



1 Introduction

The Vienna School of International Studies (Diplomatische Akademie Wien – DA) is committed to the principles of gender equality, diversity and inclusion. Gender equality is a fundamental human right, a core value of the European Union, and a main element of our mission. As the oldest professional school in the world, the DA is proud of having launched talented men and women into international careers and positions of leadership over the course of more than two centuries. Equal opportunity and non-discrimination matter to the DA as a workplace, and as central values in leadership, decision-making, and the production and transfer of knowledge. Gender equality, the advancement of women and the support of LGBTQIA+ persons is also a commitment we share with our main cooperation partner University of Vienna.¹ The implementation of our Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is integrated into ongoing strategic goals and processes of institutional development, including with the International Gender Champions Initiative (IGC) as well as recommendations by external evaluators (e.g. Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance - AQA).

The GEP elaborates how the DA ensures gender equality in different areas of the organization, including its organizational processes, organizational culture and approach to research, teaching, and executive training. It is designed as a flexible, participatory, and process-oriented tool based on monitoring, periodic assessment, and evaluation that supports updates in regular intervals. The structure of the plan corresponds to the five key areas proposed by the Research and Innovation Directorate-General of the European Commission: (i) gender balance in leadership & decision-making, (ii) gender equality in recruitment & career progression, (iii) integration of the gender dimension into research & teaching content, (iv) organizational culture and work-life balance, (v) prevention and harassment.

2 About the Diplomatische Akademie Wien - Vienna School of International Studies

The DA is a center of excellence for the study of international affairs. Our main training areas encompass international relations, political science, international and EU law, economics, history and languages and more recently, cultural studies. Our activities as a professional school are complemented by academic research, executive training programmes and our function as a hub for public lectures and debates. The DA is an independent public institution, whose legal basis is the “Diplomatische Akademie-Gesetz” (BGBl. Nr. 178/1996, last amended by the BGBl. I Nr. 177/2021). Its directorate is headed by a director, who is supported by a deputy director. The decisions of its director are checked by a board of trustees, composed of the Secretary General of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (BMEIA) and 10 members appointed by the BMEIA. The study commission is composed of its chairperson, elected by the scientific staff, the chairs of its four academic departments (international relations, history, international economics, international law and European Union law), and two external

¹ Affirmative Action Plan for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality of the University of Vienna. <https://satzung.univie.ac.at/en/more-parts-of-the-statutes/affirmative-action-plan-for-the-advancement-of-women-and-gender-equality/>



members. In addition to its four academic departments, the languages departments and the new research area in cultural studies, the DA includes its academic administration, a department for executive training programmes and events, a development department, a financial department, as well as a human resources and facility management department. The DA is open to post-graduate students from around the world and young people from more than 125 countries have graduated from the DA.

3 Mapping Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

At the time of our assessment, the directorate is headed by a male director and a female deputy director. Its board of trustees is headed by a male Secretary General and includes 6 female and 4 male members. A gender imbalance is observed in the study commission, which is headed by a male chairperson and includes 1 female and 4 male colleagues, whilst the head of the new research area cultural studies held by a female academic is invited and involved in decision-making as an informal practice. Similarly, a gender imbalance is observed in the senior resident faculty. The departments of international relations, history, economics, and international and European Union law are headed by male professors, whilst the recently established research area of cultural studies is headed by a female academic. Women are strongly represented, including in leadership positions, in the language department, 3 out of 3 coordinators for language training are female. At the level of our junior resident faculty, women have been well represented with 9 out of 17 post-doctoral researchers recruited from all four disciplines since the establishment of post-doctoral positions. With respect to the entire faculty of over a 100, which in addition to the resident faculty includes a large visiting faculty from the core academic disciplines as well as languages, about 30 percent have been female and 70 percent male over the past five years. Women are well represented both in leadership positions and among the staff of the different administrative departments at the DA (i.e. academic administration, executive training and events, development, finance, and human resources and facility management departments). 3 out of 5 heads of departments and 22 out of 32 staff members are female. The ratio of male to female students has been at least balanced for many years already, with the majority of students being female in most years. In the academic year 2023-24, 44 percent of the students were male, 56 percent female.

4 Mapping existing initiatives and institutional mechanisms and gender equality in recruitment and career progression

Preparing future leaders in politics, academia, and the private sector requires a fair and equitable institutional environment in which everyone can maximise their potential. In the past years, the DA has been implementing important initiatives and programmes aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. Since, 2021 the Vienna School of International Studies is participating in the International Gender Champions Initiative (IGC). Commitments undertaken within the framework of the IGC include, among other things, the execution of mentoring sessions with female students to overcome gender-related professional barriers; a panel parity pledge (including participation in the IGC annual survey); and the execution of at least three executive training programmes per year dedicated to empowering women from different regions and age-groups through skills training and knowledge-transfer.



Simultaneously, there are important student led-initiatives, including the student-societies “Students Advocating Gender Equality (SAGE)” and “QUEER@DA”. Moreover, the DA is active in the network “Diplomats for Equality”, which includes the Austrian Foreign Ministry, several diplomatic missions and international organizations.

The DA promotes gender balance in recruitment at career progression. It is committed to further increase the proportion of women in management positions and the faculty. The DA encourages women to apply for leadership positions and - in accordance with federal law on equal treatment - gives priority to female applicants if equally qualified.² The DA also promotes the recruitment of talented women among its students. Within the alumni-sponsored scholarships awarded by club.da since 2011, 69 percent were granted to female awardees; and 92 percent of the scholarships awarded by the DA Alumni Hall of Fame since 2013 were awarded to female students.

5 Integrating the gender dimension in research, training, and teaching

The gender dimension is already an important part of research, training and teaching at the DA. In terms of training, the DA's executive training department conducts a series of training workshops for women leaders from different regions and age groups, including from Southeast Europe and the Black Sea/South Caucasus as well as from Palestine and Libya. In the academic curriculum of the DA's different degree programmes, the gender dimension is integrated horizontally in courses on different thematic and geographic issues. At the same time, our course offer includes specialized courses on gender and international relations. Within the DA's relatively small core faculty, the new research area on cultural studies provides new opportunities to further integrate the gender dimension in research and teaching.

6 Balancing work and family life

The DA fully implements the parental leave policies applicable in Austria. The maternity leave period normally begins eight weeks before birth and ends eight weeks thereafter. In case of an early protection period due to medical reasons, the employee is not employed at all. Parental leave may be taken for at least two months and at the most until the child's second birthday, if the child lives in the same household. Mothers and fathers employed at the DA are entitled to parental leave. In case of parental part-time work, parents must reduce their weekly working hours by at least 20 percent. The working week is 40 hours and overtime is limited. The DA offers also part-time work. This allows employees to better balance their work and personal lives. Employees are entitled to a generous amount of paid vacation time, as well as paid sick leave and parental leave.

DA employees who are needed as carers are entitled to one week of care leave. An additional week can be claimed for children in need of care. A nursing care leave of one to three months to provide care to a relative can be agreed upon. Family hospice care leave to provide care for a close relative terminally ill can also be taken. To facilitate the return to work following prolonged sick leave, a part-time working

² Bundes-Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, BGBl. Nr. 100/1993.



arrangement can be agreed upon. Employees can also reduce their working hours of up to five years prior to retirement. The resulting lower income is partly compensated for, and the reduced working time has no negative impact on later old-age pension benefits.

7 Mapping Mechanisms for Prevention and harassment

The DA has established a number of institutional mechanisms for the prevention and contrast of sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation. The Diplomatic Academy Wien's Code of Conduct sanctions harassment, including on the basis of sex and race, and sexual misconduct, and reported cases are referred to a resolution panel. Three times a year, a workshop on consent is offered, the first during the orientation week for students. Moreover, the student body appoints two ombudsperson every year, which also involves a mechanism for anonymous reporting for cases of harassment, discrimination, or abuse of power. For counselling, career and mental health support, our students can refer to public services for students offered, inter alia, by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research.

8 Actions to be taken in the 2024-26 period

Objective 1 - Governance structure: The DA has dedicated resources and expertise to the GEP. It will seek to further develop a dedicated working group entrusted with monitoring, periodically reviewing, and implementing the actions proposed in the GEP. The team should represent the different areas at the Academy.

- Action 1: Raise awareness about the GEP and its main objectives and actions, including in inter-departmental meetings.
- Action 2: Further develop the core team in charge of monitoring, reviewing, and implementing the GEP to ensure broad participation, including from senior and middle management, research and teaching staff, administrative units and students.
- Action 3: Organize exchanges with external experts on GEP implementation.

Objective 2 - Promoting gender balance in the DA decision-making structures: Our preliminary analysis shows that whilst in some areas the management has a good representation of women, the DA recognizes that in other areas it should be improved. With respect to our academic departments, particularly the development of junior positions in our resident faculty as well as the management of the composition of our external faculty allow us to improve our gender balance over the next years.

- Action 1: Engage in networking, including among women's networks, to scout for potential female candidates and pro-actively encourage female promising candidates to apply for open positions in our junior faculty.
- Action 2: Systematically map the gender balance in our external faculty as part of the ongoing curriculum review of our MAIS degree programme, as well as for our other degree programmes.
- Action 3: Engage in academic networking and consult with members of our external faculty to identify promising new candidates to be contracted as new additions to our external faculty.



Objective 3 - Strengthen the institutional culture for gender equality and inclusion: The DA seeks to strengthen its performance on gender equality and inclusion.

- Action 1: Promote and map gender equality on panels at events.
- Action 2: Involve members of the DA from different parts of the organization in training aimed at the acquisition of knowledge and skills relating to gender equality, diversity and human rights.
- Action 3: Explore possibilities for cooperation with external institutions and partners involved in initiatives for the promotion of gender equality and organize joint activities.
- Action 4: Exchange good practices on equality issues with other institutions and partners.

Objective 4 - Integrating a gender dimension into research and teaching content

- Action 1: Further integrate a gender dimension in the DA's new research area on cultural studies.
- Action 2: Incorporate research expertise in gender and international relations in the development of the DA's planning for a new junior faculty.