teams, while the evidence also suggests that the training that is now being offered to some

students does have a positive impact on student behaviour. Similarly, data on gender differences in computational self-efficacy beliefs highlights an area in which targeted supports could also work to improve retention and reduce inequalities.

Visibility of Women in STEM in the Public Sphere

Relatable role models and visibility of women in STEM fields in the public sphere are important to change perceptions on women in STEM, and STEM fields more generally.

The [portraits series](#) on women professors at EPFL, initiated by the Materials Section and NCCR Marvel that was subsequently expanded in the context of EPFL's 50th anniversary, was re-edited in postcards and disseminated in High schools and Career Services throughout Switzerland.

The visibility of women's contribution to science on the EPFL campus was further enhanced through the naming of 2 squares and 5 streets to women scientist, inaugurated on 8 March 2022 ([web](#)). The names of the women scientists were proposed through a bottom up call for proposal and selected by a panel including faculty members and students.

Portraits of women scientists were also displayed at the Portes ouvertes, with new portraits series from the exhibition [STEM Passion](#) and [Women in Imaging](#).

The visibility of women in STEM is also supported a number of other actions, including portraits series created by Sections and NCCRs, initiatives by EPFL alumni to highlight women's careers and contribution, as well as by conference organizers aiming at a more balanced list of speakers and panels, and more generally by efforts to apply a more inclusive language (see p.XX ff) in EPFL's communication.

Priorities 2024

- Pursue implementation and assessment of measures.
- Further analyse available data on study trajectories and success rates.

IV. Expanding, recognizing and understanding diversity at EPFL

IV.1. Recognizing the breadth of diversity and the needs of different groups

Planned Actions

- Expand our understanding of diversity
- Better recognize diversity at our School
- Make our campuses more accessible and inclusive to people with disabilities
- Update our facilities so as to better serve our diverse Community

Realizations

Since 2022, the EPFL Compliance Guide starts with a chapter on Equality, Diversity, Respect. The chapter is based on fundamental constitutional principles about equality, diversity and non-discrimination. It outlines EPFL's policy, commitment and responsibility towards all its members, allowing them to be able to participate fully and equally in their studies, work and campus social life. The following actions were implemented with the aim to enhanced understanding of diversity at EPFL and making the campus more accessible and inclusive.

Recognising and Understanding LGBTIQ Diversity at EPFL

A variety of actions have been deployed between 2021 and 2023 on the EPFL campus aimed at making visible the presence and **thematizing the needs and rights of LGBTIQ communities**.

In November 2021, the travelling exhibition [Continuum](#) has settled in the Rolex Learning Center, it was accompanied by a series of themed events, including a round table "[Rights and recognition of LGBTIQ people](#)" and an online conference: "[How We've Taught Algorithms to See Identity](#)".

2021 saw the birth of a bottom-up initiative called [Safe Space](#) that aims to support the LGBTIQ communities at EPFL. Safe Space is a space for dialogue for queer people and their allies. It is committed to a better consideration of LGBTIQ needs and rights. Members of Safe Space have participated in a training course provided by VoGay, supported by the Equality Office.

IDAHOBIT – 17 MAY

As part of the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), celebrated on 17 May, a number of symbolic actions have been carried out, including the hoisting of rainbow flags on campus in 2021, 2022 and 2023. In 2021, staircases were also decorated with rainbows stickers. In 2023, a constructive exchange about the needs and barriers faced by LGBTIQ people at EPFL was organized in collaboration with the EPFL/UNIL [PlanQueer](#) association. The same year saw the launch of a mini exhibition displaying the letters that make up the acronym LGBTIQ, as well as the discrimination suffered by these groups of people in Switzerland, Europe and internationally.

Inclusive Name Change

From 2021, the [Inclusive Name Change Project \(INC\)](#) has been developed to enable all member of the EPFL community to use their preferred name, through a simple and standardized administrative procedure. The project also addresses gender diversity and ultimately should allow people to use their preferred gender or neutral address. Technical developments have started in 2023.

EPFL without barriers

Everyone must be able to participate fully and equally in their studies, work and campus social life, without encountering undue and discriminatory barriers. This is also reflected in the legal framework that applies to EPFL.

The “EPFL sans Barrières” (EPFL without barriers) project was launched in February 2023, with the aim of taking stock of accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities at EPFL, both in terms of studies and among academic staff and the administrative and technical corps, and drawing up recommendations. The project team was made up of delegates from the Vice-Presidencies, Associate Vice-Presidencies and Directorates concerned. Six people directly concerned, members of different bodies, took part in the project team. The project was supervised by a Steering Committee. Management was provided by VPT-EGA.

The self-evaluation work was inspired by similar approaches at other universities, including ETHZ, the University of Geneva and the University of Zurich. It was based on various guides and checklists developed by specialists at the Zurich University of Applied Sciences, the Swissunibility network and the Federal Office for Equality for People with Disabilities. External specialists supported the process with workshops and training courses. The needs of members of the community concerned were gathered through a call for testimonials. Between the end of May and the end of August 2023, 462 people contributed one or more testimonials.

Overall, the self-assessment concludes that a rather reactive approach to accessibility and inclusion prevails at EPFL, and that individual situations are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. While this approach is often necessary and effective for ad hoc solutions, in the long run it is likely to generate additional costs and fail to reach all those who need it. What's more, there is still not enough awareness of the specific needs and rights associated with disability.

The working group reports set out 25 objectives and around 70 measures, which will be included in the EDI 2025-28 Action Plan. Priority measures will be implemented as early as 2024. The self-assessment report with recommendations and the summary of the call for testimonials are available on [the project website](#).

EPFL sans Barrières was also involved in the Health Days from October 9 to 13, 2023 at EPFL, with the organization of a round table on “[Work environments for neurodiverse people](#)”, a project stand with mini-workshops on hearing, visual and physical disabilities, a workshop on digital accessibility and a workshop on “Studying and working with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD)”. Between 100 and 120 people participated directly in these activities.

- **399 course or exam accommodations in 2022-23.**
- **665 testimonials collected as part of the EPFL without barriers project.**

International Women’s Rights Day – 8 March

International Women's Rights Day, celebrated annually on 8 March, is a highly symbolic event that is much valued by members of the EPFL community. In [2021](#), the program for this international day included a series of conferences, round tables and online interviews. From [2022](#), the Equal Opportunity Office coordinated 8 March in collaboration with EPFL entities and associations. In the same year, a number of events focusing on "The Place of Women in..." were organized, including round tables, a workshop, stand-up comedy and the inauguration of a number of squares and streets

on campus named after women scientists. While the ceremony to inaugurate the street and square names received the deserved high visibility, participation at the other events was below expectation. In [2023](#), the cross cutting theme for events around 8 March was mental load. Lectures, a round table discussion, an exhibition, a sign-making workshop and a treasure hunt attracted an interested but somewhat modest audience. In order to improve the range of events on offer as part of the 8 March celebrations, specific needs and improvements to be made to increase the participation rate have been identified, particularly in the choice of timetable and the way events are communicated.

Action Week Against Racism

Since 2022, the Equality Office have been taking part in the [Action Week Against Racism](#), which takes place every year around 21 March, International day against racism. In 2022, EPFL joined the initiative launched by the *Bureau d'intégration* of Ecublens, who organized a “*théâtre invisible*” intervention, enacted also on the EPFL Campus.

In 2023, the Equal Opportunity Office organized two "[Noircir Wikipedia](#)" workshops, with the aim of filling in the gaps in references, articles and information on African culture, personalities and the African and Afro-descendant diaspora on Wikipedia. A selection of documents by the EPFL Library as well as other events organized by UNIL were also part of the program, including an exhibition and lectures. Possibly due to the newness events on this topic, the audience was rather modest (12 attendees to the workshops), albeit interested.

Infrastructure development

In terms of infrastructure, developments at EPFL between 2021 and 2023 include the free availability of menstrual products. The introduction of dispensers in all buildings and accessible to all who need them, was realized in parallel to the introduction of [non-gendered sanitary facilities \(toilets and showers\)](#) in the BS and CE buildings. This project also includes additional breastfeeding rooms in the BS and CE buildings.

In the context of the project on “Campus Pieton”, two “*marches exploratoires*” were organized in March 2023, by VPT- Sustainability and Equal Opportunity Office, in collaboration with association with Drag Lab, Polyquity and ENAC DO, as well as the collective LARES. 36 persons took place in these marches explanatory that aimed to include the voices of users who’s needs are not traditionally included in the design of public places.

Let’s talk – Lectures, film screening roundtables and other community events

Lectures, film screenings and round-tables discussions were organized also outside “official” days or specific projects. They provided very appreciated occasions to discuss topics around equality, diversity and inclusion and often attracted a large audience. Events include : film [screening and round-table “Sans frapper”](#) (Dec. 2021; ca. 150-200 participants); “[Briser le tabou des règles](#)”, Book Launch & Lunch Discussion (oct. 2023; 90 participants); the ENAC Diversity Office’s Movies series (Moonlight; L’Ordre Divin/the Divine Order; Hidden Figures), with an average of 40 participants.

Priorities 2024

- Inclusive Name Change - finalize & communicate implementation
- EPFL without Barriers : Initiate implementation of priority actions
- Actions organised for International Day of Women’s Rights, Action week Against Racism, IDAHOBIT

IV.2. Fighting harassment and discrimination, promoting respect and inclusion

Planned Actions

- Prevent harassment and discrimination and foster a culture of respect.
- Hold seminars on implicit biases, diversity and inclusion.
- Provide guidelines and training on best practices for inclusive communications.

Realizations

Outcomes from the Task Force on Harassment A-Z & Promoting a Culture of Respect

In 2021, the VPT created the **Task Force Harassment A-Z & Promoting a Culture of Respect**. Its role has been to put in place prevention and awareness-raising measures, and to propose a mechanism to ensure that situations of harassment, discrimination and other psychosocial risks are dealt with the utmost care and in a timely manner. This Task Force and the different working groups had representatives of all key community members: student body, scientific collaborators (PhD, postdoc); faculty, as well as administrative and technical staff.

A survey on harassment, violence and discrimination was organized in relation to the Task Force's work. It provided both quantitative and qualitative [findings](#) that were integrated in the elaboration of the campaign, prevention measures and structural institutional response.

As part of this work, a large [Respect communication campaign](#) was launched in September 2021 with follow up campaigns in 2022 and 2023. In addition, an e-learning module, "[You're not alone. Promoting Respect](#)", launched in April 2022, that teaches how to identify inappropriate behavior and react to these situations, be it as a witness, a target or a confident. This module is part of the "[EPFL Essentials](#)", the internal trainings that all community members should follow during their first 30 days at EPFL. As of December 2023, 850 staff members and 1035 students had completed the training⁷.

Another important result of the Task Force was the creation of the new support and complaint management procedure, validated by the Direction and by a consultation process for the new LEX on psychosocial risks (1.8.3) and the revision of LEX 1.8.1 concerning whistleblowing at EPFL. The support and case management structure is organized in three levels, of which the first two are new.

The Trust and Support Network (TSN) is composed of internal and external instances that offer listening, guidance, and support and its implementation started in Q2 of 2022 with the hiring of the Trust and Support Network Lead. The mission of this network is to coordinate and align EPFL's support instances and to ensure they have the relevant training to prevent, address and reduce psychosocial risks in the work and study environment at EPFL.

The TSN has launched the following trainings:

- Protection of personality: mobbing, sexual harassment, rights and duties: held 8 in-person sessions, around 130 participants including EPFL's senior leadership
- « *Accueil et prise en charge* » (Assistance and support for psychosocial risks; pilot with members of the TSN)
- Preventing and intervening in mental health (pilot with members of the TSN)
- Welcoming and supporting LGBTIQ people at school and at work: held 4 in-person workshop, around 50 participants including the HR team and staff who work in direct contact with the student population (welcome desk, housing, social services).

⁷ Figures do not take into account persons who have started the training but did not entirely complete it.

In September 2023, TSN launched the tool [Trust Point](#) to offer visibility and a unique entry point to the network. It also offers short definition videos in the "Know more" section to help prevent and raise awareness of the psychosocial risks that can affect EPFL students and staff.

[The Respect Compliance Office \(RCO\)](#) is the internal instance to file formal complaints and can be contacted by any person who feels that their physical or mental health and/or personal integrity have been affected by acts such as sexual harassment, mobbing, discrimination, violence, etc. in the workplace or study environment. Its implementation started in May 2023 with the recruitment of the Respect Compliance Officer.

Prevention in specific contexts – respectful events.

As part of actions focusing on prevention, targeted to promote a culture of respect, a sub-working group of the Task Force, including AGEpoly-Pôle Prevention and VPO-SE implemented a range of actions to prevent and address harassment at festive events and outings organized by student associations. The measures implemented during the academic year 2021-22 were assessed in a report that concluded with the following main conclusion. 1) EPFL should draft a charter (available on EPFL website) presenting the commitment to respectful and inclusive events at EPFL. Compliance with the charter should be mandatory. 2) The Charter should be enhanced by a good-practice checklist and list of resources. 3) EPFL should identify providers that can deliver training to committees and staff at events to raise awareness on issues of respect and good practice, adapted to the EPFL context. The implementation of the recommendations is ongoing.

- **1885 persons who have taken the e-learning from April 2022-Dec. 2023**
- **Four successive Respect campaigns have been deployed since 2021 ([web](#)).**

[Mental Health and Well-Being Task Force](#)

In 2022, under the leadership of the Associate Vice Presidency for Student Affairs and Outreach (AVP-SAO) of EPFL a [Mental Health and Well-Being Task Force](#) was put in place, with the aim to develop a mental health strategy. A survey was addressed to the entire EPFL community during the Mental Health week in 2022. It allowed to pinpoint issues affecting mental health of EPFL members, identify the community's needs, and determine what measures need to be implemented. The results of this survey have been published and are a basis for actions and measures. First actions include a one week recess of courses in the Autumn Semester, development of trainings and awareness-raising actions during the Health Days 2023.

[Implicit Bias Awareness training](#)

Implicit Bias Awareness trainings with Prof. Marianne Schmid Mast (HEC, UNIL), were developed at EPFL in the context of its policy for Equal Opportunity in faculty Recruitment. Since 2021, trainings are available as Mini-Moocs, both in French and in English, in three different formats : "Implicit Bias Awareness: Fundamentals"; "Implicit Bias Awareness in recruitment", and "Implicit Bias Awareness in Faculty Recruitment". They are accessible via the EPFL web pages ([Implicit Bias Awareness / Eviter les biais implicites](#)), and via the microsite www.implicit-edu.ch. While the training is required for chairs and proposed to members of faculty recruitment committees, no measures have been implemented to actively promote the training among CAT members with management responsibilities.

Implicit biases are addressed in other trainings during 2021-23. These include the "Make it awkward" Workshop, developed by Siara Isaac and Vivek Ramachandran, organized on demand and addressed mainly to a student and doctoral student audience, and a workshop developed by the ENAC Diversity

Office, targeted mainly to Class representatives. CAPE addresses implicit bias in selected trainings, such as [Micro-Ethics for Project teams](#); [Implicit bias in your teaching](#) (online); [Transversal Skills Workshops: Bias + Decision Making](#) ; [Inclusive Classrooms – Sustainable Classrooms](#).

Leaders for Equality Survey

EPFL participated in a **Leaders for Equality Survey**, conducted in 2022 at all Swiss universities and ETHs, in which male professors and lecturers were asked about their commitment to gender equality issues. The female professors and lecturers were asked how they in turn rated the commitment of their male colleagues. In a workshop animated by the responsible of the survey, a professor from University of St Gallen, professors of UNIL and EPFL had the opportunity to discuss the results. The key finding is that the male professors and lecturers at Swiss universities surveyed are (or want to be) engaged in gender equality but that the women surveyed rated the activities of their male colleagues as less positive nearly across the board and that they feel less included.

<https://www.gendercampus.ch/en/ideas/projects-and-documents>

Inclusive language principles and training

Inclusive language ([web](#)) aims to make language a communication tool that includes all genders and offers them the same visibility. It is in this perspective that a project was launched at EPFL in December 2020. Coordinated by the Equal Opportunity Office, with the scientific support of Dr. Pascal Gygax (UniFR), it was supported by a Steering Committee with representatives from central units and different bodies. The rationale and the guiding principles, both in French and in English, were discussed with a broad range of stakeholders and then validated by the Direction in 2021.

The implementation in French is supported by a dedicated web-page with Information on the four basic principles, 14 video capsules (total ca. 70') based on scientific research, practical online and face-to-face workshops, methodical tips, and a "help-line". Offers for English comprise explanation of four basic principles and a specific documentation.

Over the past 3 years, more than 450 members of EPFL's administrative staff took part in the workshops. The video capsules have been viewed several thousand times and are also used by other institutions in the French-speaking part of Switzerland as a learning tool.

Priorities 2024

- Continue implementation of TSN
 - Trainings and alignment of practice for TSN members
 - Training for unit managers and heads of labs
 - Communication and prevention measures (e-learning, etc.)
- Finalize charter for inclusive events

IV.3. Working and studying conditions conducive to a healthy work-life balance

Planned Actions

- Provide better information and support for caretakers
- Ensure adequate daycare capacity
- Provide guaranteed daycare to new faculty members
- Encourage family-friendly working hours
- Provide parental leave for non-birth parents
- Offer teaching relief
- Reward good leadership

Realizations

A thorough information and communication strategy is required to ensure that current and future or incoming staff and students receive the relevant information on working conditions and support measures allowing them to fulfil their care responsibilities while working or studying at EPFL.

The relevant web-pages under the responsibility of HR, VPT-EGA and SAE have been regularly reviewed, in collaboration with Mediacom, with the aim to improve their visibility. The Equal Opportunity Office sends targeted e-mails to parents and administrative assistants with information on existing support measures. Nevertheless, current actions do not amount to the afore-mentioned information and communication strategy. The need for such a strategy is enhanced by the international mobile EPFL community and the complexity of the Swiss school and day care systems.

The following support actions were implemented and developed between 2021 and 2023:

- **39 new day care places** on the EPFL-UNIL Campus were created through the opening of the Primavera day care in 2021, bringing the **total number to 269**. In addition, up to 16 places are reserved for EPFL members in daycare centers close to the campuses in Geneva and Fribourg.
- The Equal Opportunity office supports parents through information and support in the contact with the Day care centers on Campus.
- In exceptional cases, the Equal Opportunity Office can provide **transitory financial support to students and PhD students** who did not manage to secure a publicly funded day care. Between 2021 and 23, 6 PhD student's families were supported.
- Since 2021, **family-friendly schedules for meetings** are highlighted in internal communication (see for example [here](#)). The implementation of these schedules has not yet been assessed.
- Since 2021, **parental leave policy** has **extended** in several ways:
 - Extension of paternity leave / leave for non-birth parent from 10 days to one month.
 - Stop the clock of maternity leave (leave for birth parent) with automatic contract extension for the duration of the leave (4 months) integrated in Directives.
 - Teaching relief for faculty members who become parents (birth and non-birth parents).
 - Paid leave to care for family members (in addition to paid leave for a sick child and other parental obligations)
 - Extension of rights for prolonged illness/hospitalization of a child.
- EPFL has continued to offer the **Robert Gnehm Grants (RGG) for parent postdocs**, launched in 2018, with an initial financial support by the Robert Gnehm Fund. RGG aims to support postdocs in the first year of parenthood, allowing them to devote more time to their child

while alleviating a temporary decrease in scientific productivity. In 2023 a **similar scheme has been launched for PhD students** who are parents. Between 2021 and 2023 10 families have been supported.

- EPFL has also continued other measures to support staff members and students with parental obligations, namely :
 - **Holiday offers for children** between 4-9 and 9-12 years. Organized in cooperation with UNIL, 9 weeks are organized per year, welcoming on average 216 children.
 - **Emergency childcare**, available for parents living in all cantons where EPFL has campuses. From 2021-23, 2221 hours were subsidized, benefitting 103 families.
 - Availability of a **childcare offer for conferences** taking place on the EPFL campus. Day care was also offered during the Portes ouvertes.
 - Financial **support for PhD students and postdocs who travel professionally with a small child** (up to 1.5kCHF during the first 18 months). On average 3-4 parents were supported/year. Principles applicable to all staff have been developed, but not yet officially adopted.
 - **Brown bag lunches for parents** with an input of professional childhood educators allow parents to network, share their experience and get advice. From 2021-23, 24 lunches were organized (8/year), for parents of children in various age groups, on-site, in hybrid or on-line modes, with an average attendance of 30 parents per lunch.
 - At the end of 2023, the Equal Opportunity Office launched a new **PhD students and postdoc parents network**.
- **740 hours of Emergency Child Care benefit on average 55 families/year**
- **Four daycare nurseries on the EPFL-UNIL campus total 269 places.**
- **9 holiday camps welcome 216 children per year**

Priorities 2024

- Communication on support offers.
- Formalize principles and conditions for the reimbursement of professional travel costs with a small child.
- Assess implementation of family-friendly schedules for meetings, paternity leave and teaching relieve.
- Communication campaign around the notion of care as integral part of our lives.

V. Enhancing Equality in Career Prospects

Planned Actions

- Analyze the roles, tasks, responsibilities, and career development prospects of administrative assistants and draw up recommendations.
- Strengthen the diversity among CAT members.
- Offer career development opportunities for CAT.
- Continue career development programs focusing on equal opportunity.
- Implementation of the European Charter and Code for Researchers, signed by EPFL in September 2005.

Realizations 2021-23

Support to administrative assistants and their careers

Between 2021 and 2023 HR has put a focus on expanding the training, development and support offer for Administrative Assistants.

The first step was to create a dedicated online space for administrative assistants on the Keep Learning training platform. All the resources and training courses on this site have been selected, and in some cases specially developed, so that they can acquire the knowledge and skills they need to carry out this role, and also maintain and develop their employability.

<https://www.epfl.ch/campus/services/internal-trainings/fr/formation-pour-le-personnel/keep-learning-fr/>

In 2021, a series of workshops was also set up to support administrative assistants in carrying out their work during the Covid 19 crisis.

At the same time, an external service provider specializing in professional transition has been selected and services have been developed to support people, particularly administrative assistants, during laboratory closures and/or restructuring. Depending on the specific needs of each individual at the time of the process, skills assessment services or support in their search and in their internal and external repositioning were offered.

The GT-Admin, which exists since 2008, was renewed to improve the representativity and to reinforce it. The aim of the GT-Admin is to build the essential relays and participations for future projects to optimize and digitalize the School's processes, carried out jointly by EPFL's vice-presidencies. The group plays a consultative role and acts as a think tank. <https://www.epfl.ch/about/vice-presidencies/fr/vice-presidence-pour-les-finances-vpf/project-management-office/gt-admin/>

Networking and development for women among the administrative and technical staff

Lunch event for women CAT: Once per semester, the Equal Opportunity Office invites women of the administrative and technical personnel to a networking lunch called “my journey @EPFL” (“*Mon parcours à l’EPFL*”). A member of EPFL CAT presents her career and journey at EPFL and shares her thoughts on equal opportunity, opening up the discussion. Each lunch reunites ca. 40 participants.

<https://www.epfl.ch/campus/community/equality-and-careers/events-conferences/>

Seminars for women CAT in management functions. Women remain a minority among members of the CAT with a managing function. Since 2019, the Equal Opportunity Office organizes a yearly ½-day workshop targeted to women CAT managers. The Workshops are highly appreciated occasion to network and to improve skills relevant for management and leadership functions. No course took

place during the pandemic. In past two years, three courses were organized, reuniting 43 participants in total.

Career development programs for scientists fostering women’s careers

EGA coordinates and participates in several programs for (mostly) women researchers, which are described below. During the pandemics it was possible to move most workshops and activities online. The results of regular evaluations of these programs and the high participation rate show that they meet a real need among the female research population at EPFL.

The **Fix the leaky pipeline program** for women doctoral candidates and postdocs of the ETH domain, which exists since 2007 and which is coordinated by ETH and EPFL, has included new offers in 2021 one-to-one and peer mentoring, as well as individual coaching sessions. This successful program with a very large offer attracts many doctoral candidates and postdocs from the entire ETH Domain (see numbers below). <https://www.fix-the-leaky-pipeline.ch/>

The women doctoral candidates and postdocs of EPFL also benefited from the **REGARD** workshops and the « **Réseau romand de mentoring (RRM)** », the two programs from the Universities of Western Switzerland. REGARD organized more than 20 workshops on academic career management and transversal skills per year, 4-5 of which are organized by EPFL. <https://www.unifr.ch/regard/en/>
<https://www.unifr.ch/f-mentoring/en/>

RRM targets the next generation of female researchers and puts them in contact with experienced mentors from academia. EPFL can select 4 mentees for each round lasting two years. <https://www.unifr.ch/f-mentoring/en/>

CONNECT is a comprehensive Swiss program with the aim to link young women scientists with role models in industry and public sector, and foster their awareness of career planning. Participants attend 7 - 8 one-day workshops over the course of approximately 6 months, reflect on their career, interact with role models, and become part of a supportive and encouraging community. Four participants from EPFL are selected each year to participate in the program. <https://www.connect-women.ch/>

The **High Potential University Leaders Identity & Skills Training Program (H.I.T.)** is a unique national leadership initiative for female full and associate professors. The program is centered on skills and leadership identity training for female professors from all disciplines across Switzerland, about 25 professors are selected per round including always at least one professor from EPFL. https://www.gleichstellung.uzh.ch/de/projekte/hit_2.html

Table 01. Career development for women scientists offers and participants 2021-23 (* = all genders)

Program	Offer	Total number of participants 2021-2023	Participants from EPFL 2021-2023
FLP	Workshops	257	54
	Coaching groups	120	20
	One-to-one mentoring	141	39
	Peer mentoring*	209	18
	Individual coaching sessions	796	138
	TOTAL FLP (3 rounds)	796	138
REGARD	Workshops (3 rounds)*	633	158
RRM	Mentoring program (2 rounds)	49	7
H.I.T.	Leadership program (2 rounds)	51	2

CONNECT	Offering opportunity to gain insight into non-academic career paths (3 rounds)	68	14
TOTAL		1597	319

Lunch events with role models

in cooperation with NCCRs, WISH Foundation and Private Companies the Equal Opportunity Office organizes on average 8 lunch events and industry site visits. Topics vary from career perspectives in specific areas, deciding between an academic career and industry, parenthood during PhD, entrepreneurship, etc. A central element is the discussion with role models who share their experience. The average attendance is 30 participants per lunch.

Implementation of the European Charter and Code for Researchers

A detailed documentation of the implementation of the European Charter and Code for Researchers at EPFL hasn't been drafted yet.

Implementation of the Charter for Equal Pay in Public Organizations

By signing the Equal Pay Charter, EPFL has committed itself to

- Raise awareness of the Federal Law on Federal Act on Gender Equality (Gender Equality Act, GEA) among employees involved in job evaluation, recruitment and professional promotion.
- Carry out a regular analysis of compliance with equal pay using a recognized standard.
- Enforce equal pay in public procurement and/or subsidies, by introducing control mechanisms.

The principles of the Gender Equality Act are included in the chapter on Equality, Diversity and Respect in the EPFL Compliance Guide, and are presented as part of the training given to TSN members and HR managers (see Section IV.2.). The Implicit Bias Awareness training course (see Section IV.2.) also provides a reminder of good practice in line with the principles of the Equality Act.

The equal pay analysis is carried out every 5 years and audited by an independent body. The analysis carried out in 2020/21 reveals that the average pay gap between men and women at EPFL, not explained by criteria such as training, function and professional experience, does not exceed 0.1%. This is an improvement on the 0.6% recorded 5 years earlier.

Compliance with the principles of the Equality Act, including equal pay, is one of the formal criteria defined by the Purchasing Department for the awarding of public tendering contracts. Since 2021, sustainability criteria have been systematically integrated wherever relevant. Since 2023, specifications have also been examined from the angle of accessibility and inclusion.

Career prospects of EPFL Alumnae and Alumni

On 8 March 2021, EPFL alumni presented results from a survey conducted among EPFL Alumnae, with the aim to take stock of the situation of women graduates and see how they evolve in the professional world: Where do they work? How do they reconcile their professional and private lives? What career obstacles and opportunities do they encounter? While findings highlighted that participation in the labour market of EPFL alumnae is very high and far above the average in Switzerland, including when they have children, results also indicate remaining obstacles and points to factors that support equal opportunity. An [extensive survey conducted in 2022](#) among EPFL alumni and alumnae, indicates

persisting gender difference among which differences in salary. The latter being also supported by [surveys on the entry into the job](#) market from the EPFL career center.

Priorities 2024

- Prepare and implement new rounds of programs.

VI. Improving gender equality and diversity in research and innovation

Planned Actions

- Enhance awareness of gender and diversity issues in research and innovation

Realizations 2021-23

L'EPFL is associated in two cooperation projects supported by swissuniversities as part of the P7 funding program "Diversity, inclusion and equal opportunities in higher education development" (2021-2024), that pursue the above mentioned objective.

Genre/numérique

The project "Égalité de genre et transformation numérique" (Gender Equality and Digital Transformation) project is led by the UNIL Equality Office, in partnership with the EPFL Equality Office, HES-SO, HEG-FR and the StrukturELLE association. The dhCenter UNIL-EPFL, which ceased operations on December 31, 2022, was a founding member.

FemSpin

This collaborative project of ETHZ, EPFL, the PSI, the Universities of Zurich, Basel, Bern and Geneva, as well as the universities of applied science HES-SO, SUPSI and FHNW. It aims at promoting equal opportunities in the field of spin-off activities by setting a specific focus on women. Activities include gathering and discussion of data on academic spin-offs and entrepreneurship in Switzerland according to gender, the organisation of event and networking opportunities, enhance the visibility of women scientists creating spin-offs and start-ups at Swiss universities and research institutions. The Equal Opportunity Office and the VPI have collaborate to producing data for EPFL and co-organized the event The Female Entrepreneur Experience: Wisdom and Innovation at the RLC in November 2023, reuniting ca. 150-170 participants.

EuroTech Alliance Brochure

In June 2023, the EuroTech Alliance Working Group on Gender Equality edited the "[EuroTech guide on how to address gender and sex in Horizon Europe proposals](#)", with good practice examples from its member institutions, among which EPFL.

Priorities 2024

- Prepare a workshop on Gender and Research and Innovation for EPFL Leaders4Impact and other postdocs.
- Organize a workshop for decision makers as part of the FemSpin project.
- Organize an event in October 2024 on gaming in the frame of the *Genre/numerique* cooperation project.