

POLICY
WORKPLACE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

Document owner: DIRECTORATE

Title and version: Policy Workplace Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion - V2

Approval: Consiglio di Sorveglianza, July 6, 2023

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1) Object

Human Technopole (HT) is an international research Institute, which aims to promote and improve human health and well-being through fundamental and translational research in the life sciences, paving the way for the development of novel approaches for personalised and preventive medicine. HT staff (Management, Administration, and Research) represents diverse backgrounds and cultures, and this diversity symbolises our aim for all HT activities, as it promotes excellence and innovation.

HT values diversity and preserves it by supporting equity between all genders, ethnicities, and social classes in the workplace. HT is committed to ensuring fair treatment of all employees and to fostering equality, where each member of the HT workforce has equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities. By promoting equality and integrating diversity, HT favours inclusion, to enable everyone to feel accepted and valued. In relation to sex discrimination, according to the [UNESCO Science Report 2021](#), women now represent about 30% of researchers globally but there remain persistent disparities between women and men in science, such as a lack of equal pay for work of equal value, underrepresentation of women in managerial positions and unequal distribution of unpaid work related to family care. By empowering all its workforce, HT aims to remove any gap in access to opportunities and to decision-making between those of different genders, ethnicities, and social classes – a key aspect in achieving workplace equality and inclusion.

HT adopts concrete actions in compliance with the mandatory requirements of applicable laws and standards to foster a workplace equality, diversity, and inclusion mindset, which is recognised by its staff and external stakeholders. Some of these measures are included in the [Human Technopole Gender Equality Plan \(GEP\) 2022-2024](#), available on the HT website. Institutional Policies and Internal Rules define the implementation of the actions indicated in the HT GEP.

2) Abbreviations and definitions

2.1. Abbreviations

Human Technopole (HT)

United Nations (UN)

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Women's Empowerment Principles (WEP)

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

Sustainability Committee

Gender Equality Team (GET)

Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

Director of Administration (DoA)

Head of Research Centre (HoRC)

Group Leader (GL)

Head of Facility (HoF)

2.2. Definitions

Equity: the process of being fair to all individuals regardless of their sex, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, or social status in relation to influence over decision-making. It also implies provision of resources for addressing imbalances.

Equality: the process of ensuring equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for all individuals regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, or social status.

Gender gap: disparity between individuals of different sex, gender, or sexual orientation in terms of their levels of participation, access, rights, remuneration or benefits in the area of health, education, political and economic empowerment.

Commitment to diversity in the workplace: recognising differences between individuals (for example in gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, language, socioeconomic or educational background, disability, and ethnicity) in the workplace and valuing everyone as an individual.

Inclusion: the practice of valuing people and what makes them different and integrating them into an environment.

Personal empowerment: the fostering of a person's sense of self-worth, decision-making power, access to opportunities and resources, independence, and ability to affect change.

3) Scope

This Policy applies to all HT employees and stakeholders as well as to all HT processes and Departments/Areas and is a tool to promote equality in the workplace, enabling HT to integrate diversity-, equality-, and inclusion-related topics into key organisational practices. It is communicated to all HT employees at multiple steps in their employment relationship (recruitment, performance reviews, training, and development) to promote the value of diversity, and to spread and implement the principles of equality and inclusion.

This Policy will be published on the HT website and reviewed periodically based on the results of the internal audit, in accordance with the guidelines on the management system for gender equality UNI/PdR 125:2022. Revisions will be approved and amended by the competent HT bodies and circulated among all HT employees.

4) Regulatory references

1. [Human Technopole Gender Equality Plan \(GEP\) 2022-2024](#)
2. [Organisational Regulation](#), HT/02.2021/01 Rev.4 E
3. [Code of Ethics Fondazione Human Technopole](#), HT/07.2020/03 E
4. [Internal Rule on Part Time Work](#), MC/12.2022/05
5. [Internal rule on Remote Working](#), MC/04.2021/05Rev.2 E
6. [Internal rule on flexible working time organisation](#), HT/07.2019/02 Rev. 3 E
7. [Policy for occupational health and safety in the workplace and environment \(HSE\)](#)
HT/01.2023/02 Rev.1E
8. [Internal Rule on reporting harassment and/or violence in the workplace](#), MC/03.2022/06 E
9. [Policy, Norme e Procedure Funzione Internal Audit](#), CdS/10.2020/04 I.

5) Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in the workplace

HT is committed to ensuring equal employment opportunities and to promoting workplace equality, diversity and inclusion in agreement with the [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#) recommendations and with the [UN Women Empowerment Principles \(WEP\)](#) established by [UN Women](#) and the [United Nations Global Compact](#), and based on best practice in international labour and human rights standards.

5.1. Sustainability Committee and Gender Equality Team (GET)

HT relies on two groups – namely the HT Sustainability Committee and the Gender Equality Team (GET) – to establish, monitor, and implement the best workplace diversity, equality, and inclusion practices.

The Sustainability Committee is a sub-Committee of the Consiglio di Sorveglianza (“CdS” composed of three members of the CdS), which has an advisory function, prepares preliminary inquiries and makes proposals to the CdS in relation to inclusion and equal opportunities policies, among others. In addition, the Sustainability Committee *i)* is involved in the internal consultation process required for the preparation and update of the HT GEP and this Policy; and *ii)* constantly monitors and assesses GEP’s implementation over time.

The HT GET is nominated by the HT Director to monitor and support the implementation of the measures and actions reported in the [HT GEP](#). The team consists of at least five HT staff members with different internal functions and has a quinquennial mandate. The GET may consult or rely on specific external gender policy experts to support the implementation of the GEP plan and has a budget, although limited, to use to implement new measures.

5.2. Establishment of a leadership in diversity and equality in the workplace

HT promotes the importance of workplace equality in the Institute and maintains an organisational culture supporting fair and equal treatment of all employees. The Institute is committed to gender balance in corporate and scientific leadership positions and discourages behaviours that could constitute discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, race, age, religious beliefs or physical or mental disabilities. Furthermore, HT fosters a non-discriminatory access to opportunities, resources, and information. HT Administration and Scientific Support Managers, and Scientific Managers (Heads of Research Centre – HoRCs – Group Leaders – GLs – and Heads of Facilities – HoFs) are proactive in proposing strategies to ensure that all employees understand the value of workplace equality, diversity, and inclusion (see also “Functions and responsibilities of the Heads of Research Centres” – in preparation – which will be included in a revised version of the [Organisational Regulation](#) in

force, HT/02.2021/01 Rev.4 E). In consultation with the Sustainability Committee, HT Managers are committed to identify and implement the best practices to attract, recruit, retain, and reward/recognise employees. In addition, they create an environment where all employees can express their ideas and feel supported and included and monitor the implementation of the best workplace equality, diversity, and inclusion practices in their Area/Research Centre/Group. HT Managers regularly report their plans and actions to achieve workplace equality, diversity, and inclusion to the Sustainability Committee, HT Director, and DoA (see also section 5.7). HT promotes equality in decision-making boards and trains staff involved in recruitment (i.e., drafting job descriptions, shortlisting, interviewing, and selecting personnel) to recognise and manage unconscious bias and to follow workplace equality best practices (see also section 5.3). Furthermore, HT develops and implements procedures for identifying and reporting discrimination in the workplace and educates staff in reporting and dealing with complaints in a timely manner (see section 5.5). All HT employees must hold themselves accountable for the dissemination and implementation of workplace equality and inclusion best practices in their respective Area.

5.3. Promoting diversity and inclusion at work

HT is committed to diversity at work and fosters it by recruiting personnel from diverse talent pools, professional and cultural backgrounds. Having a diverse, multilingual, and multicultural workforce, HT ensures that internal procedures, rules, and other key information are drafted and communicated in a way that overcomes language and cultural barriers (e.g., translating documents and using graphics and symbols whenever applicable) as well as organises language courses (i.e., Italian and English) for employees to promote communication and inclusion at work. HT leadership manages heterogeneous groups of people efficiently, while respecting their uniqueness and making employees feel valued. HT managers undergo training in unconscious bias and active listening and consider each staff member as an individual, so that everyone can be heard and respected. HT also provides opportunities for staff to get together and express their diversity, for example by encouraging the creation of interest groups and associations. HT promotes outreach and communication activities and the organisation of dedicated events to celebrate diversity and inclusion.

5.4. Fair treatment of employees (see also Code of Ethics Fondazione Human Technopole, HT/07.2020/03 E)

HT's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace is reflected in its Rules of Conduct reported in the HT Code of Ethics. HT fosters equal and fair treatment of all employees by setting up an inclusive workplace culture, promoting team inclusion and creating

opportunities for development and empowerment of all employees. HT implements gender-sensitive recruitment, retention, promotion, and reintegration of employees after a career break. HT personnel are recruited by diverse search committees and interview panels via appropriately worded advertisements, including gender and diversity awareness statements. Job descriptions are drafted in a gender-neutral language and open to all individuals, regardless of their sex or gender, religion, and social status. Questions about marital status, pregnancy, or care responsibilities are not permitted during interviews. Search committees and interview panels are made up of diversity-aware and diversity-competent members who *i)* support HT's commitment to excellence and diversity and inclusion; *ii)* have direct or indirect experience in the field they are recruiting in; and *iii)* possess the technical know-how to effectively evaluate the candidates and to provide each of them with equal opportunities to feel comfortable and welcome during the process. HT aims at preventing explicit and implicit bias in admission, hiring, and promotion practices and allows for equal opportunities in promotion. Recruitment of employees from minority groups is encouraged by advertising open positions in relevant networks. HT ensures equal and transparent pay for work of equal value without discrimination and implements equitable and non-discriminatory performance management and appraisal. The Institute ensures benefit provisions for all employees to balance family and professional responsibilities and encourages flexible work options (e.g., part-time and remote working, see also the [Internal Rule on Part Time Work](#), MC/12.2022/05 E, [Internal rule on Remote Working](#), MC/04.2021/05Rev.2 E and [Internal rule on flexible working time organisation](#), HT/07.2019/02 Rev. 3 E) that allow HT staff to be productive and efficient at work while fulfilling their family duties. HT periodically reviews the need for flexibility of its employees and ensures that *i)* business meetings are schedule to allow a healthy work-life balance; and *ii)* part-time workers and employees with flexible employment contracts can also participate in such meetings.

HT promotes equal sharing of childcare responsibilities and supports the childcare needs of its employees inside and outside the Institute and recognises that employees may wish or need to take an extended period of unpaid time away from work to balance their career with other commitments and responsibilities (career break scheme). HT sets up specific programmes for maternity or paternity leave (e.g., training programmes for reintegration) and informs personnel about any important changes that occur in the workplace while on leave. HT recognises that women often have greater family responsibilities and ensures that they are not penalised for trying to balance their professional and family lives. The Institute supports the lifecycle of working women by drafting dedicated institutional policies and internal rules and laying down plans for managing the different stages of maternity (see HT GEP and [HSE](#)

[Area webpage](#) on Intranet). HT encourages the application for paternity leave and implements a dual career service helping the spouses of new HT employees to smoothly continue their career in Milan.

5.5. Health, well-being, and safety at work (see also [Policy for occupational health and safety in the workplace and environment](#) HT/01.2023/02 Rev.1)

HT promotes a family-friendly workplace for all employees by offering flexible working arrangements and strives to preserve the physical and emotional health, safety, and well-being of its personnel. HT maintains the highest standards of safety and health at work by organising workplace safety training courses for all employees as well as by interfacing with national safety and health organisations, and national authorities to incorporate matters of safety and health, and to accommodate disabilities in the workplace.

HT will carry out occupational health and safety risk assessment to promote the psycho-physical well-being of employees in the workplace and to define preventive and protective measures, according to Legislative Decree 81/2008 (see also HT GEP 2022-2024). This assessment will also cover the risks *i)* of work-related stress; *ii)* of all forms of violence and abuse; and *iii)* for women related to each stage of maternity (pregnancy, breastfeeding, etc).

HT recognises that violence and harassment (including verbal, physical, and sexual harassment) and/or a culture of hostility towards certain employees are human rights violations and is committed to preventing and fighting them through anti-violence and anti-harassment programmes and by implementing complaint and investigation procedures, as described in the "[Internal Rule on reporting harassment and/or violence in the workplace](#), MC/03.2022/06 E". The Institute pays constant attention to the language used, which should be as polite and neutral as possible, and provides specific training on "zero tolerance" for all forms of violence on employees.

5.6. Education and training

HT allocates time and resources for education on workplace equality and offers training courses on diversity and inclusion as well as on how to recognise, monitor, and manage unconscious bias to all employees. HT encourages employee self-awareness and facilitates discussion and training sessions promoting bias literacy. HT promotes and implements mentoring schemes and career and leadership development programmes for all employees. Also, it ensures that training times, facilities, and opportunities are appropriate and friendly with regards to employees' personal life (e.g., employees with children). HT offers internships, career advice, awareness-raising on STEM careers for women, and on dedicated competitive

grant programmes. Training for career advancement and development opportunities are openly advertised to be easily accessed by all HT staff. HT is committed to diversity and inclusion in training by organising and delivering seminars dedicated to diversity- and inclusion-related issues.

5.7. Transparent reporting

HT Administration measures the implementation and impact of workplace equality, diversity, and inclusion best practices in distinct organisational Areas by selecting specific actions and activities, namely indicators (see also the [HT GEP 2022-2024](#)). The indicators define simple, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-planned objectives and are used to monitor and analyse the progress derived from them in a specific Area. The objectives are kept updated over time. HT periodically communicates the results of the indicator analysis externally and internally in a transparent manner (see also the [HT GEP 2022-2024](#)).

In addition, HR Area in collaboration with the GET will collect and publish data on *i*) recruitment processes, *ii*) gender of HT employees; *iii*) training initiatives; *iv*) career development; *v*) grades; *vi*) qualification changes; *vii*) mobility; *viii*) redundancies; *ix*) retirements; and *x*) remuneration, pursuant to Legislative Decree N.198/2006 (Libro I-Titolo I; Libro III- Titolo I, updates by Law 162/2021).

5.8. Internal audit

HT will plan, implement, and document a system of internal audit to verify the actual and effective application of this Policy, as well as compliance with the instructions and procedures defined herein. The audit will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of UNI EN ISO 19011 and the "[Policy, Norme e Procedure Funzione Internal Audit](#), CdS/10.2020/04 I", and must gather objective evidence of conformity of the deployed measures.

5.9. Promoting new workplace equality, diversity, and inclusion initiatives

HT staff (HoRCs, GLs, etc.) may propose new practices and/or initiatives aimed at promoting workplace equality, diversity, and inclusion by filling the [request form](#) in **Appendix 1**. The proposals are then submitted to the HT Director, who selects the initiatives to bring before the HT Management Committee (MC) for information. After discussing with the Sustainability Committee and informing the MC, the HT Director sends the selected proposals to the Consiglio di Sorveglianza (CdS). Once a given proposal is approved, the HT Director decides how to implement it by assigning tasks to the DoA and/or to relevant HoRCs/GLs/Managers.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Request form to propose new workplace equality, diversity, and inclusion initiatives

To be filled by the requesting party and approved by the Sustainability Committee

Request form for new workplace equality, diversity, and inclusion initiatives	
Requesting party	
Name	
Surname	
Affiliation	
email	
Description of the initiative: (max 200 words)	
Rationale for the initiative: (max 200 words)	
Impact of the new initiative on HT staff (max 200 words)	
Approved by	Name Surname Signature