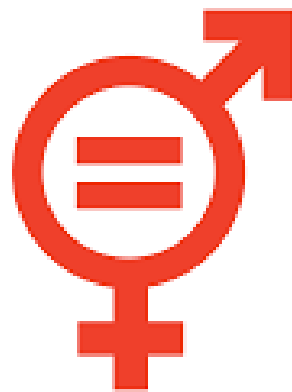




INSTITUTE OF SYSTEMS AND ROBOTICS
UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA

Ethics and Gender Equality Plan – ISR-UC

5 GENDER EQUALITY



INSTITUTE FOR SYSTEMS AND ROBOTICS – UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA

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Ethics and Gender Equality Plan – ISR-UC

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Introduction

The Institute of Systems and Robotics of the University of Coimbra (ISR-UC) is strongly committed with the development and implementation of an action plan to promote gender equality, in line with UNESCO's 5th sustainable development goal and the 2020-2025 Gender Equality Strategy of the European Commission.

The ISR-UC Ethics and Gender Equality Working Group (EGEWG) was primarily established with the goals of designing, implementing and monitoring an Ethics and Gender Equality Plan (EGEP), that effectively contribute to attain the EU objectives for gender equality in research, in particular:

- Fostering equality in scientific careers;
- Ensuring gender balance in decision-making processes and bodies;
- Integrating the gender dimension in research and innovation contents;
- Integrating the gender dimension in research and innovation contents;
- Defence of employees' ethics.

Main Goals

The main goal of the current action plan is to establish a set of actions/ measures that would contribute, in a decisive manner, to a better gender balance in ISR-UC. The proposed plan will be applied in the period of January 1st 2022 to December 31st 2024.

The Institute of Systems and Robotics, based in the University of Coimbra (ISR-UC) is a private, non-profit research institution founded in 1992 with the global purpose of setting up a first class multi-disciplinary research team, able to carry out leading edge research in several important areas of science and technology, with a special emphasis in systems and robotics. ISR promotes advanced multidisciplinary R&D in the areas of Mobile Autonomous Robotics, Intelligent Transportation Systems, Search and Rescue Robotics, Robotic Manipulation, Computer Vision, Medical Robotics, Assistive Technologies, Biomedical Engineering, Advanced Industrial Automation Technologies and Intelligent Energy Systems.

As in many other engineering and technology research institutes and laboratories, male dominance persists in all domains: leadership, researchers, scholarships, permanent staff and doctoral and master students. It is expected that the application of actions/measures that promote equality and gender balance will contribute to increase the number of women in the various human resource domains of ISR-UC. The proposed action plan has the following five global objectives:

1. Integration of gender dimension in research – promotion of research projects that are meaningful to women;
2. Work-life balance;
3. Gender equality education;
4. Gender equality dissemination;
5. Preventing discrimination and combat harassment and violence at all levels (sexual, sexist and moral).

Methodology

The four-step methodology (see fig. 1) adopted by the EGEWG follows the guidelines and recommendations of the European Institute for Gender Equality, and the Plan for Equality, Equity, and Diversity 2019-2024 of the University of Coimbra.

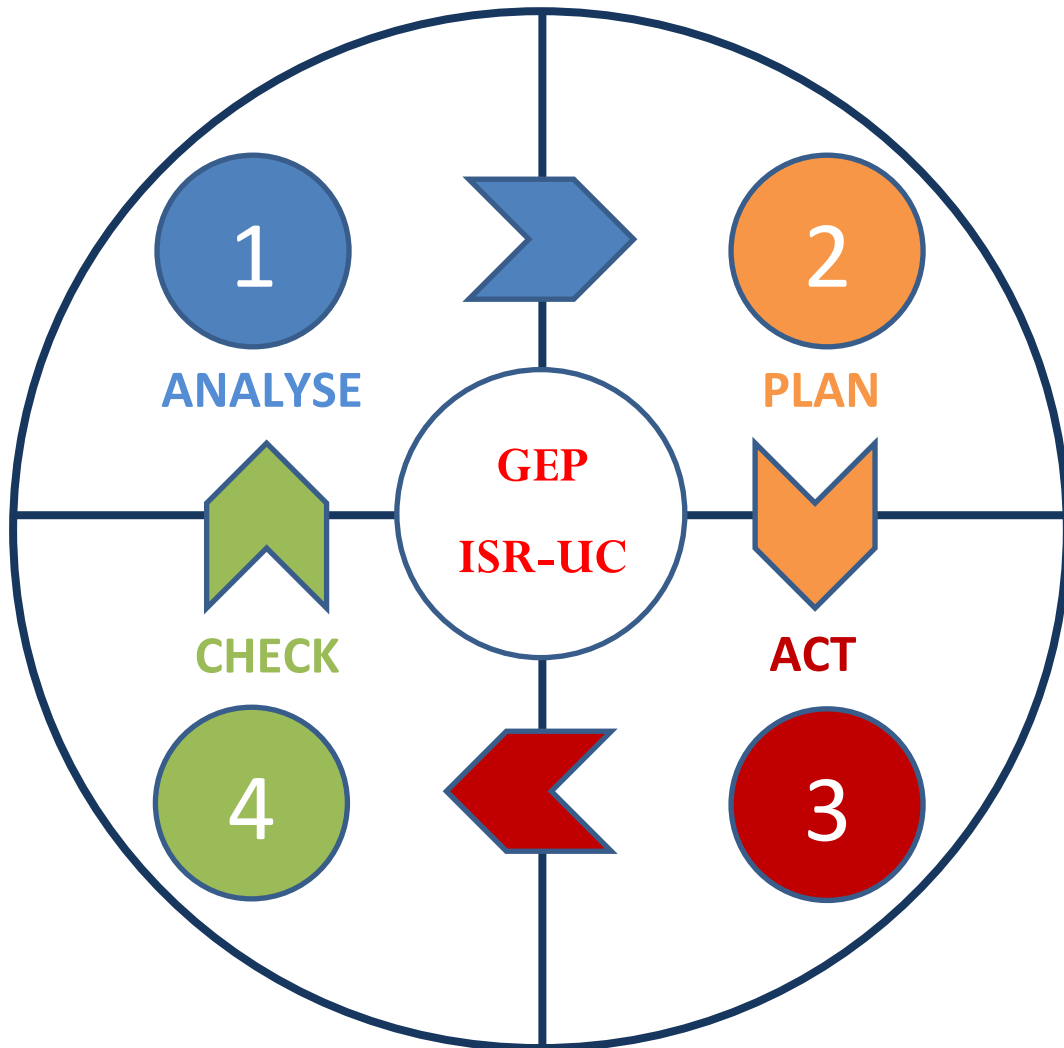


FIGURE 1: FOUR-STEP METHODOLOGY ADOPTED BY THE GENDER EQUALITY WORKING GROUP OF ISR-UC

According to Fig. 1 the **ANALYSE** step is the first to be implemented and consists in the conduction of an extensive diagnosis and analysis regarding gender equality, and assessing the state-of-play in ISR-UC. This step includes the review of current legislation, and identifying existing measures of gender equality, and to analyse gender-disaggregated data of staff, researchers and students. A gender equality questionnaire will also be developed and carried out to all ISR-UC members. The results of this analysis are presented in section “Diagnosis and Analysis”.

The **PLAN** step consists in establishing the strategic objectives, which are essentially defined from the challenges identified in the diagnosis. The main areas of intervention must be identified, being the plan measures designed accordingly, as well as indicators, timelines, targets, and division of responsibilities.

The **ACT** step consists in putting the measures of the Ethics and Gender Equality Plan in motion according to the defined timeline. For each measure, in addition to identifying the accomplishment indicator(s), the corresponding schedule is established and the units, services and areas to be involved in its implementation are indicated, as well as the responsibility for its accomplishment is also assigned.

The **Check** step consists in defining and implementing the monitoring and evaluation instruments to assess the proposed set of actions/measures. Such instruments will allow to assess the progress that is made towards targets, based on indicators.

Diagnosis and Analysis

Review of current measures and regulation in University of Coimbra

The University of Coimbra has adopted the Plan for Equality, Equity and Diversity (GEP) that can be found in <https://www.uc.pt/en/sustainability/equality/PIEDUC20192023>

In the framework of the SUPERA project, some important conclusions were attained concerning Gender Equality in the University of Coimbra, being the most relevant:

- There is gender balance in the intermediate leader positions;
- Women are in the minority in the governing bodies of the University (at the central level and at the level of its different Units).
- Male dominance of top positions has an effect on women's leadership aspirations, who have a lower expectation of filling these positions.
- However, the reasons pointed out by men to not fill decision-making positions are mainly personal (lack of motivation/interest), while women's reasons are more linked to social, family and organizational factors (i.e., work overload, lack of time and opportunities).
- Although there are more women than men working at the UC, there is a cleavage between different types of personnel: women dominate in non-teaching staff and are in the minority in academic staff.

The strategic objectives of the Ethics and Gender Equality Plan of the ISR-University of Coimbra, are as follows:

1. Mitigate horizontal segregation, by promoting the integration of women and men in scientific/studies areas in which they are under-represented;
2. Combat vertical segregation, by removing institutional barriers to the career progression and supporting the improvement of careers;
3. Improve the reconciliation of and balance between work/study and personal and family life;
4. Ensure the inclusivity in the governing bodies;
5. Integrate equality, equity and diversity into the structures and policies, by ensuring the actions sustainability.
6. Integrate the gender perspective and the principles of equality, equity and diversity into all the scientific areas, the educational and research contents, as a component of academic excellence;
7. Raise the academic community awareness of equality, equity and diversity;
8. Promote inclusion and minorities' protection policies, prevent discrimination and combat harassment and violence at all levels (sexual, sexist and moral);
9. Deepen the themes of citizenship and equality, by continuously implementing improvement measures.

Gender disaggregated data at ISR-UC

Bolseiros de investigação (M): 36

Bolseiras de investigação (F): 8

Investigadores Contratados (M): 14

Investigadoras Contratadas (F): 9

Investigadores Doutorados (M): 49

Investigadoras Doutoradas (F): 9

Alunos de doutoramento (M): 36

Alunas de doutoramento (F): 7

Alunos de mestrado (M): 50

Alunas de mestrado (F): 12

Action Plan

The action plan to be applied in the period of 2022-2024 is composed of 5 main actions/measures. The design of the proposed measures was carried out based on the analysis of ISR-UC disaggregated gender, and on several open discussions of proposed measures among the members of EGEWG and the researchers and staff of the ISR-UC. The following sections present the description of 5 main actions/measures that are part of this plan, as well as some details concerning goals, timelines and targets.

Action 1 – Integration of a gender perspective in research

The integration of gender perspective in research, is, in the point of view of the EGEWG, paramount to achieving the gender equality goals previously outlined. Action 1 is composed by two measures as follows:

Measure 1.1 – Promotion of an Annual Internal Call for a Project to promote the integration of gender perspective.

This measure consists in promoting an internal annual project call, whose applications will be evaluated according to two essential evaluation parameters, in particular: (i) - scientific merit; and (ii) - integration of a gender perspective in the scientific proposal subject. This measure depends on budget availability.

Period of the measure: To be applied during 2024

People in charge: The director of ISR and an evaluation board consisting of 4 senior researchers belonging to ISR and external research institutions. It is recommended that the evaluation board includes people of both genders.

Measure goals: promote gender dimension in research

Measure 1.2 – Collaboration in the supervision of PhDs between ISR professors (mainly in technological areas) and professors from areas where the female gender has a greater representation (e.g. psychology, mathematics, biology, economics, biomedicine, etc.).

This measure consists in promoting the collaboration of researchers from both genders, as a way to increase the integration of a gender perspective in the R&D projects of ISR-UC. This collaboration will be achieved through the shared supervision of PhDs between professors/researchers from the ISR-UC and professors/researchers from areas where the female gender is strongly represented.

Period of the measure: To be applied during the period of this plan

People in charge: ISR researchers

Measure goals: promote gender dimension in research and to increase the number of female candidates

Action 2 – Promotion of work-life balance

Measure 2.1 – To promote time and geographical flexibility to help staff members, students and researchers balancing their work and family issues.

This measure consists in allowing researchers and ISR staff members who are parents of minor children, or who are caregivers of people with physical or cognitive impairments, the possibility of working online, with flexible hours.

Period of the measure: To be applied during the period of this plan

People in charge: ISR researchers in charge of research projects (Principal Investigators)

Measure goals: promote life balance

Action 3 – Dissemination of ISR-UC projects among students of other areas

This action is related with a more effective dissemination of the projects and R&D work developed at ISR-UC. The ISR-UC includes a diverse set of research groups working in different areas related to robotic systems. These systems are characterized by being transversal to science and technology, requiring knowledge and skills not only from classical technological areas (such as electrical and mechanical engineering), but also from scientific areas that are not normally directly associated with robotics. The latest also include areas that have a better representation of female elements, such as: psychology, biology, biochemistry, mathematics, etc. A more effective dissemination of ISR R&D projects among students from these areas may contribute to attract more candidates of both genders, and in particular female student and scholarship candidates to ISR R&D projects.

Measure 3.1 – Improve dissemination of R&D project proposals of ISR between students from a wider range of scientific areas. This measure includes the dissemination of the R&D projects on social networks, and oficial webpages of Coimbra University.

Period of the measure: To be applied during the period of this plan

People in charge: ISR researchers and staff

Measure goals: promote gender perspective in research, promote gender equality dissemination

Action 4 – Dissemination and promotion of technology areas among young women

Measure 4.1 – Bootcamp or summerschool on robotics for young women

Period of the measure: To be applied once during this period.

People in charge: ISR Director, EGEWG, and ISR researchers in collaboration with master and phd students.

Measure goals: promote gender equality education, to increase the number of women in technological areas

Action 5 – promotion of education on gender equality among ISR-UC members

Measure 5.1 – To promote an **anonymous** gender questionnaire to all ISR members

Period of the measure: To be applied in the first semester of 2022 and at the end of 2023.

People in charge: EGEWG

Measure goals: promote gender equality education,

Measure 5.2 – To promote a Gender Equality Day open to all ISR members and the community. A gender equality day with open debates and seminars about the importance of promoting gender equality in the robotic field.

Period of the measure: To be applied once during the period of this action plan

People in charge: EGEWG

Measure goals: promote gender equality education

Action 6 – Prevent all forms of sexual harassment

Gender unbalanced environments could be more prone to sexual harassment. ISR-UC is attentive to this issue and will not tolerate Sexual harassment. ISR-UC supports the mottos “Policy should protect people and not reputation” and “Victims must not be silenced”.

ISR-UC has created an email for complaints (denuncias@isr.uc.pt), which is available to everyone who wants to expose an anonymous complain.

ISR-UC is also working on an anonymous platform, through the ISR-UC website, where victims may expose their cases (ongoing).

Nevertheless, issues related to the prevention and elimination of sexual harassment at work at ISR-UC are regulated by the “CODE OF GOOD CONDUCT FOR PREVENTING AND COMBATING HARASSMENT AT WORK AT THE UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA”

[https://www.uc.pt/regulamentos/transversais/vigentes/Codigo de Boa Conduta para a Prevencao e Combate ao Assedio no Trabalho na Universidade de Coimbra](https://www.uc.pt/regulamentos/transversais/vigentes/Codigo_de_Boa_Conduta_para_a_Prevencao_e_Combate_ao_Assedio_no_Trabalho_na_Universidade_de_Coimbra) .

As indicated in the Code, any person covered by this Code who considers him or herself the target of harassment at work within the ISR-UC, must report the situation to his/her immediate hierarchical superior, or to the superior hierarchical to follow, if the harasser is the immediate superior, or directly to the Rector.

Documents for consultation:

- ISR-UC Ethics, Behaviour and Integrity Code - available in PDF:
https://www.uc.pt/site/assets/files/383004/co_digo_de_e_tica-_conduta_e_integridade_uc.pdf
- Guide to Gender Mainstreaming in the Management of Research Processes and Content in R&D Units - available here:
<https://doi.org/10.48552/96vw-rt16>
- Guidelines on Gender Dimension in Research – Horizon Europe Funds – available here:
https://www.uc.pt/site/assets/files/1540869/guidelines_on_gender_in_research_horizon_europe_funding.pdf
- Inclusive Event Planning Guide - available here:
<https://doi.org/10.48552/h76t-s091>
- Checklist for Inclusive Events - available here:
https://www.uc.pt/site/assets/files/546986/checklist_eventos_inclusivos_dez_2022-1.pdf
- Inclusive Communication in Research Manual - available here:
<https://doi.org/10.48552/5xwp-p874>

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