

Proposal for the Constitution's Rights Committee, Freedoms, Guarantees and guidelines for Gender Equality Plan

Committee on Rights, Freedoms and Guarantees

The Rectory expressed its interest in creating a Rights Commission, Freedoms and Guarantees, expressed in the 2021 Acting Plan of the University of Madeira (UMa), which provides for the attainment of the principles of equality in the institution, as part of an overview, which includes, namely, non-discrimination by gender.

Since the University is a privileged centre for training and knowledge, with the ability to influence and transform not only the human resources that comprise it, but also the social environment in which it operates. As UMa is well established in the Region with several links with the local society, we believe that the fundamental conditions exist for this mission to be successful.

Education and changing mentalities are a long cycle process and does not essentially involve the creation or imposition of rules, but rather a paradigm shift that is intended to bring about deep transformations in individuals. UMa views this project as a medium-long-term process that will be adapted and adjusted throughout its implementation.

One of the functions of this Committee will be the realization of a plan for gender equality by setting a course to address this issue and adding some of the specific initiatives that already take place at the Academy.

The constitution of the work team will consider the representation of the different stakeholders and areas of knowledge of the academy. The team will have a representative of each Faculty or School, appointed by the respective scientific or technical-scientific council; a representative of the employees, appointed by the Rector; and a student representative, appointed by the Academic Association and will be coordinator by a professor named by the Rector.

The Rector may also appoint some external personalities to this commission.

After the constitution of the team, the various stages foreseen for the elaboration of the Plan will begin.

Guidelines for the Gender Equality Plan

To carry out this project, the following phases are planned: i) elaboration of a diagnosis at the level of the institution; ii) preparation of an action plan and implementation of initiatives and measures designed; iii) evaluation and control of the actions implemented.

i) Diagnosis at the institution level

At this stage, we intend to identify the main gaps existing in this type of institutions (universities), already mentioned in the literature on the subject, and to understand what the state of the art regarding this theme is.

This framework will allow the commission to comprehend which data will be useful to collect and the reformulations that need to be introduced in the services in order to obtain them in a format that is compatible with the defined objectives.

In a very succinct way, what is intended is that there is a collection of data that allows us to carry out a gender analysis, both in a horizontal and vertical perspective of the institution, identifying the various stakeholders of the Academy (teaching staff, non-teaching staff, students), in order to recognize possible dysfunctions, but also their causes. In addition to this quantitative aspect, it is also necessary to take into account the identification of possible training areas that are considered important for the Institution and that may be useful in raising people's awareness.

ii) Action Plan and Operation of measures designed

Naturally, the Action Plan to be drawn up and implemented will be drafted based on the diagnosis to be carried out. However, it is already possible to delineate some areas of intervention, although we are aware that these may undergo adjustments during this process.

In general, we consider that the design of this Action Plan should be achieved by raising awareness of this type of issues, by providing performance tools and learning from the results. These different strands should cover current legislation, institutional practices, training and research.

Some of the areas of intervention, without prejudice to other that may be included, depending on the options taken by the Commission, are: support for the reconciliation of family and professional lives of students, teaching and non-teaching staff; increasing the Institution's commitment to the principles of gender equality, seeking to achieve balanced representation at different levels; as well as raising awareness of gender-related violence and harassment.

iii) Evaluation and control of implemented actions

Understanding the effectiveness of the actions outlined passes naturally through impact assessment, through indicators that allow us to understand not only the successes but also the failures and the strategies to be considered in order to overcome them.

This assessment will be individualized for some of the actions to be implemented, but it will also include a general assessment, carried out in annual cycles, in order to adjust the main lines of intervention and adapt the plan according to the needs that are identified.



The Rector