

**Steinbeis University**

**Concept for Women's Opportunities and  
Equal Opportunities**

**2021 – 2025**

**January 2021**

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## 1 Foreword

With its first equal opportunity concept on February 1, 2017, Steinbeis University set itself the goal of doing everything possible to address how equal opportunities are implemented in all areas of the university.

Policies are primarily based on the anti-discrimination directives of the European Union, the General Act on Equal Treatment (AGG), the Berlin State Equal Opportunities Act (LGG Berlin), the Higher Education Framework Act, and the Berlin Higher Education Act, as well as the SHB framework regulations and "general equality standards at Berlin universities."

After extensive consultation with committees, on February 9, 2021 the executive committee adopted this revised concept and declared it effective for a period of five years.

This concept will be revised in 2025 based on the annual women's and equal opportunity report.

## 2 The importance of equal opportunities

The following principles and guidelines apply to all departments, levels of the organization, decision-making, and stakeholders at Steinbeis University, and are valid for everyone working in administration at headquarters and elsewhere, as well as academic fields involving professors, lecturers, and students.

The principles of equal opportunity extend to everyone at Steinbeis University, not only with respect to gender identity, but also in terms of social differences and inequalities based on age, sexual identity, social standing, disability or chronic illness, nationality, ethnicity, and religious affiliation. Accordingly, the aim in all areas is to safeguard a work environment based on equal opportunities for people of all genders, in all areas, and at all levels of the university.

Should different treatment be necessary in individual cases (e.g. due to professional requirements or for hazard prevention), this is only permissible if there is an underlying objective reason and only if different treatment is objective, appropriate, and justified by a legitimate aim.

The following factors form the basis for the key thrusts of equal opportunities at Steinbeis University:

- A belief in and acknowledgement of equal opportunities within the guiding principles and regulations of the university
- The most equitable possible participation of people of any gender in committees, university boards, and commission work
- The inclusion of equal opportunity considerations in decision-making processes
- Family-friendly conditions with regard to studying and working at Steinbeis University

- The inclusion of gender issues in teaching and staff development

### **3 Analysis of the situation since 2017**

#### **3.1 Women's opportunities and equal opportunities within university faculties**

The organizational restructuring of the university has largely been completed. Three new faculties were set up. The goal of appointing a women's and equal opportunity representative in all faculties has been achieved.

#### **3.2 Inclusion of equal opportunities within framework regulations**

The issue of equal opportunities was included in Section 11 of the university's constitutional guidelines in 2018. Accordingly, women's and equal opportunity representatives are responsible for ensuring compliance with constitutional equal opportunity requirements, also participating in meetings of the Academic Senate and appointment processes in an advisory capacity.

The 2018 appointment regulations stipulate that a women's and equal opportunity representative must approve the wording of calls for applications, participate in appointment committee meetings in an advisory capacity, be regarded as a member of such sittings, and be invited to meetings and kept informed accordingly. They have an enshrined right to talk at meetings, as well as the right to propose motions. Finally, proposed appointments must be accompanied by a written statement from the women's and equal opportunity representative. These regulations were carried over into the 2020 revision and supplemented with requirements relating to women's and equal opportunity representatives within the individual faculties.

Furthermore, the framework academic and assessment regulations approved in September 2020 stipulate allowances for impediment. These address the protection of persons with health impairments, maternity protection, and rules for periods of care or nursing. Everyone has an equal opportunity to combine studies, career, and a family. Steinbeis University offers family-friendly working arrangements and study conditions. For example, there is a fundamental possibility to work part time, take annual leave, and make individual study arrangements, and this is possible in a variety of forms and scopes without adversely affecting professional or study-related development opportunities.

#### **3.3 Participation in committees**

A women's and equal opportunity representative participates in all central bodies, such as the Academic Senate, appointment committees, and special committees. This is captured in university

statutes, as well as other regulations pertinent to women's equality and equal opportunity (e.g. appointment regulations).

Participation in all stages of the appointment process is a stipulation for appointment committees, and this was implemented accordingly during the reporting period. By the end of the reporting period, the format of calls for applications had been successfully standardized and a criteria catalog was defined.

### **3.4 The Steinbeis University website**

A microsite has been set up for women's and equal opportunities on the university homepage. The information section for students makes it possible to identify key contacts.

## **4 Goals for 2025**

### **4.1 Academic measures**

#### Lecturing staff

The proportion of women engaged in lecturing at Steinbeis University is still negligible. After years of inactivity regarding appointment practices due to restructuring, first new appointments are now being made step by step. It should be noted in this context that there is an exceptionally low proportion of female applicants. This situation should be addressed in the future by using a wider range of specialist websites for calls for applications. This measure should go hand in hand with specific targeting of eligible scientists through full-time lecturing staff at the university.

#### Gender- and diversity-appropriate teaching

The extremely tightly governed assessment regulations at Steinbeis University are a major obstacle in integrating gender studies. It would be scarcely expedient to introduce individual modules to examination regulations, since they portray aspects of gender and diversity as a specific field of knowledge and may even portray them as marginal knowledge. It would be more efficient to integrate the underlying philosophy and principles of this topic into existing modules and capture them in teaching. This would make it possible to integrate and impart diversity competence, which is also required for the accreditation of degree programs, within individual modules. It is important to distinguish between two aspects in this respect: how teaching is organized and the subject matter of teaching.

How teaching is organized	The subject matter of teaching
Are teaching materials diverse in terms of age, gender, disability, ethnicity, social background, sexual orientation, or even religion/ideology?	Are age, disability, sexual orientation, or even religion/ideology taken into account when analyzing and solving tasks?
Are lecturing rooms barrier-free (suitable visibility, consideration for people with walking and hearing disabilities)?	Do selected examples reflect human diversity?
Is student participation in seminars supervised in such a way that reasonable participation is possible (speaking time, monitoring of individual dominance)?	Are topics examined by highlighting issues that touch on human diversity?
The promotion of equal participation, aiming to create heterogeneous groups that come close to reflecting real working conditions when forming working groups and examination groups, and not promoting homogeneous groups, e.g. due to equal levels of attainment/experience or simple empathy.	Are gender and power structures included in discussion?

This short overview is only an initial step and should be expanded on and individually adapted for each degree program. In addition, it makes sense to look into individual gender modules for certain degree programs, such as social work.

The goal of all measures should be to develop competences in the area of gender and diversity. This entails raising awareness of related issues, developing understanding, and imparting skills and capabilities that enable people to engage in action that is meaningful and demonstrates appreciation.

#### 4.2 Administrative measures

The most urgent measure in administration is to train new women's and equal opportunity representatives. Professional training should be provided immediately on appointment in order to specifically illustrate and explain the work of women's and equal opportunity representatives and create an in-depth understanding of the legal context. Discussions with university management on this point were generally positive. However, further attention is required to determine necessary budgets for this aspect.

An onboarding package is planned to raise awareness among new staff and lecturers. This should provide a clear overview of the principles of the women's and equal opportunity policies at Steinbeis University.

Due to the growing number of approved sites used by Steinbeis University, care must be taken to ensure that each site provides a common room for parents with children requiring supervision. Ideally, common rooms should be equipped with a mobile childcare cabinet.

A checklist should be developed in accordance with appointment regulations, and this should be completed as part of the duties of women's and equal opportunity representatives.

All calls for applications must include the following addition: "Steinbeis University expressly encourages qualified individuals of all genders to apply."

#### **4.3 The use of gender- and diversity-appropriate language**

The practice of using gender- and diversity-appropriate language is a measure designed to achieve and promote equal opportunities. Steinbeis University is committed to using language that refers equally to people of all genders or addresses them in a differentiated manner. The aim of this is to make the best possible use of wording as an important vehicle for expressing social reality.

A basis for establishing this practice is provided by the Berlin Senate's "guidelines for gender-inclusive language in administration." This shall be adapted according to university requirements.

Non-discriminatory language that signals acknowledgement is to be used in general correspondence, all guidelines, standard processes, regulations, statutes, administrative rules, certificates, forms, and any other documents with a bearing on Steinbeis University. In accordance with guidelines, either gender-neutral wording (gender-neutral reference to people or avoidance of personal designations) or word combinations should be used (e.g. in German: use of masculine and feminine forms of words). An alternative way to signal both female and male status in German, as well as all forms of social identification other than male or female, is to use an asterisk (\*) when writing nouns (e.g. the German word *Teilnehmer* (meaning participants) should be written *Teilnehmer\*innen*).

Based on this fundamental requirement, the wording of head office documents should once again be revised over the course of the next review.

#### **4.4 Guidelines for the prevention of sex discrimination and violence**

Steinbeis University attaches great importance to trust and cooperation among all members of staff at the university, as well as all stakeholders involved in lecturing, studying, and research at the university, anyone working in partnership with the university, and guests of the university.

Harassment at Steinbeis University is expressly forbidden. Harassment is defined as conduct that undermines personal dignity, or is unwanted, inappropriate, or offensive to the individual, and thus fuels a work environment that is intimidating, hostile, degrading, offensive, or humiliating.

Harassment, discrimination, and acts of violence that exploit relationships in situations where one person is dependent on another, in studies or the workplace, including the threat of personal or professional disadvantage, are considered particularly serious.

In line with their duty of care, all persons in managerial and supervisory positions are responsible for receiving complaints. Complainants and people of trust must not suffer any form of professional or personal disadvantage.

Based on this fundamental position adopted by the university, corresponding guidelines will be written offering specific illustrations of such situations and how to deal with them.

#### **4.5 Appointment of women's and equal opportunity representatives**

In accordance with Steinbeis University statutes, head office women's and equal opportunity representatives are elected and appointed for four years. In addition, arrangements should be made to appoint women's and equal opportunity representatives at the faculties to act in a deputized capacity.

To this end, election rules shall be drafted to ensure ongoing work is carried out by women's and equal opportunity representatives at Steinbeis University.

#### **4.6 Guidelines for improving the situation of students with disabilities**

Equal opportunity also includes considering the needs of students with disabilities or chronic illnesses. Inadequate understanding of problems experienced and how to alleviate or eliminate them make it imperative that appropriate guidelines are created for students, lecturers, and staff.

In addition, it should be considered whether a head office position should be created for people with disabilities to turn to with questions.

#### **4.7 Setting up of a training unit**

To provide training to lecturers and staff at the university, a range of courses should be developed.

#### 4.8 Overview of new measures

Measure	Issue	Responsibility	Time frame
<b>In academic areas</b>			
More targeted calls for applications for professorships	Simply announcing calls for applications for new professorships on an ad hoc basis does not reach the target group of women. As a result, advertisements on specialist websites explicitly targeting women lecturers should be used.	Head office women's and equal opportunity representatives as part of appointment procedures	By the end of the reporting period
Introduction of gender and diversity issues to teaching	Consideration of gender and diversity issues when drafting degree and assessment regulations and within seminars	Academic heads, lecturing staff, women's and equal opportunity representatives	By the end of the reporting period
Guidelines for the composition of groups	Establish criteria affecting the composition of learning groups/working groups during ongoing degree administration	Academic heads, lecturing staff, women's and equal opportunity representatives	By the end of the reporting period
Complete checklist for the appointment commission	The tasks and the position of the women's and equal opportunity representatives should be determined	University management, women's and equal opportunity representatives	Within the first year
<b>In administration</b>			
Training for women's and equal opportunity representatives	After new appointments to the position of women's and equal opportunity representative, suitable training must be carried out	University management, faculties, women's and equal opportunity representatives	On appointment
Onboarding package	Introduction to the basics of women's and equal opportunity policy at the university on appointment of new staff and lecturers	Women's and equal opportunity representatives	As soon as possible after appointment during onboarding
Common rooms	All university sites shall designate a common room for child care or as a place for	On-site management, women's and equal opportunity representatives	When defining new locations

	people with health problems to retreat		
Regulations			
Guidelines on the use of gender- and diversity-appropriate language	Guidelines on promoting and standardizing gender- and diversity-appropriate language	Women's and equal opportunity representatives	By the end of 2021
Guidelines on protection from sex discrimination and violence	Guidelines explaining how to deal with harassment, discrimination, and sexual violence	Women's and equal opportunity representatives	By the end of 2021
Election regulations	Forthright election and appointment of women's and equal opportunity representatives in rotation	Women's and equal opportunity representatives	By the end of 2021

## 5 Conclusion

Transformation of the university, which began in 2017, is now largely complete. Committees have been set up and the women's and equal opportunity representatives have succeeded in establishing a fixed presence within the new structure. In terms of wording, public portrayal and official documents have visibly resulted in sensitization.

In addition to two presidents, the governing body of the university has been supplemented by a female chancellor and a female executive director.

There are still deficits in certain areas. The introduction of gender-related topics to teaching is still far from actual implementation.

Above all, the proportion of female lecturers has not yet noticeably increased. Raising the number of female lecturers will be the top priority for the women's and equal opportunity representatives over the next five years.

Equal opportunities are a challenge that transcends all areas of the university. They are also an element of quality assurance. This issue must therefore be explicitly considered in all decisions with a bearing on resources and personnel at the university. It must also be integrated into all aspects of quality assurance.

## 6 Appendix

### 6.1 Links

General Act on Equal Treatment (AGG):

<https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/agg/index.html>

Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency handbook on legal protection against discrimination

[http://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/DE/ThemenUndForschung/Recht\\_und\\_gesetz/Handbuch/HandbuchRechtlicherDiskriminierungsschutz\\_node.html](http://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/DE/ThemenUndForschung/Recht_und_gesetz/Handbuch/HandbuchRechtlicherDiskriminierungsschutz_node.html)

Berlin Higher Education Act (BerlHG)

<http://gesetze.berlin.de/jportal/?quelle=jlink&query=HSchulG+BE&psml=bsbeprod.psml&max=true>

Center of Excellence, Women and Science (CEWS)

<https://www.gesis.org/cews/cews-home>

<https://www.gesis.org/cews/themen/geschlechtsbezogene-und-sexualisierte-gewalt>

DFG (the central German research funding organization)

[https://www.dfg.de/foerderung/grundlagen\\_rahmenbedingungen/chancengleichheit/gleichstellung\\_sstandards/](https://www.dfg.de/foerderung/grundlagen_rahmenbedingungen/chancengleichheit/gleichstellung_sstandards/)

[https://www.dfg.de/download/pdf/foerderung/grundlagen\\_dfg\\_foerderung/chancengleichheit/fog\\_empfehlungen\\_2020.pdf](https://www.dfg.de/download/pdf/foerderung/grundlagen_dfg_foerderung/chancengleichheit/fog_empfehlungen_2020.pdf)

General equal opportunity standards at universities in Berlin

[https://www.lakof-berlin.de/\\_media/AGS\\_A6\\_8\\_Seiten\\_final\\_II.pdf](https://www.lakof-berlin.de/_media/AGS_A6_8_Seiten_final_II.pdf)

European Commission – Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152>

Gender made easy (German)

<https://www.genderleicht.de/>

Higher Education Framework Act (HRG)

<http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/hrg/>

Berlin State Equality Act (LGG)

<http://gesetze.berlin.de/jportal/?quelle=jlink&query=GleichstG+BE&psml=bsbeprod.psml&max=true>

State Conference of Women's Representatives at Berlin Universities (LaKoF)

<http://www.lakof-berlin.de/>

Framework regulations of SHB

<https://www.steinbeis-hochschule.de/Studium-Studierende/Allgemeine-Informationen/Ordnungen>

Berlin Senate: guidelines for gender-inclusive language in administration

<https://www.berlin.de/sen/frauen/oeffentlichkeit/sprache/>

German Federal Statistical Office

<https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/GesellschaftStaat/BildungForschungKultur/Hochschulen/Hochschulen.html>

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DUDEN – Richtig gendern (Correct gendering). 2017.

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Senate Department for Labor, Integration, Women, Education, Youth, and Science: collaboration agreement on "Gender Equitable Education." 2015.

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