

BALIKESİR UNIVERSITY

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Balıkesir University aims to create an inclusive and fair working and educational environment where all its members have equal opportunities. This Gender Equality Plan has been developed to promote gender equality, prevent gender-based discrimination, and ensure gender equality in the academic and administrative units of the university.

This plan integrates gender equality into all processes within the university and includes concrete goals and measures in areas such as work-life balance, gender equality in leadership and decision-making mechanisms, recruitment and career progression, and integration of gender dimension in research and educational content. It also aims to provide a safe and supportive environment for all members of the university community by developing comprehensive policies on issues such as gender-based violence and harassment.

The scope of the plan covers all employees, students, and academic and administrative units of the university, and it aims to ensure that the necessary strategies and practices are implemented to achieve the set goals.

2. GENDER EQUALITY IN TÜRKİYE

In Türkiye, gender equality is constitutionally guaranteed and supported by various legal regulations. In the struggle against gender discrimination, the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey and Labour Law No. 4857 stand out as the main legal bases.

Constitutional Basis: Article 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey guarantees non-discrimination by stating that ‘Everyone is equal before the law without discrimination on the grounds of language, race, colour, gender, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion, sect and similar grounds’. In addition to this article, it is clearly stated that women and men have equal rights and a provision stating that ‘Women and men have equal rights. The State is obliged to ensure that this equality is realised.’ (Additional paragraph: 7/5/2004-5170/1 Art.). The Constitution also emphasizes the State's obligation to ensure gender equality with the provision ‘Measures to be taken for this purpose cannot be interpreted as contrary to the principle of equality’ (Additional sentence: 7/5/2010-5982/1 Art.).

Labour Law and Other Regulations: Article 5 of the Labour Law No. 4857 explicitly prohibits gender discrimination. This article states that ‘In labour relations, no discrimination shall be made on the grounds of language, race, colour, gender, disability, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect and similar grounds’ and that employers may not treat an employee differently on the grounds of gender, unless there are compelling biological reasons or reasons related to the nature of the work. Similarly, differential remuneration for work of equal value on the grounds of gender is

also prohibited. In addition, it provides job security with the statement ‘The application of special protective provisions due to the gender of the worker does not justify the application of a lower wage’.

These legal frameworks constitute a solid foundation for the policies and practices that Balıkesir University will develop to promote and protect gender equality. Beyond fulfilling the obligations stipulated by these laws, our university is committed to taking proactive measures and implementing practices to ensure gender equality.

3. GENDER EQUALITY AT BALIKESİR UNIVERSITY

Balıkesir University develops various policies and strategies to ensure and promote gender equality. By taking concrete steps towards gender equality, our university aims to create a fair and inclusive environment for academic and administrative staff as well as students. In this context, various practices have been implemented in key areas such as resource allocation, data collection and monitoring, training and awareness.

Balıkesir University is committed to ensuring gender equality and has allocated various resources for this purpose. Women's Studies Research and Application Centre was established to contribute to gender equality and strengthen the role of women in working life and society. The Centre conducts research on gender equality, organises awareness-raising activities and develops policy recommendations. This centre also plays a critical role in the implementation of our university's gender equality policies.

Balıkesir University regularly carries out gender-based data collection and monitoring activities to follow progress on gender equality and shape its policies accordingly. Gender distribution in the number of academic staff is monitored annually and current statistics show that female academic staff is 44% and male academic staff is 56%. Policies have been developed to equalise these ratios, and balancing these ratios in the near future is among our priority goals. At the same time, student statistics are also regularly kept and monitored on a gender basis. According to current student statistics, the ratio of female students is 49% and the ratio of male students is 51%. Balıkesir University is also a university preferred by female students thanks to the importance it attaches to gender equality.

Balıkesir University offers various training programmes to raise awareness on gender equality and subconscious gender biases. For our students, 3 common elective courses on gender equality are offered. These courses aim to provide our students with important gains on gender equality. In addition, training programs on gender equality awareness for university staff are also planned, and the aim is to make all university components more aware of gender equality through these trainings.

4. INSTITUTIONAL TARGETS FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Balıkesir University has set comprehensive and strategic goals to ensure gender equality and create a sustainable culture in this field. These goals offer a holistic approach that covers key areas such as raising awareness on gender equality, ensuring gender balance, increasing the representation of women in leadership positions, and preventing gender-based violence and harassment.

a. Awareness Raising and Training Programmes on Gender Equality

Balıkesir University aims to raise awareness on gender equality among all academic and administrative staff and students. In this context:

- **Training Programs:** Gender equality trainings will be organised for all academic and administrative staff throughout the university and the completion of these trainings will be monitored. These programmes will focus on raising awareness on gender equality, subconscious biases and gender roles.
- **Information for Students:** Information sessions on gender equality issues will be organised for all new students within the scope of orientation programs. In addition, elective courses on gender equality will be offered and the scope of these courses will be expanded over time.

b. Strengthening Equal Representation and Participation

Our university will develop various policies to ensure gender balance in the representation and participation of academic and administrative staff:

- **Increasing Female Representation in Leadership Positions:** Mentoring and leadership development programs will be initiated to increase the representation of women in university administration. These programs will support the career advancement of female academics and facilitate their access to leadership positions.
- **Gender Equality Balance:** In order to ensure gender equality in decision-making bodies and important administrative positions, female and male representation rates will be observed, and efforts will be made to ensure that these rates are balanced.

c. Prevention of Gender-Based Violence and Harassment

Balıkesir University takes decisive steps to prevent gender-based violence and harassment across the campus:

- **Safe Campus Environment:** In order to prevent sexual harassment and assault on campus, physical security measures will be increased, security cameras and lighting systems will be improved. At the same time, safe areas will be created, and these areas will be structured to provide immediate support for individuals who are subjected to sexual harassment or assault.
- **Rapid Response and Support Mechanisms:** In order to provide rapid and effective intervention in cases of sexual harassment and assault, an Emergency Response Plan will be developed and will be implemented in line with this plan. Psychological, legal and medical

support will be provided for victims, and confidentiality and security will be prioritised at every stage of these processes.

d. Data Collection, Monitoring and Reporting

Continuous monitoring and evaluation of progress on gender equality is one of the main strategic objectives of the university:

- **Regular Data Collection:** The gender distribution of academic and administrative staff will be regularly monitored, and this data will be used to develop gender equality policies. Student enrolments will also be monitored on the basis of gender and steps will be taken to ensure gender balance in student profiles.
- **Annual Reporting:** In line with the data collected, comprehensive reports on gender equality will be prepared every year and these reports will be presented to the university administration. These reports will be used to assess whether the targets on gender equality have been achieved.

e. Integration of Gender Dimension in Scientific Research and Teaching

The integration of the gender dimension in the university's research and teaching activities is critical for the lasting achievement of gender equality:

- **Research Projects:** The integration of gender equality principles into scientific research projects will be encouraged and special funds will be allocated to such projects. Researchers will shape their work by considering the gender equality dimension in their projects.
- **Course Contents:** In all departments of the university, the integration of gender equality principles into course content will be encouraged and new curricula will be developed in this direction. To raise awareness of students on gender equality issues, the gender dimension will be addressed in the courses.

5. EXECUTION

The Department of Strategy Development has the main responsibility for the implementation of Balıkesir University's Gender Equality Plan. This unit regularly collects and analyses the institutional data required to ensure the implementation of gender equality principles and strategies and prepares annual reports in the light of this data. The reports are shared with the Rectorate and Deans' Offices at the end of January each year and new strategies are developed in line with these data. Regular evaluation meetings are organised to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the plan. In addition, the Strategy Development Department organises various awareness campaigns and training programs to ensure the effective implementation of the plan in all academic and administrative units. These activities aim to ensure a sustainable improvement in gender equality throughout the university.