



# Working together for a diverse and inclusive Hasselt University

Inclusion plan

21/04/2023



**UHASSELT**

KNOWLEDGE IN ACTION



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# Preface

Welcome to Hasselt University. We aim to be an inclusive university in which the importance of diversity is recognised and valued. This is related to our role as a civic university: we assume our responsibilities, we engage and we use our knowledge for the benefit of society – the increasingly diverse society in which we as a higher education institution play an important role. Our students, lecturers, researchers and alumni are both able and willing to make society more agile and better. The challenges of both today and the period ahead are the compass needles of our teaching, research and social engagement. Innovation is a constant here.

By 2030, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) state that all children must have equal access to quality education, and participation in higher education is also in the spotlight in this context. Both internationally and locally, it is high up on the agenda. Our region, which is actively engaged in a catch-up process, needs powerful engines that can strengthen the social and economic fabric. One of the greatest challenges for Hasselt University is to ensure that a much wider group of young people is given the necessary opportunities to develop and excel.

The widening of access to higher education has not led to a higher rate of participation by ethno-cultural minorities, for example<sup>1</sup>. Progress in terms of equal educational opportunities in higher education has stalled, and this is not always related to study motivation or study success, but to factors such as socio-economic status, being a first-generation student, and so on<sup>2</sup>. The coronavirus crisis also had a major impact on the educational careers of children, young people and students.

You can't be what you can't see. At Hasselt University, too, society is not adequately reflected in our students and staff, in terms of ethno-cultural minorities, people with different sexual orientations and gender identities, and so on. The transition to gender equality in the academic world also needs to shift up a gear. With this inclusion plan, we continue to build an inclusive university. We support the ongoing widening of access to higher education, the increasing of educational opportunities, and the creation of an organisation in which all students and staff are welcome and feel welcome.

This Hasselt University inclusion plan was prepared by the Inclusion Steering Group and is endorsed by the faculties through their representation on the Board of Deans. It contains both current processes and new projects to be embarked on. For each of the new projects, a project dossier will be drawn up at the outset, clearly identifying the costs and benefits, after which final approval will be given or withheld. The successful roll-out of this plan requires all our employees and partners to get behind it.

It should also be stressed that an inclusion plan is never 'finished'. As a university, we aim to keep learning, adjusting and innovating in this area.

*Rector Bernard Vanheusden*

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1. This point is also made very clearly by Hemelsoet in his chapter on the widening of access to higher education (2021).
  2. Nicaise, Frankc and Cincinnato, 2021.



# An inclusive university

## Mission

Hasselt University works to ensure that everyone is welcome, feels at home, and can do their best at our university. The diverse talents of our students and staff are a precious resource for our community and the engine of our future prosperity. Diversity of experiences and perspectives enriches our education, strengthens our research and increases our social impact. As a civic university, Hasselt University seeks to set a good example in the region in terms of diversity and inclusion. With our focus on justice and non-discrimination, we are working together for a diverse and inclusive Hasselt University.

## Vision

In what follows, some important definitions are outlined to ensure that we can use a common language later in this document. Briefly, by **diversity** we mean differences in society and by inclusion we mean the way we deal with these differences.

### What does diversity mean for Hasselt University?

Diversity is about differences within our organisation, especially those associated with certain inequality mechanisms. It is about characteristics<sup>3</sup> that are experienced as diverse, in areas such as:

- sex, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, age, family situation or dependent children;
- disability;
- culture, religion/ideology;
- skin colour, ethnic origin;
- socio-economic background or situation.

It is important to recognise that people never consist of a single dimension. This is the meaning of intersectionality: a layered identity that emerges at the intersection of these characteristics and experiences.

### What does inclusion mean for Hasselt University?

#### *In theory*

Inclusion is about how we deal with differences. Inclusion is the concept of appreciating and acknowledging the diversity of identities, backgrounds, perspectives, experiences and perceptions. In concrete terms, it is often about the extent to which people from different backgrounds feel seen, heard and valued and are able to be themselves.

#### *In practice*

In practice, inclusion is seen as a way of dealing with diversity, with a key question being: how do we bring about an organisational culture that attracts and retains diversity? There are two different schools of thought on the issue of inclusion:

- Diversity blindness: "this view is based on the idea that differences should not matter and that everyone should be treated equally on the basis of equal rights. A colour-blind approach often leads to generic measures, where a single approach is offered for everyone. This approach is aligned with a particular norm. Although the intention is good, a colour-blind approach often ignores differences in starting positions. The result is that people who do not belong to the established norm, are, despite their talents, still unable to participate or contribute optimally."<sup>4</sup>
- Diversity consciousness: "this view is based on the idea that there is already a difference in starting position in society and that this should lead to a focus on offering equal opportunities. In this vision, everyone is not equal, but everyone should be treated equally. A diversity-conscious approach often leads to specific measures, with specific programmes being offered to people who need extra support to achieve an equal starting position.<sup>4</sup> A diversity-conscious approach aims to give everyone the opportunity to develop, taking account of their different starting positions. Research shows that a diversity-conscious approach is crucial to ensuring that an organisation becomes both more diverse and more inclusive."<sup>5</sup>

Hasselt University puts the emphasis on making the university inclusive in a diversity-conscious way. Despite this, there is little coverage in this document of actions aimed at specific target groups. That is a matter for the further distillation of the actions of this plan into project plans and procedures.

<sup>3</sup> Hasselt University uses the clear definitions produced by the Flemish Educational Council (VHLOR). In this document you can find information about the data recorded at Hasselt University.

<sup>4</sup> The original definition of the Teaching Learning Center uses "color-blind" and "color-conscious". UHasselt prefers to use the word "diversity-blind" and "diversity-aware" because inclusion is approached more broadly than color within this plan.

<sup>5</sup> Geerts, I., Pulinx, R., Schrooten, M., Emmers, E., & Morreel, E. (2020). Wees niet langer kleurenblind in hoger onderwijs: 3 strategieën voor meer diversiteit in hoger onderwijs. Essanhaji, Z., & van den Brink, M. (2022). 'Naar het inclusiever (her) maken van het hoger onderwijs: een review naar ongelijkheidspraktijken.' Tijdschrift Sociologie, 2, 173-212.



## A cross-cutting approach

To create the right conditions for innovative policy and to allow Hasselt University to continue to excel in the field of education, research, innovation and management, a cross-cutting approach was chosen in 2021. The four policy themes form Hasselt University's vision for 2030, which is completely in line with the sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. Learning, inclusive, international, sustainable – these themes filter through to all fields of activity at the university. At the same time, the chosen priorities allow Hasselt University to further achieve its civic mission. This is because they fit with the challenges that arise in this region as elsewhere: a fast-changing economy which we constantly have to 'keep up' with; the growing diversity in our society; global problems that also have local effects; and a society that must above all remain sustainable and viable for everyone. Against this background of economic, social, demographic and societal change, a stronger university can also make the region more resilient.

The choice of 'inclusive' is related to the fact that the social fabric and demographic development of Limburg is comparable to large cities. Even today, this region is still struggling with under-participation in academic higher education (particularly among young people growing up in vulnerable situations) and, on average, with a higher number of young people leaving secondary education without a qualification (school drop-out rates are particularly high in former mining municipalities). Actions by Hasselt University in this respect reflect the ambition set out in the SALKturbo plan of 'maximum development opportunities for every Limburger'. We can and should learn lessons from the Limburg context and thus encourage initiatives elsewhere – with robust scientific support from our learning experience.

Promoting diversity and inclusion in the workforce is also an important lever for achieving the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs) and providing better education for the university's diverse student population.

This inclusion plan is institution-wide and therefore covers all policy areas (education, research, management). Hasselt University takes a whole institution approach to inclusion in all facets of its duties and organisation. Inclusion must be embedded in general policy and concerns all levels and parts of the organisation. Having a diverse and inclusive university requires efforts at the level of organisational culture, policy and practice. It therefore presupposes not only a change process within the organisation and its regional partners, but also personal change processes. Everyone's voice is needed in order for the university to become a model of inclusion. However, leadership has a very important role to play:

*'Leadership is key to reducing bias in an institution and its processes, since change [such as gender action] almost always generates resistance. [...] Leaders are better placed than anyone else to explain why change is necessary, invoke acceptance for change despite fears of loss, and provide incentives for supporting change while upholding and safe-guarding academic excellence.'*

The distillation and implementation of the inclusion goals are matters for the directorates of Education, Research, Tech Transfer and General Management. These directorates themselves make the necessary operational choices when implementing the goals, and this process will take place within the faculties, schools, services and student consultation structures such as the student council.

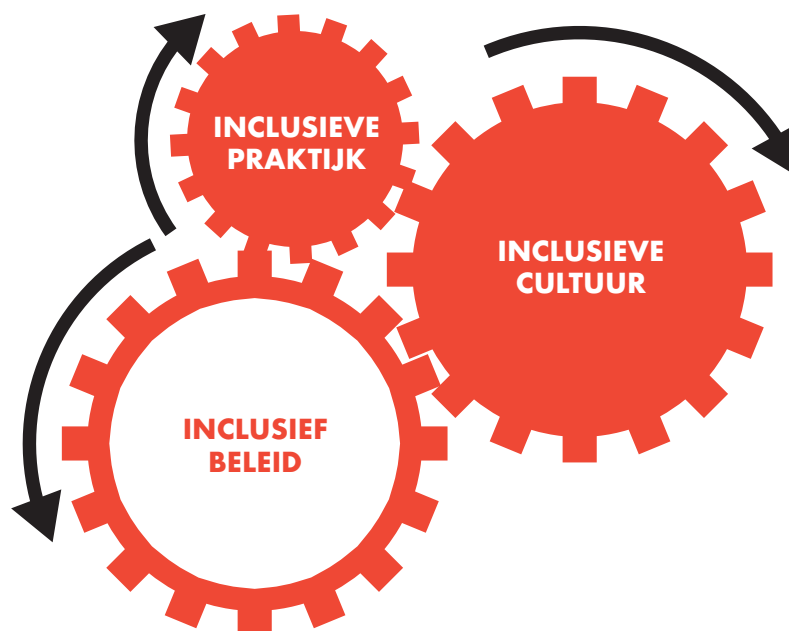
There is also someone within each faculty who can be approached with regard to inclusion and diversity issues: in particular the gender lead (administrative directors) and the Inclusion Steering Group liaison officers.

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<sup>6</sup> League of European Research Universities (LERU, 2018). Implicit bias in Academia. A challenge to the meritocratic principle and to women's careers. And what to do about it. Te raadplegen op <https://www.leru.org/files/implicit-bias-in-academia-full-paper.pdf> Zie p. 15, punt 41.



This inclusion plan is intended to drive a diverse and inclusive university and to ensure that inclusive policy, inclusive practice and inclusive culture move in step with one another.



## Method

Hasselt University's Day-to-Day Management Team has delegated the design and management of cross-cutting policy to the **Inclusion Steering Group**. The steering group is assembled on the basis of expertise, from different disciplines and perspectives and with a mix of representation of academics and administrative and technical staff. The chair of the steering group is an academic, known as the academic inclusion lead. A Rectorate staff member (½ FTE) acts as a liaison officer, seeing to the translation of the cross-cutting theme to the domains and ensuring interaction with and between the domains. Together, this academic lead and Rectorate staff member form the **point of contact for inclusion** within Hasselt University. See Appendix 1 for more information about how this works.

Roles of the steering group:

- formulating strategic (and operational) policy for the cross-cutting policy theme;
- submitting its policy to the Day-to-Day Management Team / Board of Deans for approval;
- aligning with domain/management for operational translation and reality check;
- monitoring the coherence of the cross-cutting policy

theme (goal – action – budget);

- tracking progress;
- reporting on operations to the Day-to-Day Management Team / Board of Deans. This reporting includes the developing results of the indicators for employees and students as monitored in this inclusion plan;
- safeguarding operational performance by transferring responsibility to offices/services;
- The Inclusion Steering Group also forms the platform for sharing knowledge and information from the networks in which Hasselt University is represented along with all Flemish.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>8</sup>

A bottom-up survey from 2021 within the university and good practices gave direction to this inclusion plan. Various working groups then set to work on these findings, and experts throughout the organisation were consulted. The creation of this inclusion plan ensures that Hasselt University complies with the European requirement to put forward a Gender Equality Plan and supersedes the former Gender Policy Plan (2014).

<sup>7</sup> The process flow of cross-cutting policy at Hasselt University is described in Appendix 1.

<sup>8</sup> Hasselt University is a signatory of the Gender in Academia Charter, an initiative of the Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR) and Jonge Academie. This charter renews and confirms the Flemish universities' commitment to gender equality:  
creating more awareness, among other things by offering training packages on gender diversity, career obstacles and unconscious bias;  
screening and, where necessary, adjusting promotion and recruitment procedures;  
achieving equal representation on boards and committees;  
offering a viable work culture for everyone, including by ensuring a better reconciliation between work in an academic setting and care and private commitments;  
systematically monitoring changes in the gender balance.  
These lines of action have been integrated into this inclusion plan.



# Strategy

In this inclusion plan, the Inclusion Steering Group identifies five strategic goals for Hasselt University. These strategic objectives (SOs) are long-term objectives that indicate Hasselt University's desired direction of travel.

Each strategic objective has been translated into operational objectives (OOs). These are the levers we have identified within Hasselt University that will enable us to move in the medium term (2030) to achieve the strategic objectives.

Action is needed to achieve each of these operational objectives. The steering group provides suggestions for concrete action in this plan. These proposals have been included in Hasselt University's policy plans for Education, Research, Tech Transfer and General Management. In practice, this should then lead to the launch of new projects and the adjustment of existing processes over the period 2023-2030.

- Most of the projects proposed by the steering group are not solely intended to make the university more inclusive, but also pursue other objectives. In that sense, these proposed projects are contingent. Making them part of the inclusion plan ensures that a project plan will be drawn up. Final approval for these projects will only be given at the project dossier stage. These recommendations should be further investigated and assessed by the relevant project team. The steering group wishes in every case to delegate someone to be involved in the preparation of the project dossier and, where necessary, in specific components of the project implementation.
- The processes that are already running are regularly updated due to changing circumstances and advancing understanding. The steering group monitors these processes annually and has a mandate to ask questions about them where necessary.





# SO1: Hasselt University will identify and eliminate barriers in order to maximise the intake and study success of all students by providing equal opportunities.

Hasselt University wants to be an inclusive university that makes room for all students and where every student is welcome. Hasselt University strives to ensure that its student population is a reflection of the community in which the university is active. Creating a powerful, inclusive and excellent learning environment<sup>9</sup> for every student is an important precondition for this.

## OO1: Hasselt University will encourage the intake of students from under-represented groups

Hasselt University is committed to increasing the intake of under-represented groups of students in various ways, with a special emphasis on ethno-cultural minorities. Through an active recruitment policy, under-represented groups can become even better acquainted with the possibilities offered by Hasselt University. A welcoming reception policy shows these students that they are welcome at Hasselt University and seeks to remove barriers. Finally, Hasselt University plays a role in projects to combat the high school drop-out rate in Limburg, and also tries to have an indirect impact on the influx of new and diverse talent

### Actions:

- Annual compilation of intake figures for each programme categorised by diversity characteristics<sup>10</sup> for strategic discussion within the relevant faculty (new).
- Active and inclusive recruitment strategy<sup>11</sup> (ongoing).
- Inclusive enrolment process (ongoing)<sup>12</sup>.
- Inclusive reception policy for new students (ongoing).
  - Introduction days at faculties. Each programme has a policy for creating a friendly and inclusive living and learning community: from outreach to schools via introduction days and study years through to alumni and their relevant networks.
  - Orientation days for international students.
- TALim (ongoing).
- Summer schools (ongoing).
- Educational master's programmes focusing on diversity competencies for teachers in secondary education (ongoing).
- Alumni activities: Hasselt University label / mandate to give back to your community? (new).



<sup>9</sup> An excellent learning environment is: a learning environment that is powerful because its starting point is diversity as a social standard and in which people work inclusively to deal with these differences in an appreciative way by focusing on talents.

<sup>10</sup> Clear VLIR/VLHORA definitions.

<sup>11</sup> See also the study by Dr Maristela Do Nashimento Rocha at <https://documentserver.uhasselt.be/handle/1942/37368>: Persona, schaduw en symbolisch geweld: universitaire brochures en hoe ze dekoloniserende acties kunnen informeren.

<sup>12</sup> This action also targets PhD students.



## OO2: Hasselt University will create an inclusive teaching and learning environment that maximises study success for all students, taking account of students' diversity

Hasselt University strives to identify and remove barriers to student progression. By taking into account the unique strengths, talents and learning needs of each student when designing our courses, programme components and learning pathways, we can create a highly inclusive and excellent learning environment.<sup>13</sup> Our primary focus here is on professional training for lecturers to make their education more inclusive, supporting students through Student Point and raising awareness among our partners.

### Actions:

- Monitoring student progress for each programme as a function of various background characteristics (new).
- Training, professional development, inspiration on inclusion and diversity for lecturers (new).
- Student Point - a place where all students can go with their questions. They can drop by in person or email their questions about:
  - Study methods, study planning, motivation, reorientation (study coaches).
  - Personal, relational or family problems (student psychologist).
  - Creating or changing a study programme, explanation about study progress monitoring, tolerance rules, how learning credit works, requests for exemptions, etc. Advice to students with disappointing exam results on how they can approach things differently in the future (academic advisors and study programme coaches).
  - Facilities and support for dyslexia, top athletics, work, and other 'special circumstances', e.g. taking care of a family etc.
- Studying with a disability (care coordinator).
- Financial support (social worker).
- Group sessions on topics such as 'Start to study'.
- Referrals to other and external services.
- The buddy project (ongoing). There is also an ongoing buddy project for international students and PhD students. The approaches to students and international students need to be harmonised.
  - More information: A buddy is a student in a higher year who knows his/her way around Hasselt University. As well as helping first-year students to find their feet quickly, they also support them throughout the year. The focus is mainly on the first two quartiles, but a buddy arrangement can be continued throughout the year if desired. The system not only increases the chances of success, but also ensures that students quickly find their feet and feel at home at the university.
- There are various initiatives such as the Hubertus Fund and Erasmus that provide financial and logistical support to Hasselt University students who lack the means to participate in valuable experiences at home and abroad that will further develop their knowledge, talents and skills (ongoing).
- Improving the academic Dutch language skills of all students – including systematic language support and extensive professional development for lecturers<sup>14</sup>.
- The development of systematic language support with an emphasis on Dutch and English – at different levels.
- Research internships and projects with the key question: 'How can we raise awareness among our partners to encourage them to also work on an inclusive approach?' (new).
- Research into the possibility of purchasing Blackboard Ally to increase Blackboard's overall accessibility (new).

Also worth mentioning are student enterprises such as Studentteach (extra lessons given by students at fair prices) and Re-book IT (sustainable and financially advantageous for buyers and sellers of textbooks).

<sup>13</sup> In line with the principles of universal design for learning and broad evaluation - CAST: Over Universal Design for Learning, n.d. Universal design takes diversity as its starting point and emphasises the use of flexible goals, methods, materials and forms of evaluation to provide effective education for all students. Instead of approaching accessibility as an afterthought or purely on a case-by-case basis, universal design focuses on designing education, products, environments and services that meet the needs of different students from the start, so that all students can participate and receive optimal learning opportunities (Steunpunt voor Inclusief Hoger Onderwijs, Leidraad universeel ontwerp).

<sup>14</sup> This action also targets PhD students.



## SO2: Hasselt University is committed to increasing diversity in research

Equality and inclusion are fundamental values that benefit research and development by improving its quality and relevance, attracting and retaining more talent and ensuring that everyone is able to realise their full potential.<sup>15</sup> Hasselt University attaches great importance to equal opportunities for all researchers who apply for funding from the university. Composing research teams carefully and approaching research content through an inclusive lens also play an important role. Finally, there is a lever in the personnel policy aimed at academics (see SO3).

### OO1: Hasselt University will pay more attention to inclusion within research

Hasselt University strives to ensure that every research question is considered through an inclusive lens and that all relevant populations are equally involved in research.

#### Actions:

- Inclusion within Special Research Fund (BOF) funding and funding initiatives from Hasselt University for internationalisation (new).
- Inclusion test for research content and funding applicants:
- Content: Within Hasselt University BOF and internationalisation funding applications, the extent to which an applicant takes inclusion into account is included as a criterion, along with possible differences between men, women and ethno-cultural groups in research and the innovativeness of the project where relevant. Those submitting funding applications are asked to describe whether and how gender analysis is taken into account in the content of the project.
- Adding a team description to the BOF template (gender, ethno-cultural, disability, etc.). This phase focuses on awareness-raising.
- Adding the question 'Have you taken diversity within society into account in your research proposal?' to the BOF template. This phase focuses on awareness-raising. It must also be possible to tick the option 'not applicable'.
- Adding a narrative CV by the supervisor and co-supervisor (e.g. care tasks, alternative experiences).
- Applicant: Inclusion is used as a criterion when awarding BOF funding (see Mosaic scholarship proposal).
- The university raises the theme of inclusion with external funding providers as one of the important themes in research. We expect researchers who represent Hasselt

University to also endorse and advocate for the mission and vision on external policy committees (see diversity charter).

### OO2: Hasselt University will create leverage for a more inclusive world in dialogue with social actors through its diversity and inclusion research.

As a civic university, Hasselt University wants to be a driving force for the region and to contribute to the UN's sustainable development goals. The focus on inclusion is already embedded in the research groups on diversity and inclusion (BCL-DIV (SEIN), URISE, R4D).

#### Actions:

- Hasselt University encourages research groups with inclusion as a theme to contribute to an inclusive society through their research. E.g. supporting networks, research days and interdisciplinary collaborations with the theme of inclusion.
- Through its focus on the key challenges of a 'Healthy society, sustainable society and inclusive society', Hasselt University is committed to combining expertise from various Hasselt University disciplines / faculties in order to come up with answers, e.g. through research projects, and communicate research findings to society (ongoing).
- The Chair in Inclusive and Excellent Education is an initiative of the province of Limburg that will identify good practices. Hasselt University is working for the establishment of a Centre for Inclusive and Excellent Learning (CIEL). With the establishment of CIEL, Hasselt University will develop a knowledge and research centre based on the concept of 'inclusive excellence' that promotes social mobility for young people from vulnerable socio-economic groups. The Centre for Inclusive and Excellent Learning, which will work closely with the university colleges PXL and UCLL, will conduct scientific research on this theme, covering the entire education chain, monitor the results of projects that different actors in Limburg start on this issue, study and document best practices from projects at home and abroad, build an expertise network on this theme with all actors, and organise training activities for anyone professionally engaged with this issue in agreement with the university colleges.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.fwo.be/en/the-fwo/research-policy/hr-strategy/gender-equality-plan/>



## SO3: Hasselt University will strive for more diversity within its workforce and a more inclusive working environment

Hasselt University strives for a more diverse workforce regardless of status or grade and for a working environment in which all employees feel accepted and valued. As a civic university, Hasselt University wants to play an exemplary role in the region in terms of diversity and inclusion. Promoting diversity and inclusion in the workforce is also an important lever for achieving the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs) and providing better education for the university's diverse student population. For the university as an employer, focusing on more diversity and inclusion also yields benefits, such as becoming more attractive in the war for talent, making optimal use of talent in the organisation, motivating and retaining that talent, and improving collaboration, innovation and creativity<sup>16</sup>.

### OO1: Hasselt University will make its intake of staff more diverse

Research shows that intake processes are often not inclusive and present numerous (often unintended) barriers. For example, the intake of diverse talent can be hindered by a failure to reach out sufficiently to ethno-cultural minorities, among others. This can be linked to non-inclusive job ad texts, biases on the part of recruiters, and non-inclusive selection procedures and criteria<sup>17</sup>. Striving for more diversity within the workforce and for a more inclusive work context therefore starts with an intake policy that takes these factors explicitly into account<sup>18</sup>. It takes an effort to attract more diverse talent, remove barriers from recruitment and selection procedures and ensure an inclusive reception policy.

- Annual data collection to find out how representative the Hasselt University workforce is. This includes self-registration of staff (new).
  - Optimising the administrative and technical staff selection procedure with respect to inclusion (new). Below is a non-exhaustive list of suggestions, the feasibility of which will be investigated in the context of this project:
  - Screening the job requirements that are described. Clear inclusion of demonstrable relevant professional experience and reasoning skills at master's level as an alternative to the degree requirement in order to demonstrate competence.
- Conscious and proactive assessment of the inclusion

competency during selection interviews. This requires a definition to be drawn up in terms of behavioural indicators including skills and attitude. Questions may be asked about this competency during the competency-based interview using the STAR interview method. This competency can then be included in the feedback cycle of an employee at Hasselt University.

- The project on 'Career paths for academics with inclusion as one of the objectives' (new) - see also SO3OO2.
- Earmarking a budget for taking on employees from under-represented target groups.
  - Below is a non-exhaustive list of suggestions, the feasibility of which will be investigated in the context of this project:
    - Administrative and technical staff: allocating a budget for taking on employees from under-represented target groups (new).
    - Academics: Lobbying at Flemish level for the award of Mosaic scholarships. Potential PhD students who can focus 100% on their studies do better in the current education system. Those who combine studies with a job, informal care, etc. are less able to focus on obtaining the necessary grades and achieve less progress within the university. How can we get more graduates from under-represented groups to enter our science programmes? This includes students who have not completed a standard study pathway due for example to care tasks or their home situation, working students and programme-switching students.
    - Scholars at risk programme (SAR) – ongoing.
- Analysis of recruitment tools and recruitment process for all grades and statuses
  - Below is a non-exhaustive list of suggestions, the feasibility of which will be investigated in the context of this project:
    - The presentation of a clear vision on the Hasselt University website of the university's view of inclusion and the concrete actions being taken by the university in this area.
    - Incorporating monitoring and checks in selection reports.
    - Asking departments and committees to

<sup>16</sup> Joshi & Roh, 2009; Kele & Cassell, 2022; Kossek & Pichler, 2008; Van Laer & Zanoni, 2018.

<sup>17</sup> Van den Brink et al., 2010; Van Laer et al., 2021.

<sup>18</sup> Kossek & Lobel, 2008; van den Brink et al., 2010; Van Laer & Zanoni, 2018.



justify lack of representation of both genders among the candidates during recruitment and promotion.

- Conducting active searches and advertising through certain channels that reach under-represented groups.
- Ensuring that selection committees are composed as diversely as possible, with at least one-third of members from each gender, and examining what additional targets regarding diversity are possible.
- Making inclusion part of recruitment and selection training
  - Making inclusion an important part of the existing training on 'writing job ad texts'.
  - Making inclusion an important part of the existing training on 'conducting selection interviews'.
  - Making the Goodhabitz training course a mandatory condition of participation as a committee member in a selection procedure.
  - Making an inclusion toolkit available to these committees.
- The possibilities offered by positive action in connection with intake are being further explored and will be presented to the Inclusion Steering Group (new).
- Inclusive reception policy tailored to the target group and status (staff, new researchers, international researchers, etc.). The various roles here are currently fragmented across various offices/services. Better coordination is needed (new).

## **OO2: Hasselt University will increase the career prospects of under-represented target groups**

Even once people have started working in an organisation, all kinds of barriers can form a glass ceiling that impedes their chances of developing their careers and progressing to higher positions<sup>19</sup>. These may include prejudices, failure to recognise differences in career paths and situations, or failure to value certain competencies and roles. It is therefore crucial to pay attention to these barriers.

### **Actions:**

- Annual data collection on the representativeness of the workforce, including self-registration of staff.
- The possibilities offered by positive action in connection with career progression are being further explored and will be presented to the Inclusion Steering Group.
- The project on 'Career paths for academics with inclusion as one of the objectives' (new). Below is a non-exhaustive list of suggestions, the feasibility of which will be investigated in the context of this project:
  - Defining a code of conduct for recruitment and promotion. Clear principles ensure transparency and reduce unconscious bias (see the European Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers as an example).
  - Evaluation of the role of gender leads (currently taken by administrative directors). Extension of this role to gender and inclusion lead. This means that the leads will include diversity aspects beyond gender in their task of safeguarding assessment processes from bias and discrimination. They can take on a reporting role here, explicitly justifying how inclusion has been taken into account in the process and possibly explaining why the applicants/ ranked candidates are not diverse. See link with monitoring and checks in selection reports.
  - Balanced composition of selection committees. Examine whether it is feasible to include targets for diversity separately from gender (ongoing).
  - Adding an inclusion component to education and training of panel members. This will make them aware of their own bias. (See also SO3OO3.)
  - Adjusting the competency framework and

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<sup>19</sup>

Van den Brink & Benschop, 2012a; 2012b



assessment criteria for academic staff. Below is a non-exhaustive list of suggestions, the feasibility of which will be investigated in the context of this project:

- Focusing more on research quality than quantity and not relying on journal-based metrics. Switching to a model in which tenure track (TT) lecturers (and possibly all independent academic staff) formulate their own objectives in consultation with the dean and can thus tailor TT criteria to their own ambitions and area where they want to grow, but also to their own situation and possibilities (e.g. family, foreign experience, etc.). In other words, no more standard models and biased criteria, but rather individual pathways.
- Sufficient appreciation for the diverse roles that academics can take on, including internal services. Ensuring that administrative responsibilities, student supervision, etc. are transparently present in staff records and are valued alongside research output. Assessment of generic competencies alongside the research results, for example being a project leader in a successful research project.
- Considering an organisation-wide workload planning model to promote transparency and fairness through workload distribution across academic staff that is consistent between different departments.
- Considering timing / events when assessing performance.
- Taking career breaks and absences into account when assessing research output. Account can also be taken in this context of non-traditional career paths, e.g. work experience or training.
- Adding Bio Sketch – which provides space to reflect on the personal context – to the tenure track academic file and evaluations of academic staff.
- Implementation of competency-based thinking in the various HR processes (selection, L&D, evaluation) in a uniform manner. This will mean that employees can get a better idea of what is expected of them and how they can improve.
- Making changes to the Replacement Fund.
  - Below is a non-exhaustive list of suggestions, the feasibility of which will be investigated in the context of this project:
  - Putting the Replacement Fund back in the

spotlight: independent academic staff can be replaced using resources from the Replacement Fund during their absence (due to maternity leave, sick leave or leave for social reasons).

After their absence, they can also gain a temporary exemption from teaching duties (i.e. be replaced for these duties) in order to bring their academic file up to date.

- Ensuring financial separation in the accounts so that monitoring is possible.
- Extending the replacement fund to postdocs and research tasks (new).
- Extra financial support for sabbaticals, adapted to the personal context and the possibility of being replaced for teaching duties (new).
- Inclusion policy on long-term illness and integration (new).
- Mentoring programme for PhD students, postdocs and tenure track lecturers and investigation of extension to other researchers and administrative and technical staff.
- Doctoral schools buddy project (ongoing).
- Extra support from doctoral schools for supervisors and PhD students with a disability (new).
- The development of systematic language support in Dutch and English – at different levels and for academic staff and administrative and technical staff.



### OO3: Hasselt University will foster its employees' diversity skills

Hasselt University wishes to encourage diversity-conscious employees. This means employees who have the sensitivity to know when differences are relevant and when they are not. This is a challenge that everyone at Hasselt University faces, in order to recognise and break down barriers. No one is immune to unconscious biases, stereotypes and attitudes. These things are shaped by our upbringing, social background and personal experiences. As a result, we are more likely to have positive prejudices about people who are like us and negative prejudices about people who are different. Awareness of this is a process and a prerequisite for turning diversity into an asset. Hasselt University integrates this as a learning goal in its leadership training programmes, and encourages exchanges on diversity for all staff members.

#### Actions:

- Integrating inclusion within the overall training offer.
- Professional development with regard to an inclusive learning environment.
  - The goal is for lecturers to create inclusive learning environments in which students learn to function in a diverse environment where inclusion and equality are fundamental values. Lecturers must set a good example. But it is not only lecturers who must do this: all employees in all roles need to set a good example within an inclusive organisational culture. This is supported by professional development and learning activities at various levels, such as educational professional development, training provided by the doctoral schools, Human Resources Department and career centre and initiatives by faculties and offices/services. In order to have impact, the individual efforts of employees need to be rewarded within the formal personnel processes and structures of the organisation, to ensure that creating an inclusive learning environment becomes a component of the appraisal, evaluation and promotion processes.
- Staff day on inclusion for academic, administrative and technical staff.

### OO4: Hasselt University will embed inclusion in its operations and support processes

Hasselt University's overarching processes will be scanned for inclusion and adjusted accordingly.

#### Actions:

- Making administrative procedures non-binary (new).
- Investigating possibilities for an inclusive purchasing policy - including frame of reference (new).





## OO5: Hasselt University will promote the well-being of all employees

Well-being at work includes feeling safe, protecting employees' health, and the psychosocial aspects of the job. A good work/life balance is important for all employees of Hasselt University. It ensures that everyone finds the support to build their career in combination with their personal responsibilities outside the workplace, including care responsibilities. The entire university benefits from an open and respectful organisational culture. It helps make Hasselt University an attractive employer and enables it to recruit the best talent.<sup>20</sup>

### Actions:

- Staff survey on diversity and inclusion.
- Further development of contact point for prevention and intervention with respect to transgressive behaviour.
  - More information: Transgressive behaviour can occur anywhere, including at Hasselt University. Behaviour is transgressive if someone's personal boundary is crossed. Students or staff members who experience transgressive behaviour or who have a question on this subject can contact the transgressive behaviour contact point. A report can be about transgressive behaviour on the part of a student, a member of staff or a visitor to the campus. Reports may concern, among other things, intimidation, violation of personal integrity, verbal and/or physical aggression, discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment. Students and staff members can send an email or message to [meldpunt@uhasselt.be](mailto:meldpunt@uhasselt.be). A confidant will then get in contact.
- Breastfeeding room and prayer room for staff on each campus, clearly communicated.
- Universal design - increasing integral accessibility in existing and new buildings (ongoing). Consideration of inclusion in the design of new buildings.

Some examples are given below of work-life policy; more information on the website.

- Part-time work.
  - Various part-time work arrangements are possible: in addition to the legal schemes, Hasselt University offers various other arrangements for part-time work that support a good work/life balance (reduction of working time to 50 - 80 - 90%)
- Hybrid working.
  - Flexible working hours are supported by a flexitime system for administrative and technical staff employees and a flexible timetable for academic staff.
  - Systematic working from home for two days a week may be supplemented with occasional working from home if desired. There is a great deal of autonomy for academic staff with regard to the use of working from home.
  - Hybrid working is supported and facilitated by hybrid work resources (flex desks, IT equipment) and a home working allowance.
- Support with care responsibilities.
  - Childcare during holiday periods: It is often no easy matter for parents to provide care for their children during the school holidays. Hasselt University there offers holiday childcare at an affordable rate for one week during the spring break and Easter holidays and for four weeks during the summer holidays for staff members' children aged between 2.5 and 12 years.
  - Ironing service: As a family-friendly institution, Hasselt University also wishes to meet its staff's need for domestic help. Hasselt University contributes by providing an ironing service within the institution. On Diepenbeek campus you can have your laundry picked up by the ironing service. This also helps Hasselt University to support the social economy.
  - We also offer staff discounts in the university restaurants.
  - There is an extensive holiday scheme: all Hasselt University staff members have 35 days of holiday per year, 14 public holidays and a

<sup>20</sup>

<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/work-life-balance-and-organisational-culture>

collective closure between Christmas and the New Year.

- Workload management: Replacement fund: independent academic staff can be replaced using resources from the Replacement Fund during their absence (due to maternity leave, sick leave or leave for social reasons). After their absence, they can also gain a temporary exemption from teaching duties (i.e. be replaced for these duties) in order to bring their academic file up to date.
- Integration of staff after a career break.
- Advice and support with regard to work/life balance.
  - Staff members can talk to confidants in the event of difficulties.
  - Internal training on resilience, hybrid working, time management, etc.
  - Feedback and evaluation cycle, taking account of work/life balance
  - Well-being survey with personal advice and action plans to improve well-being.
  - Career centre currently being developed which will help people understand their talents, strengths and ambitions.
  - HR business partner with focus on well-being policy.





## SO4: Hasselt University will communicate and interact inclusively

How can Hasselt University talk to and reach the largest possible group of people, both externally and internally? And when is communication tailored to target groups needed

### OO1: Hasselt University will communicate inclusively

We want to adapt our communication ever more closely to a super-diverse world. This is a learning process, in which the key question is: 'How can we connect better with potential and existing Hasselt University students, employees, alumni and visitors on campus and beyond?'

#### Actions:

- Marketing and Communication Directorate attends training courses and workshops on inclusive communication and follows the professional debate on this subject.
- Inclusion becomes a guiding principle for drawing up the communication and marketing strategy and putting it into practice => start-up process, possibly with an external consultant? E.g. Who are we failing to reach at present? Are our channels accessible enough?
- Improving English-language communication at Hasselt University – both quantitatively and qualitatively.
- Adding new perspectives in the communications team.
- Rolling out diversity-conscious communication
  - Screening basic documents for gender neutrality and formulating a proposal.
  - Rolling out language policies that encourage the active use of inclusive language in the organisation regarding gender equality and other forms of identity and diversity. An intranet page is being developed with concrete examples.
- Increasing the attention paid to diversity in images and activities (e.g. screening photographic material for diversity, etc.) (ongoing).
- Paying attention in communication to exemplary functions / role models among senior students and staff.
- The inclusivity prize (ongoing).
- Working to gain the Any Surfer Label or similar for the website.



### OO2: Hasselt University employees will promote the diversity policy

The diversity policy at Hasselt University is worn like a badge by every member of staff. They accept joint accountability for it, because it's up to them! They recognise the challenges of diversity as a reality and are open to dialogue. Talking together about obstacles and seeking out good practices are the first steps to embedding a robust diversity policy. We expect this to be reflected in every communication and contact.

#### Actions:

- Launching an inclusion charter. The idea of a charter will be further explored with attention to synergy with existing documents.

## SDO5: Hasselt University will encourage a friendly and inclusive student life

Hasselt University works to ensure that every student feels safe and included, connected and valued as a full member ('sense of belonging'). The presence of a diverse student population and context/environment in which everyone is reflected and recognised is important here. In short, everyone must feel welcome.

### OO1: Hasselt University will make it possible for students to connect with other students

Hasselt University believes it is important for every student to have the opportunity to meet others in a meaningful way, through a range of leisure activities and student associations in which everyone can find something to their liking

#### Actions:

- Student survey on diversity and inclusion.
- Hasselt University supports student associations (e.g. student association for international students, chess club, world evening, free outdoor games, introduction week for international students, introduction days for programme-switching students, meeting times for students with ASD + for students with ADHD, etc.). The student council STURA is active in supporting student groups (ongoing).
- Hasselt University is developing an inclusive range of cultural activities and tries to bring culture within the reach of every student through financial support and culture on campus (ongoing).

### OO2: Hasselt University will strive for an integrally accessible and inclusive learning and living environment for students

Hasselt University strives for a physically accessible and inclusive learning and living environment for students. For this reason it presses for internal and external infrastructure policy from an inclusive perspective based on the principles of Universal Design for Learning. UDL is about proactively designing the curriculum and learning environment (teaching materials, evaluation, method, etc.) so that they are accessible to everyone, regardless of the learning styles, needs and limitations of students and staff.

#### Actions:

- Increasing the supply of accessible, affordable and high-quality student rooms in Limburg by seeking to influence the student housing policies of project developers and surrounding cities and municipalities (ongoing).
- As a university, we press for affordable and accessible mobility.
- Universal design - increasing integral accessibility in existing and new buildings (ongoing).
- Adjusting signage to m/f/x toilets (new).





### OO3: Hasselt University will support students financially on the basis of their overall financial situation and support students in their search for a student job.

The Student Facilities office supports students with all practical matters relating to student life: housing, finances, student jobs, etc. It also provides support with social and administrative challenges.

#### Actions:

- Hasselt University provides financial contributions without income conditions to students for food, sports, medical and psychosocial services, transport and culture (ongoing).
- Food: Food is offered in the restaurant in two price categories: non-subsidised and subsidised. Students and staff who pay electronically with PingPing (student and staff card) receive a discount when purchasing a subsidised item.
- Transport: In the context of sustainable mobility, contributions are offered to all students without differentiation, such as a campus pass for the bus, taxi shuttle between station and room at the weekend, bicycle rental and maintenance
- and contribution to taxi charge between the airport and student accommodation for international students.
- Student activities: Cultural activities and initiatives of student groups and recognised student associations on and around the campus are financially supported, and individual students receive a 50% discount off the normal entrance fee for cultural centres in Flanders, the Muziekodroom, purchase of a Museum Pass, the Nieuwstedelijk (Hasselt) and Cinema Zed.
- Sports: a cooperation agreement between all higher education institutions and the sports facilities in the region, 'Studentensport Limburg' allows every student to buy a sports card via 'Sportapp' and register for a wide range of sports options for free or at a low price.
- Medical and psychosocial services: all preventive checkups and vaccinations in the context of internships are free of charge for the student. All students are covered by a physical accident policy. Student psychologists are employed whom students can see individually or in group sessions, without any waiting time and free of charge. If the student psychologist, taking into account the issue in question and in consultation with the student, refers the student for external second-line psychotherapeutic counselling, a financial contribution may be made for this.
- There is an adaptable social policy, operated within a safe and accessible service that provides help relating to student finance (advances, loans, contributions, emergency fund, free loan of a laptop, emergency room, etc.). The allocation of a contribution towards study costs is determined on the basis of the student's overall and individual financial situation.
- When implementing agreements with partner countries, there is clear communication about the cost of working and living in Belgium.
- Supporting international student workers in their search for a student job (internal) (ongoing). Using the 'Jobteaser' platform, students can find internal and external student jobs. They can also find information about applying for a job, writing a CV, job events at home and abroad, the collaboration with Randstad Young Talents to improve knowledge of and outflow to the job market.



## OO4: Hasselt University will promote the well-being of all its students

Hasselt University is inclusively committed to having a healthy student population, paying attention to nutrition, sports and mental well-being.

### Actions:

- In catering, emphasis must be placed on providing an open, affordable, healthy range where everyone can find what they want, with attention given to specific target groups. In other words, a continuously varied and balanced offer in the student restaurant (taking account of different diets) (new).
- An inclusive sports policy in which specific target groups are not overlooked. We want to appeal not only to students who already participate in sport (including at a high level), but also to students who need extra support, for example students who take little or no exercise.
- The student psychologists provide support in the event of personal or relational problems (ongoing).
- The transgressive behaviour contact point will be further expanded and efforts will be made to prevent unacceptable behaviour (ongoing).
  - More information: Transgressive behaviour can occur anywhere, including at Hasselt University. Behaviour is transgressive if someone's personal boundary is crossed. Students or staff members who experience transgressive behaviour or who have a question on this subject can contact the transgressive behaviour contact point. A report can be about transgressive behaviour on the part of a student, a member of staff or a visitor to the campus. Reports may concern, among other things, intimidation, violation of personal integrity, verbal and/or physical aggression, discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment. Students and staff members can send an email or message to [meldpunt@uhasselt.be](mailto:meldpunt@uhasselt.be). A confidant will then get in contact.
- The quiet room for prayer or meditation is being given a new look and each campus will have its own room (ongoing).
- A low-stimulation space will be created and evaluated by the users (students with ASD) (new).

## Data analysis

After giving a little background information about the concepts and the choices made, we look successively at (1) the basis, namely the gender ratio in the student population (note: the analysis of student ethnicity can be consulted internally), (2) the staff data by gender and nationality and (3) equal representation and inclusive decision-making.

### Important clarification regarding these data

- These available data are limited to nationality, gender (m/f), and age. This is because these are the only background characteristics that are recorded.
  - Ethno-cultural diversity and inclusion: With regard to the student population, use is made of voluntary self-declaration at the time of enrolment on the basis of the clearly defined indicators determined within VLIR and VLHORA. These data are not yet available for staff.
  - Gender: monitoring is limited to the gender of a person as recorded in the national register and the personnel dossier. This is obviously not a reflection of the gender diversity in our society.
- Obtaining additional data is therefore included as an action in SO3.

## Gender ratio within student population

Below we discuss the gender ratio in our student population. To this end, we look at the incoming first-time students and identify the data since academic year 2015-16. In addition to the intake, we also look at a number of progression indicators as a function of gender. As well as changes at institutional level, we also present changes at programme level.

### Intake

Figure 1 shows the relative number of male and female unique UH/tUL first-time students since 2015-16. At institutional level, there is a balanced gender distribution in terms of incoming first-time students. Moreover, in the last seven academic years there have been no major shifts in the relative proportion of the sexes.



Figure 2 shows the proportion of male first-time students per Bachelor's programme since 2015-16. The upper and lower limits (2/3 and 1/3 respectively) between which we describe the gender distribution as balanced are also shown in the graph (red). Per academic year, the graph also shows how many Bachelor's programmes have an unbalanced intake in terms of gender.

The IIW, INF and FYS programmes consistently have an unbalanced intake (more than 2/3 male FTS). The IARCH and BM programmes, on the other hand, have more than 2/3 female first-time students. The number of Bachelor's programmes with an unbalanced intake has remained stable over the past seven academic years.

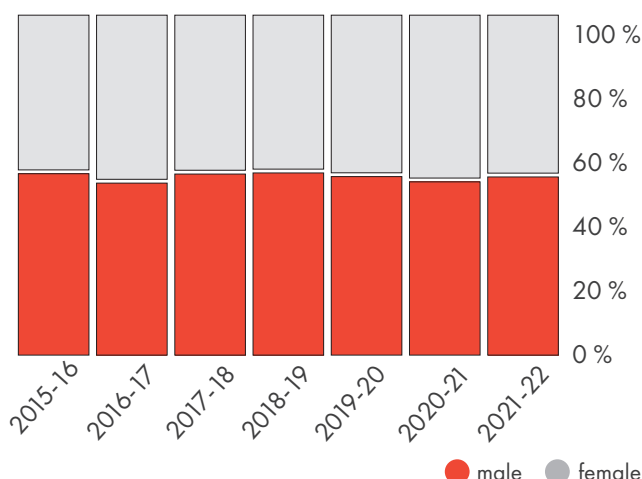
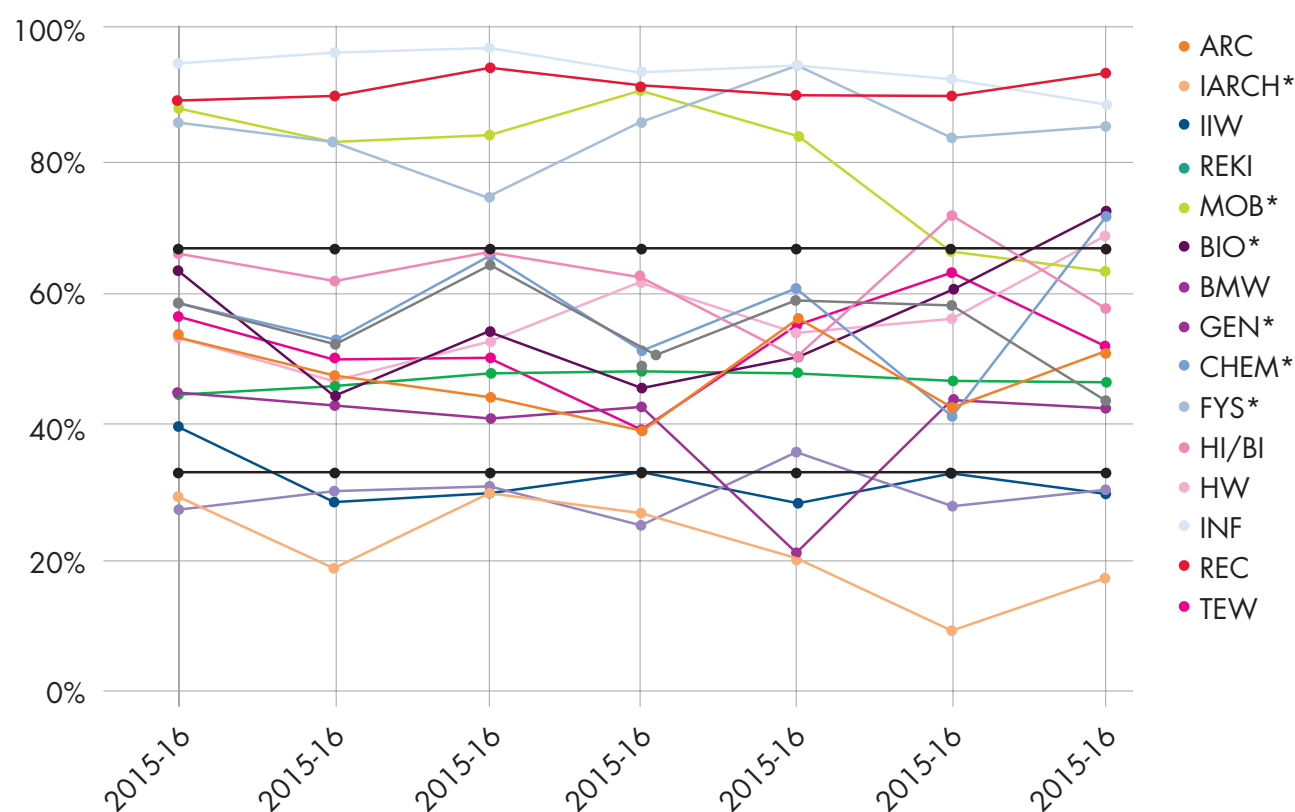


Figure 1: Relative number of male and female unique incoming (active and deregistered) first-time students, UH/tUL, 2015-16 to 2021-22



# programmes outside limits (out of 16:	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
	6	7	7	6	7	6	8

Figure 2: Percentage of male incoming first-time students per programme (active and deregistered), 2015-16 to 2021-22, and number of Bachelor's programmes per academic year with an unbalanced gender composition (outside the limits of 1/3 and 2/3 respectively)

\* = programmes with less than 60 FTS per year (caution required with regard to %)

Figure 3 shows the relative number of male and female first-time students per programme for all cohorts from 2015-16 to 2021-22. Seven of the 16 Bachelor's programmes have an unbalanced intake (3 Bachelor's programmes have more women and 4 have more men).

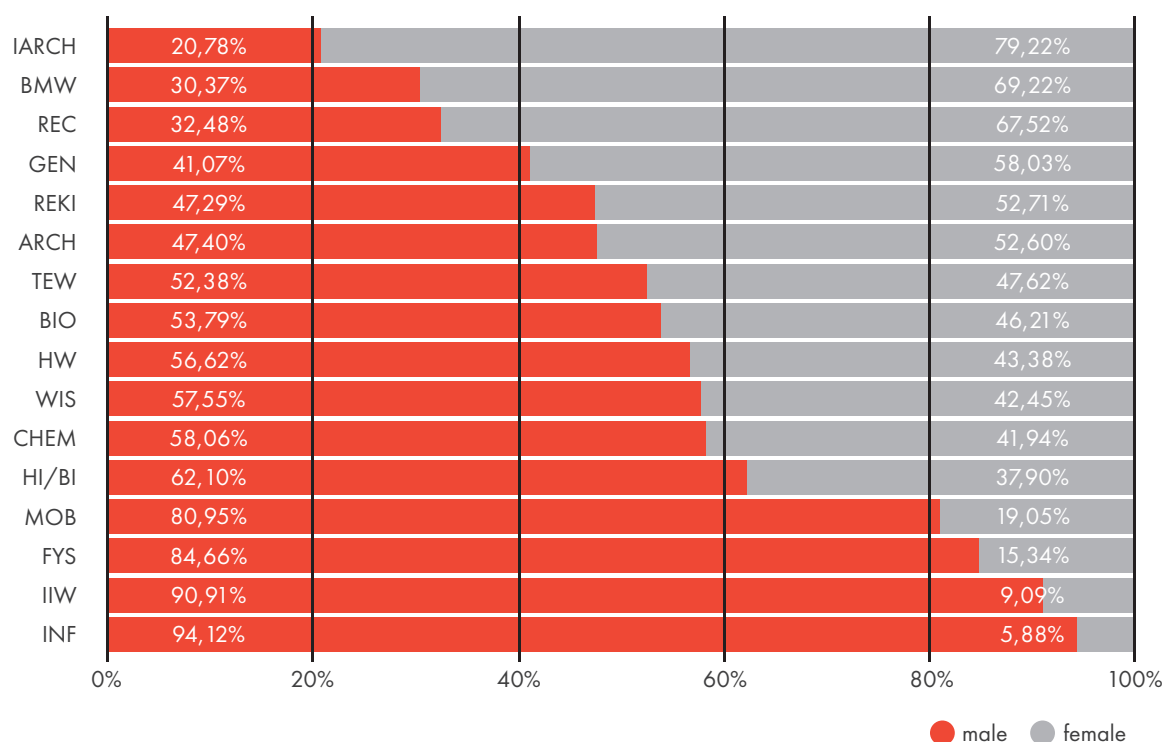


Figure 3: Percentage of first-time students of each gender per programme (active and deregistered) in cohorts from 2015-16 to 2021-22 combined

### Progression

Figure 4 shows that overall, a higher percentage of male than female first-time students (FTS) deregisters (at institutional level). This situation was only reversed in the academic year 2016-17, when a higher percentage of female FTS deregistered. On average, the dropout rate at institutional level is 12% for men and 10% for women.

Figure 5 shows the percentage of male versus female first-time students who deregistered for each Bachelor's programme, for the cohorts from 2015-16 to 2020-21 combined. The percentages for Bachelor's programmes marked with an asterisk (\*) should be treated with caution as the total number of women (and men) is less than 60.

The number of Bachelor's programmes with a higher dropout rate for men is the same as that of Bachelor's programmes with a higher dropout rate for women.

Disregarding the Bachelor's programmes with an asterisk, the difference is greatest for IARCH (higher dropout rate for men), BIO (higher dropout rate for women) and TEW (higher dropout rate for men).





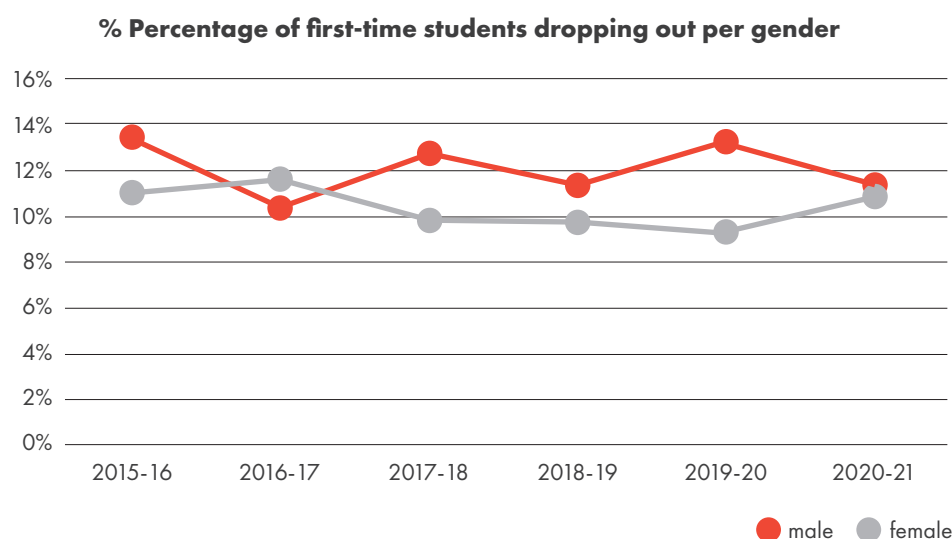


Figure 4: Percentage of first-time students dropping out (institutional level) per gender since 2015-16

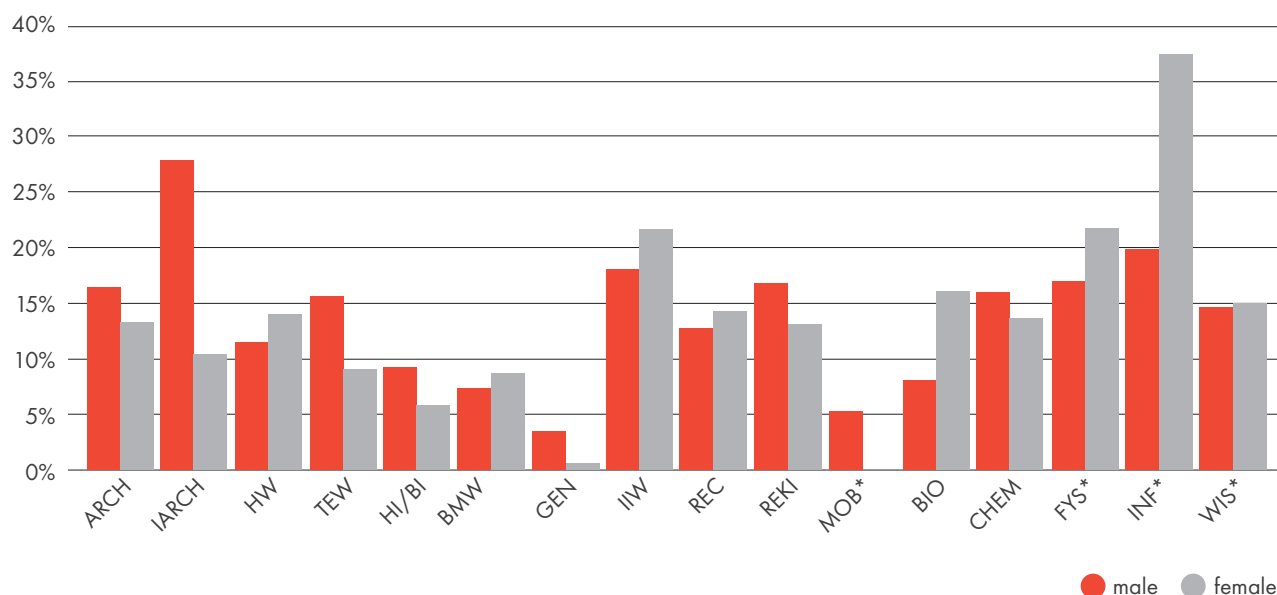


Figure 5: Percentage of first-time students dropping out per gender per Bachelor's programme (cohorts from 2015-16 to 2020-21 combined)

\* = percentage based on <60 female (Mob, FYS, INF, WIS) or male (WIS) FTS

Figure 6 shows that the average success rate<sup>21</sup> of female first-time students (FTS) is 8% higher than that of male FTS. The difference is greatest in the coronavirus academic year 2020-21.

Figure 7 shows the success rate (SR) of male versus female first-time students per Bachelor's programme, for the cohorts from 2015-16 to 2020-21 combined. Note that in all Bachelor's programmes except for physics, women's success rate is higher than men's. It should be pointed out that in physics the SR has been calculated for a total of only 18 active female FTS, so caution is advised with regard to conclusions. The difference between women's and men's SR is greatest in REKI, TEW and HW.

<sup>21</sup> The percentage of credits a student gains in 1 academic year, which gives an idea of students' study efficiency.

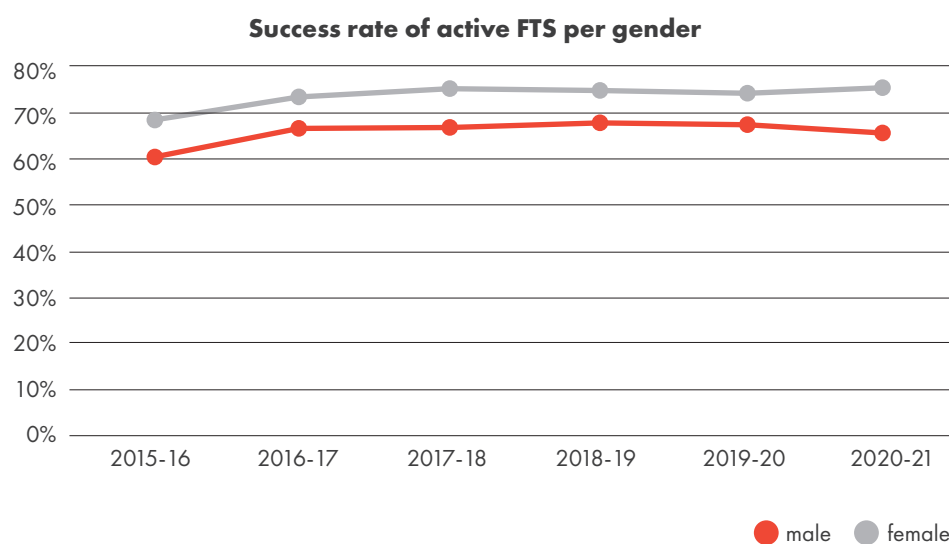


Figure 6: Success rate of male versus female active FTS since 2015-16

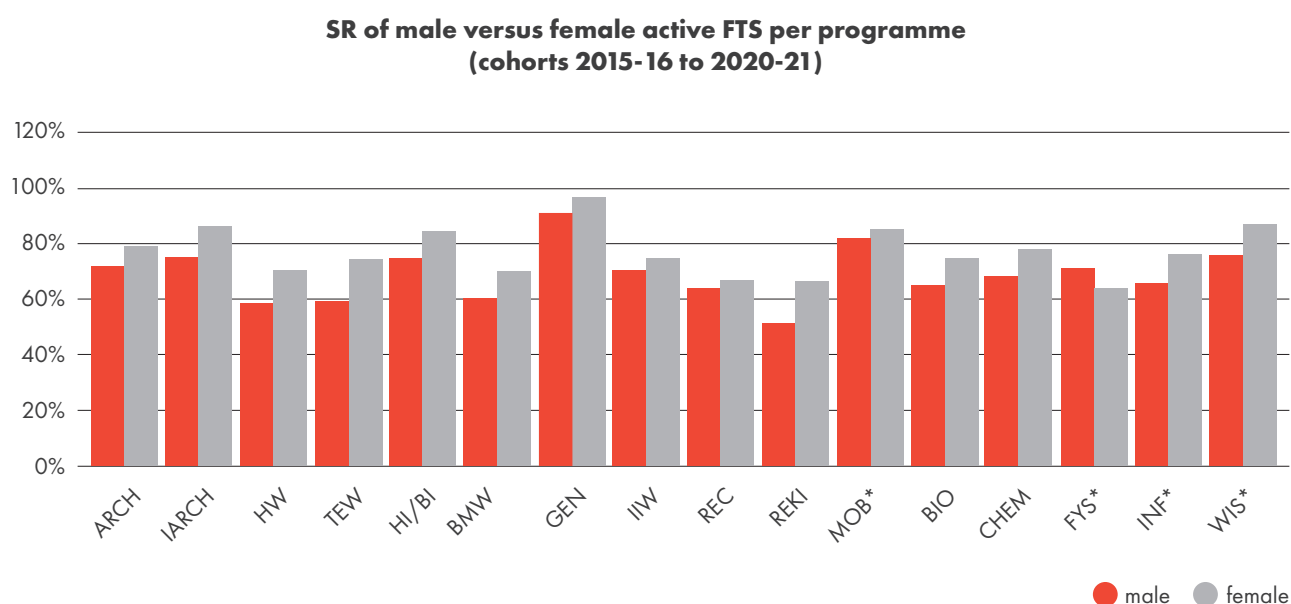


Figure 7: Success rate of male versus female active FTS per Bachelor's programme (cohorts 2015-16 to 2020-21 combined)

\* = SR based on <20 female FTS

Figure 8 shows that the rate of successful FTS is on average 11 percentage points higher for women than for men. Again, the difference is greatest in the coronavirus academic year 2020-21.

Figure 9 shows the percentage of successful FTS by gender for each Bachelor's programme, for the cohorts from 2015-16 to 2020-21 combined.

Note that in all Bachelor's programmes except for physics, the percentage of female FTS successfully completing the first Bachelor's year in the first academic year is higher than that of male FTS. It should be pointed out that in physics the percentage has been calculated for a total of only 18 female FTS, so caution is advised with regard to conclusions. Disregarding the Bachelor's programmes with an asterisk, the difference between women and men is greatest in HI/BI, TEW and REKI.



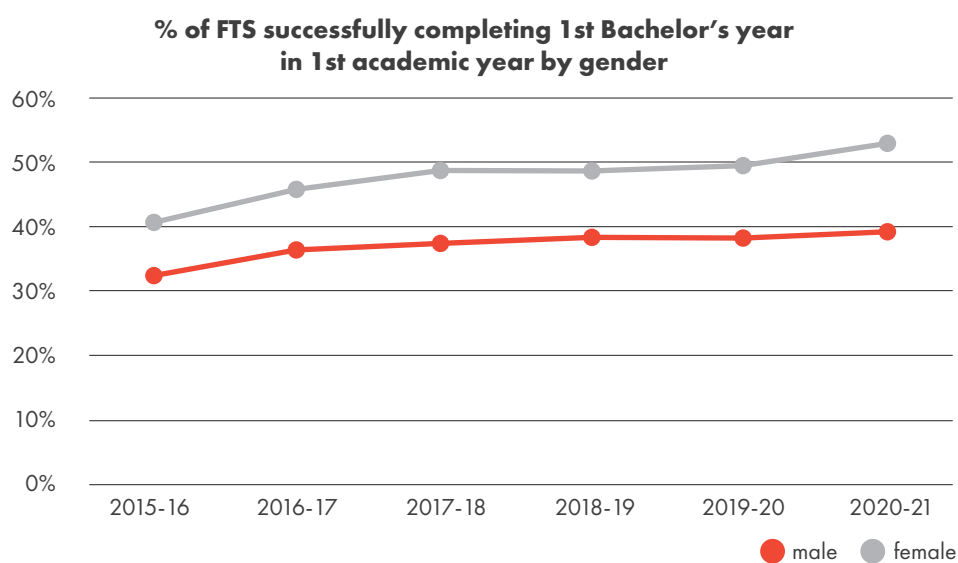


Figure 8: Successful FTS (i.e. percentage of active FTS successfully completing first Bachelor's year in first academic year) by gender since 2015-16

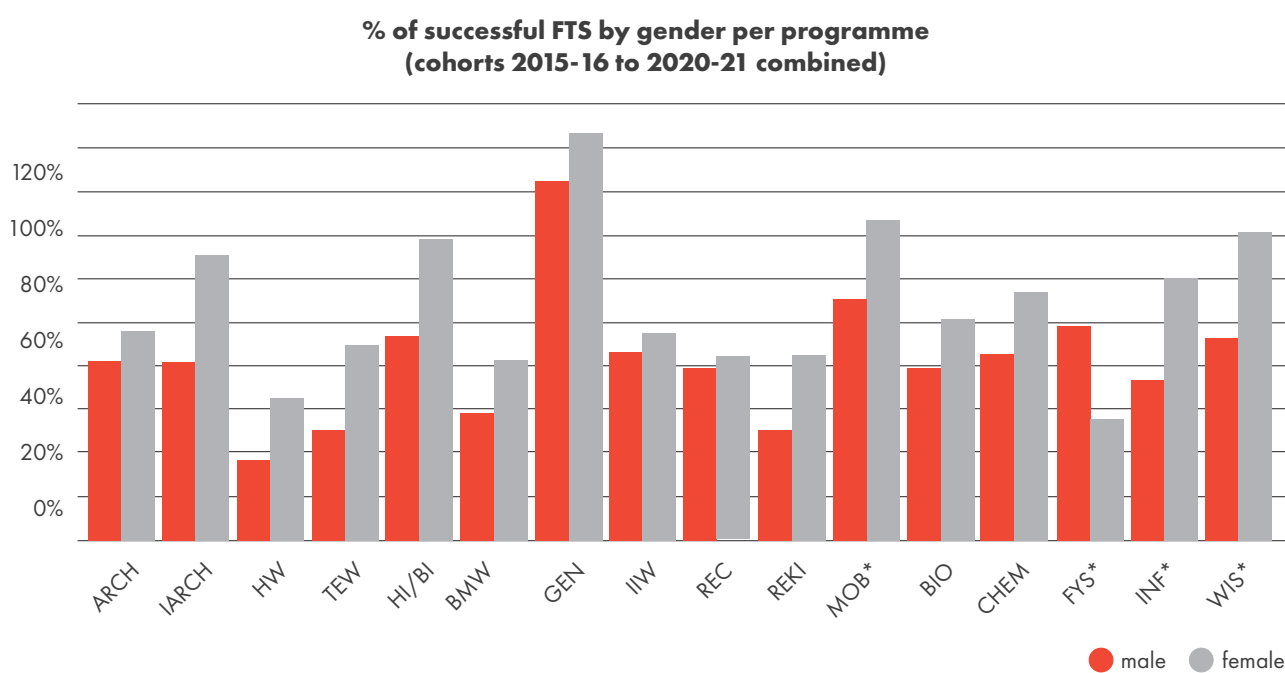


Figure 9: Successful FTS (i.e. percentage of active FTS successfully completing first Bachelor's year in first academic year) by gender per Bachelor's programme (cohorts 2015-16 to 2020-21 combined)  
 \* = percentage based on <60 female (Mob, FYS, INF, WIS) or male (IARCH, WIS) first-time students

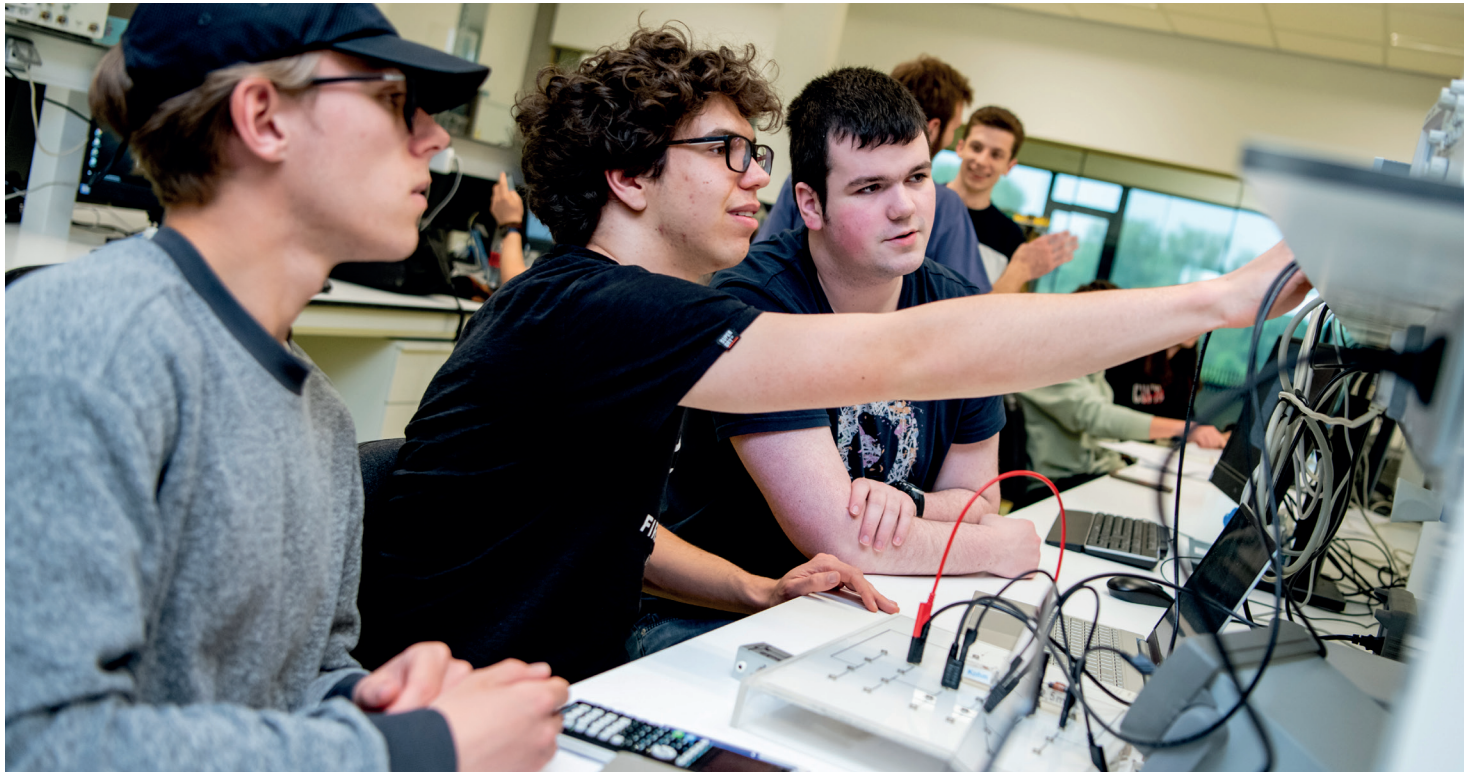


Figure 10 shows that the **percentage of FTS obtaining a Bachelor's degree within three years** is higher for women than for men (on average 11 percentage points higher).

Figure 11 shows the percentage of FTS obtaining a Bachelor's degree within three years (time to graduate (TTG) = three years) by gender for each Bachelor's programme, for the cohorts from 2015-16 to 2020-21 combined.

Note that in all Bachelor's programmes except for physics, computer science and IIW, the percentage of female FTS with a TTG of three years is higher than that of male FTS. It should be pointed out that in physics and computer science the percentage has been calculated for a total of fewer than 20 female FTS (14 and 5 respectively), so caution is advised with regard to these conclusions. Disregarding the Bachelor's programmes marked with an asterisk, the difference between women and men is greatest in TEW, REKI and HI/BI. In TEW and REKI the percentage for men is as low as half or less than half of the percentage for women.

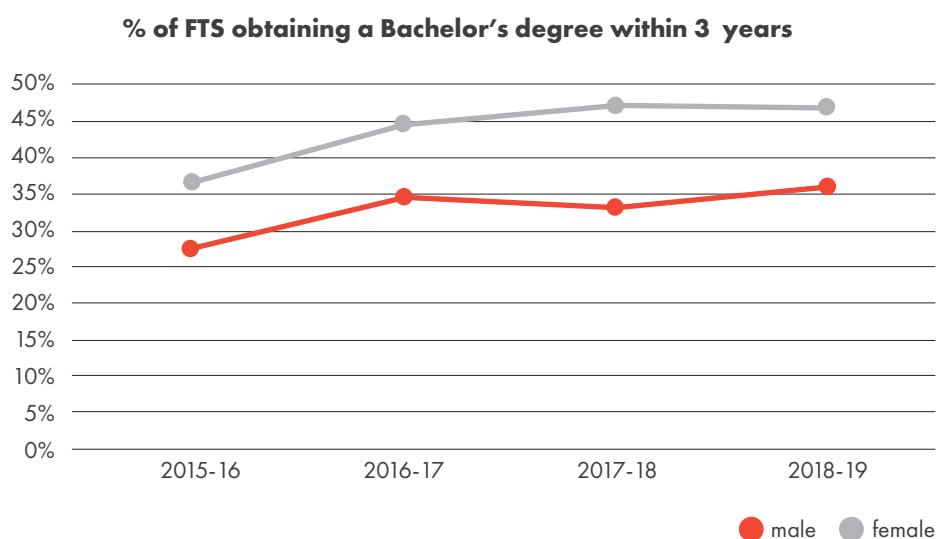


Figure 10: Percentage of FTS obtaining a Bachelor's degree within three years by gender since 2015-16



**% of FTS obtaining a Bachelor's degree within 3 years by programme**

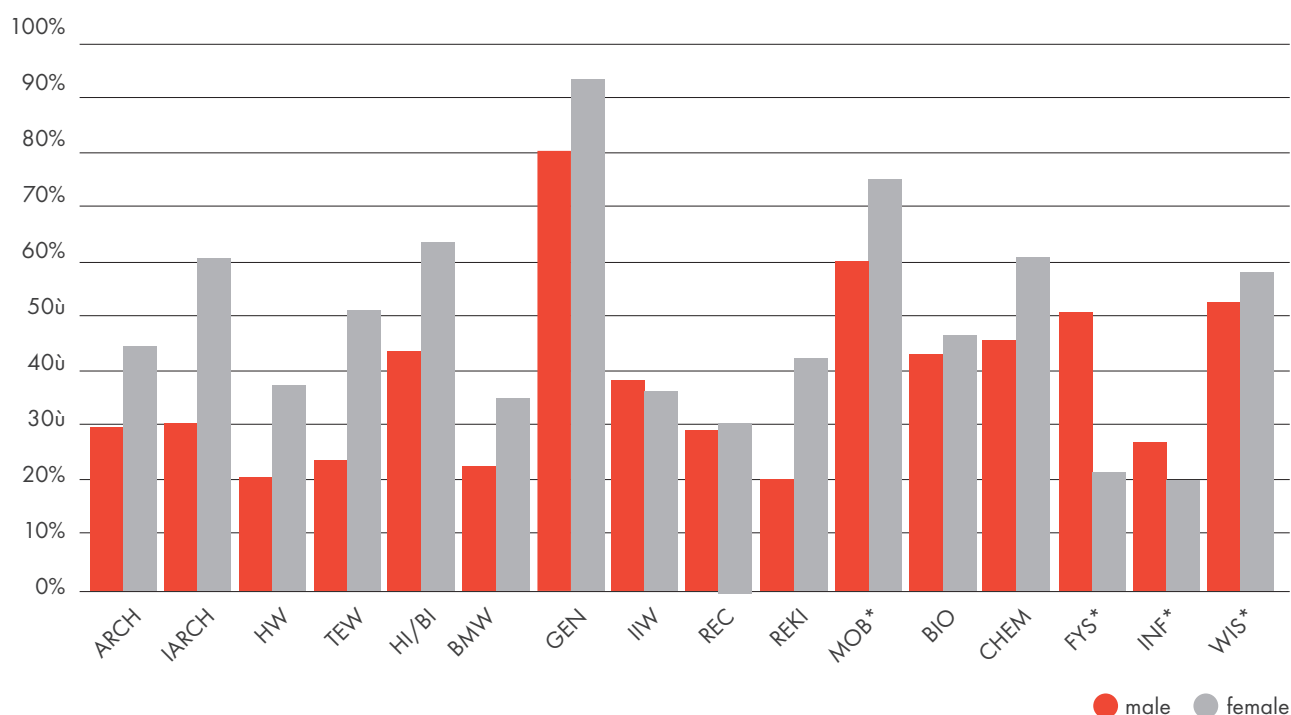


Figure 11: Percentage of FTS obtaining a Bachelor's degree within three years by gender for each Bachelor's programme (cohorts 2015-16 to 2020-21 combined)  
 \* = percentage based on <60 female (Mob, BIO, CHEM, FYS, INF, WIS) or male (IARCH, MOB, CHEM, WIS) first-time students

### Staff data by gender and nationality

A look at the composition of Hasselt University employees (academics and administrative/technical staff) shows that slightly more women than men were employed in 2021.<sup>22</sup>

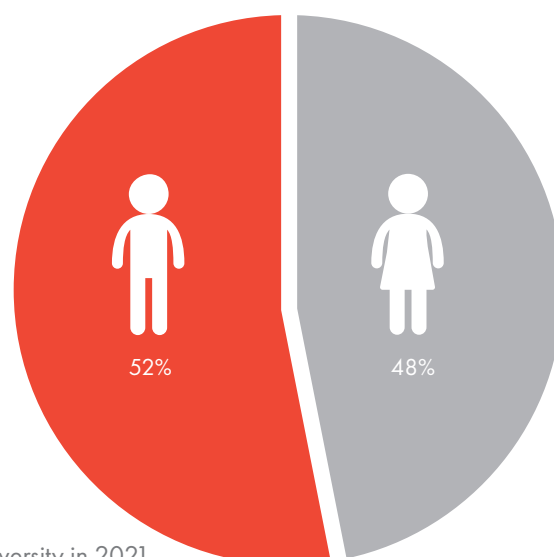


Diagram showing male/female staff ratio at Hasselt University in 2021

<sup>22</sup> As of 2022, Belgium does not recognise a third gender, as the legal framework for using a third gender is not in place. As a result, the Hasselt University administration is not yet able to implement this technically.

In 2021, 45% of Hasselt University academics were women. The figure below shows that there is a ‘leaky pipeline’ for academics (AAP) throughout their academic career<sup>23</sup>. Despite the increase in the number of women at master’s, PhD and postdoc level, the number of women decreases with each subsequent career step. While more than half of those at PhD and postdoc level were women in 2021, this falls to less than one in five of full professors.

In the period 2014-2021, the gap between male and female academics narrowed. A look back at 2014 shows that less than one in ten full professors was a woman at that time. In 2021, the figure was slightly less than one in five. But if we zoom in a little more closely on the male-to-female ratio among academics, we see persistent problems. This phenomenon of the ‘leaky pipeline’ is also found at the other Flemish and European universities and remains an important point for attention at Hasselt University. This is why Europe is using financial pressure to insist on measures in the gender equality plan.

The first table below shows the absolute number (number of people, not full-time equivalent) of men and women per academic title. In order to focus as closely as possible on academic progression and careers, this calculation does not take account of visiting professors, teaching staff, predoc assistants and permanent assistants.



Academic title and gender, absolute numbers, 2021

title	men	%	women	%	total
PhD	156	45,48	187	54,52	343
postdoc	74	49,01	77	50,99	151
lecturer	35	62,5	21	37,5	56
tenure track lecturer	23	60,53	15	39,47	38
associate professor	54	71,05	22	28,95	76
professor	26	70,27	11	29,73	37
full professor	43	81,13	10	18,87	53
	411	54,51	343	45,49	754

Table 1a): Academic title and gender, absolute numbers, 2021

● male ● female

Overall, the final percentage seems quite balanced: more than 54% men versus more than 45% women. However, if we remove the large number of PhDs from this table, the

balance becomes much more uneven, with 62% men versus 38% women.

<sup>23</sup> We have chosen to simplify the number of rungs on the academic ladder in this table for the sake of readability.



title	men	%	women	%	total
Previous without PhDs	255	62.04	156	37.96	411

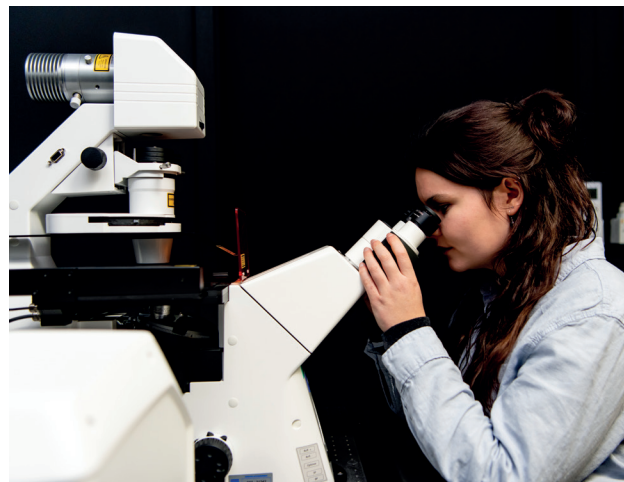
Table 1b): Table 1a) minus PhDs

● male ● female

The leaky pipeline is clearly apparent: while the ratios for postdocs are still almost equal, there is a systematic deterioration to problematic ratios of 70% and 80% men for the highest academic titles.

Since 2014, Hasselt University has had a gender action plan and concrete actions have been taken to plug these leaks in the pipeline. This gender action plan has been updated and integrated into the present inclusion plan. What are the results for the past period 2014 - 2021? Are any effects of the actions visible in the data?

In Table 2 we make a comparison between 2014 and 2021, by academic title and the percentage distribution of men and women (absolute numbers, not full-time equivalents).



**Academic title and gender, absolute numbers, 2014 and 2021 (in %)**

Title	% men	% women	vrouw	%
	2014	2021	2014	2021
PhD	50	45,48	50	54,52
postdoc	44,9	49,01	55,1	50,99
lecturer	80,85	62,5	19,15	37,5
tenure track lecturer	57,69	60,53	42,31	39,47
associate professor	72,22	71,05	27,78	28,95
professor	65,63	70,27	34,38	29,73
full professor	90,63	81,13	9,38	18,87

Table 2: Academic title and gender, % of absolute numbers

● male ● female

If we look at developments between 2014 and 2021 in percentage terms, the overall picture we get is not positive. At PhD level, the balance has tilted towards slightly more women than men in 2021. Among postdocs, there is a balanced ratio in 2021, with around the same percentage of men and women. This represents an increase in the percentage of men compared to 2014. At the level of lecturers, we can see the women catching up, moving from 19% to over 37%; however this is not yet a balanced distribution.

The percentage of female tenure track lecturers falls from 42% to 39%, which is not a positive development. Among professors, the percentage of women falls from 34% to under 30%. The ratio in the associate professor category remains more or less the same: just over 70% male to less than 30% female. As already stated, the percentage of women among full professors has doubled, so that they now represent almost 19%, less than one in five.

Below we show the changes between 2021, 2017 and 2014 by academic title and gender as a percentage of absolute numbers, with the lecturer and tenure track lecturer categories being combined. There is a systematic increase in the proportion of women among lecturers. In 2021 and 2017, there is a decreasing proportion of women among associate professors compared to 2014. In 2017, the proportion of women professors increases by almost 10% compared to 2014, but this trend does not continue. Compared to 2017, the percentage in 2021 decreases by almost 5 percentage points. Below the table, the data are presented in a line graph.

**Academic title and gender, absolute numbers, between 2014 and 2021 (in %)**

	M 2021	F 2021	M 2017	F 2017	M 2014	F 2014
PhD	45,48%	54,52%	50,00%	50,00%	51,55%	48,45%
Postdoc	49,01%	50,99%	44,90%	55,10%	49,09%	50,91%
Lecturer	61,70%	38,30%	72,60%	27,40%	75,00%	25,00%
Associate professor	71,05%	28,95%	72,22%	27,78%	66,67%	33,33%
Professor	70,27%	29,73%	65,63%	34,38%	75,00%	25,00%
Full Professor	81,13%	18,87%	90,63%	9,38%	91,43%	8,57%

Table 3: Academic title and gender, absolute numbers, 2021, 2017, 2014 (in %)

● male ● female





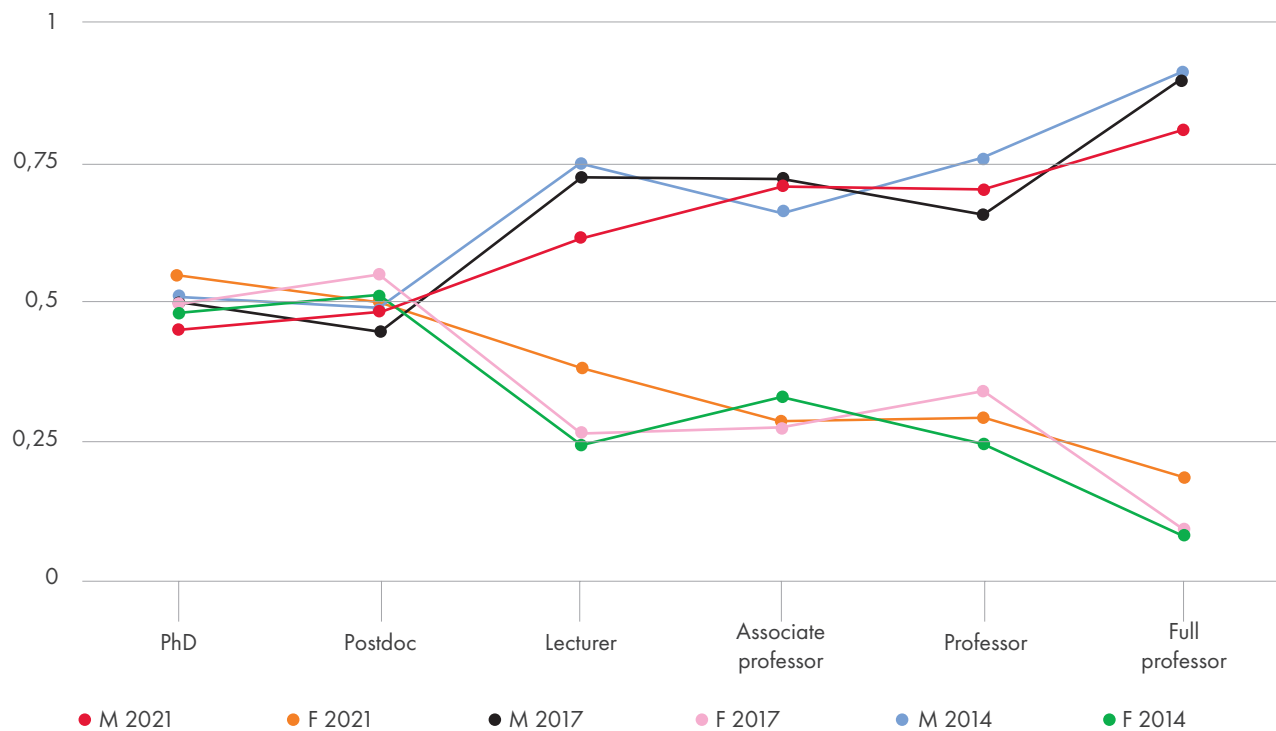


Figure based on data in table 3 Academic title and gender, absolute numbers, 2021, 2017, 2014 (in %)

Table 4 shows the differences between faculties. Since the numbers are too small, they are not shown here as percentages. The numbers at the schools (educational studies and mobility) are too small and are not included in the overview. The differences are closely related to the number of academics per faculty. The totals are shown in parentheses

for each faculty. This also shows which faculties carry most weight in the percentages presented above. It should be noted that this does not represent the complete picture of academic staff: among other categories, guest lecturers, non-statutory academic staff and voluntary research assistants are not included.

	Academic title and gender in absolute number by faculty, 2021													
	ArcK (37)		BEW (61)		GLW (88)		IIW (20)		REC (21)		RWS (38)		WET (121)	
	M	V	M	V	M	V	M	V	M	V	M	V	M	V
postdoc	4	7	7	12	4	18	6	0	4	1	7	12	35	17
lecturer	5	2	6	2	16	11	0	0	3	0	0	0	5	6
TT lecturer	2	2	7	4	3	2	1	0	3	0	5	6	4	0
associate professor	9	3	5	4	18	3	5	3	3	4	2	1	10	3
professor	2	1	3	4	6	0	4	0	1	1	2	1	8	3
full professor	0	0	5	2	5	2	0	1	1	0	2	0	25	5
total	22	15	33	28	52	36	16	4	15	6	18	20	87	34
%	59%	41%	54%	46%	59%	41%	80%	20%	71%	29%	47%	53%	72%	28%

Table 4: Academic title and gender in absolute number by faculty, 2021

Year	Independent academic staff members invited to submit a promotion application		Independent academic staff members with submitted application		Submitted/invited ratio	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
2022	37	20	14	11	38%	55%
2021	38	19	19	6	50%	32%
2020	49	21	21	8	43%	38%
2019	39	19	11	7	28%	37%
2018	34	9	16	6	47%	67%
2017	41	22	22	10	54%	45%

Table 5: Gender and promotion application invited/submitted ratio

Table 5 above shows that the gender difference does not particularly lie in the submitted/invited ratio or in a lack of willingness to submit an application, but that there is a gender gap in the number of M/W who are invited to submit, with women across all years clearly under-represented.

#### Is gender a factor in the speed with which promotion is achieved?

Table 6 below is based on data from all academics concerning promotion from associate professor to professor since 1997. This gives the overall picture across a number of years rather than the trend from year to year. The data in Table 2 show that there is a persistent gender gap between associate professor and professor. The difference in promotion time is a factor that needs further investigation.

Promotion from associate professor to professor		
M/F	Average time (years)	Median time (years)
m	3.85	3
f	4.75	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.11</b>	<b>3</b>

Table 6: Promotion from associate professor to professor 1997-2021

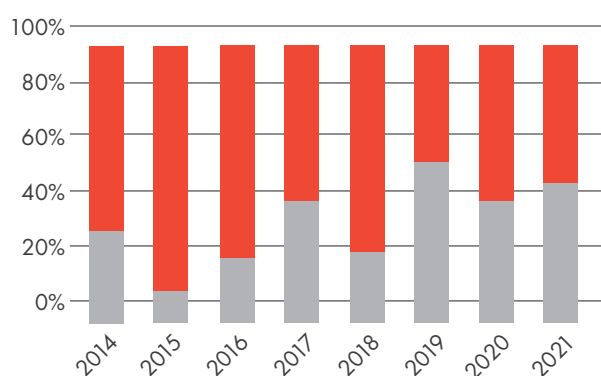
New independent academic staff recruitments by year and gender		
2014	66,67%	33,33%
2015	88,24%	11,76%
2016	77,27%	22,73%
2017	55,56%	44,44%
2018	75,00%	25,00%
2019	41,67%	58,33%
2020	55,56%	44,44%
2021	50,00%	50,00%

● male ● female

Table 7: New independent academic staff recruitments by year and gender in %

#### Newly appointed independent academic staff

The growth in the proportion of women at lecturer level is confirmed in the proportion of newly appointed independent academic staff. Positive growth towards equal distribution is visible here. Comparison with previous tables is not straightforward because the new appointments also include guest lecturers and others.



### Gender among administrative and technical staff

In 2021, the administrative/technical staff are very largely female. More than seven out of ten staff members are women. This varies greatly by class. If the link is used to look at the classes, it will be seen that most positions are in classes 4 (46 positions) and 5 (57 positions). Class 1 contains two positions and class 10 contains one position. Several people can be appointed for each position, but this is mainly in classes 4 and 5, the two classes that contain most employees in numerical terms.

Graphic representation of Table 7

● male ● female

Administrative and technical staff by gender and class, absolute numbers, 2021, 2017, 2014 (in %)						
	M 2021	F 2021	M 2017	F 2017	M 2014	F 2014
Class 10	70,00%	30,00%	60,00%	40,00%	50,00%	50,00%
Class 9	35,71%	64,29%	25,00%	75,00%	62,50%	37,50%
Class 8	14,13%	85,87%	20,69%	79,31%	30,23%	69,77%
Class 7	28,26%	71,74%	37,04%	62,96%	37,50%	62,50%
Class 6	54,55%	45,45%	47,37%	52,63%	44,44%	55,56%
Class 5	22,41%	77,59%	18,92%	81,08%	24,00%	76,00%
Class 4	30,77%	69,23%	45,45%	54,55%	60,00%	40,00%
Class 3	41,67%	58,33%	36,36%	63,64%	0,00%	100,00%
Class 2	50,00%	50,00%	42,86%	57,14%	50,00%	50,00%
Class 1	50,00%	50,00%	0,00%	100,00%	0,00%	100,00%

Table 8: Administrative and technical staff by class and gender, absolute numbers, 2021, 2017, 2014 (in %)



The diagram below shows the predominance of women in classes 4 and 5, with a second peak in percentage terms in class 8. Class 8 mainly consists of administrative worker positions. This vertical segregation is reversed in class 10, the position of maintenance worker. Both at the beginning (1, 2, 3) and at the end of the classification (9, 10) the number of actual employees is small. Class 6 also only represents a small number of employees.

**Percentage of men and women, administrative and technical staff**



## Nationality of employees

Unlike the situation with students, we have a limited amount of background information on staff. In addition to gender, title and age, we have nationality information. In the table, EU1= Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom. Non-EU1= all other non-Belgian nationalities.

The number of academics at Hasselt University more than doubled over the period 2014-2021. Looking at the nationality of the academics, growth can be noticed in the group of academics from the non-EU1 countries. This percentage increased from almost 8% in 2014 to 18.5% in 2021. The proportion originating from EU1 countries grew from 4% to 7%.

The administrative and technical staff are mainly of Belgian nationality. The numbers are too small to convert to percentages.

Nationality per year of academic staff, % of absolute numbers			
	BEL	EU1	Non-EU1
2014	88.02%	4.19%	7.78%
2015	84.60%	5.48%	9.92%
2016	83.37%	5.39%	11.24%
2017	80.28%	6.44%	13.28%
2018	79.57%	7.28%	13.14%
2019	77.48%	7.35%	15.18%
2020	76.40%	7.30%	16.29%
2021	74.40%	7.03%	18.57%

Table 9: Nationality per year of academic staff, % of absolute numbers

Nationality per year of administrative and technical staff, absolute numbers				
	BEL	EU1	Non-EU1	Total
2014	294	2	2	298
2015	296	3	2	301
2016	308	4	2	314
2017	329	4	2	335
2018	350	5	2	357
2019	387	5	3	395
2020	429	6	3	438
2021	436	7	3	446

Table 10: Nationality per year of administrative and technical staff, absolute numbers



## Equal representation and inclusive decision-making

Research has shown that equal representation in administrative bodies leads to more effective and better-supported decision-making, but also that the visibility of role models from under-represented groups has a positive effect on the motivation, perceived opportunities and efficacy of others from those under-represented groups..<sup>24</sup>

### Senior policy positions

The position of rector has not yet been filled by a woman. Among the vice rectors, the male/female representation does reflect society as a whole. Among the deans, the percentage of women fluctuated around 30% in the period 2015-2020 and dropped to 14% in 2021.

In 2021, the positions of academic and general administrator were filled by a woman and a man respectively.



### Boards and administrative bodies

Hasselt University fully supports the principle of gender balance. The Decree of 13 July 2012 imposed an obligation on Hasselt University to have equal representation of the two genders on the Board of Governors and on the other administrative bodies, advisory boards and selection committees. No more than two-thirds of the members of these bodies may be persons of the same gender. Efforts to achieve gender balance in leadership and decision-making are in progress. Despite these measures, women are still under-represented in academic and administrative leadership and decision-making. In some cases, difficulties are encountered if the composition of the faculties, their respective faculty board and the bodies functioning under them (capacity group boards, examination boards, education management teams, advisory committees for appointments) is adjusted to comply with the imposed gender norm. These entities are composed on the basis of the qualification, scientific expertise and/or teaching duties of the academics involved. In certain scientific disciplines, men are over-represented, or there are hardly any women at all. Hasselt University remains committed to achieving this gender balance.

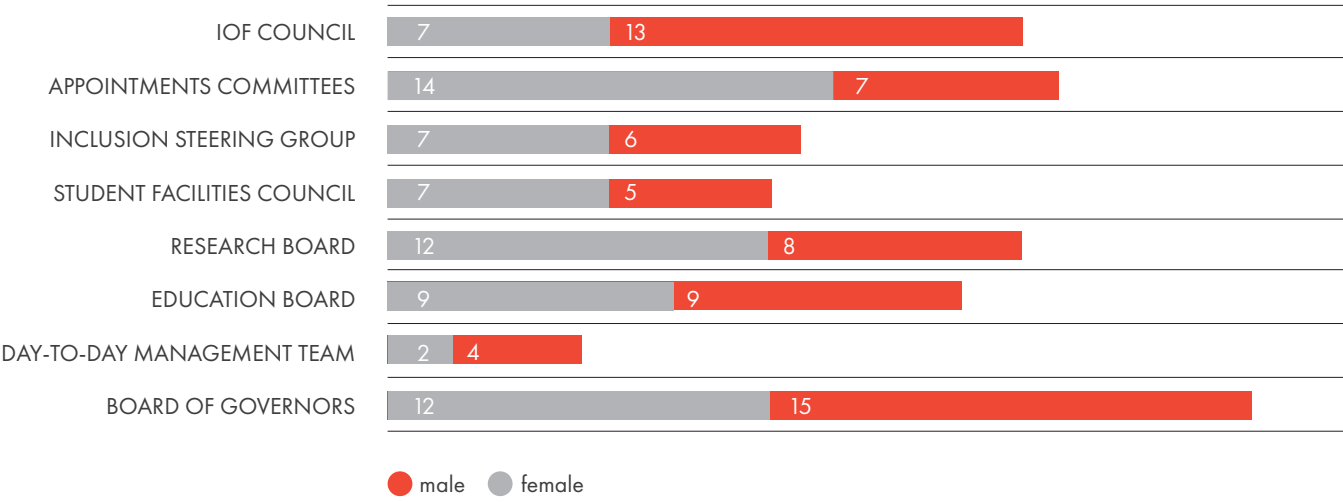
The data below show that women are well represented on most boards in Hasselt University and constitute at least 1/3 of the members. In many boards and committees, the percentage of women is close to 50%.

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<sup>24</sup> VLIR-JA Charter: gender in academia.



### NUMBER OF MEN AND WOMEN ON BOARDS AND ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES AT HASSELT UNIVERSITY IN 2022





# APPENDIX 1:

## The functioning of cross-cutting policy themes

Working strategically by means of cross-cutting policy themes within the institution is something new which therefore requires both a harmonised approach and coordinated monitoring. The steering groups have the confidence of the Day-to-Day Management Team to work on the basis on their expertise and the specific nature of the theme. In this context, it is important for the steering groups to submit their policy

proposals to the Day-to-Day Management Team and the Board of Deans for approval. This allows the policymakers to monitor the coherence of their strategy on the basis of the civic framework. The steering groups report periodically on progress.

### Phas

### Description

#### Plan 1

The Day-to-Day Management Team formulates the cross-cutting policy themes and delegates the design and management of the cross-cutting policy to a steering group. A steering group is assembled on the basis of expertise, from different disciplines and perspectives and with a mix of representation of administrative and technical staff and academic staff. The chair of the steering group is an academic. A staff member, usually from the Rectorate, acts as a liaison officer, seeing to the translation of the cross-cutting theme to the domains and ensuring interaction with and between the domains.

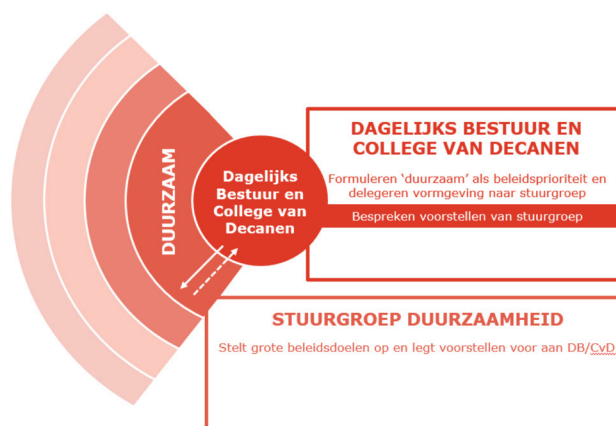
Role of the steering group, as approved by the Board of Deans on 11.02.2022:

- formulating strategic (and operational) policy for the cross-cutting policy theme;
- submitting its policy to the Day-to-Day Management Team / Board of Deans for approval;
- aligning with domain/management for operational translation and reality check;
- monitoring the coherence of the cross-cutting policy theme (goal – action – budget);
- tracking progress;
- reporting on operations to the Day-to-Day Management Team / Board of Deans;
- safeguarding operational performance by transferring responsibility to offices/ services.

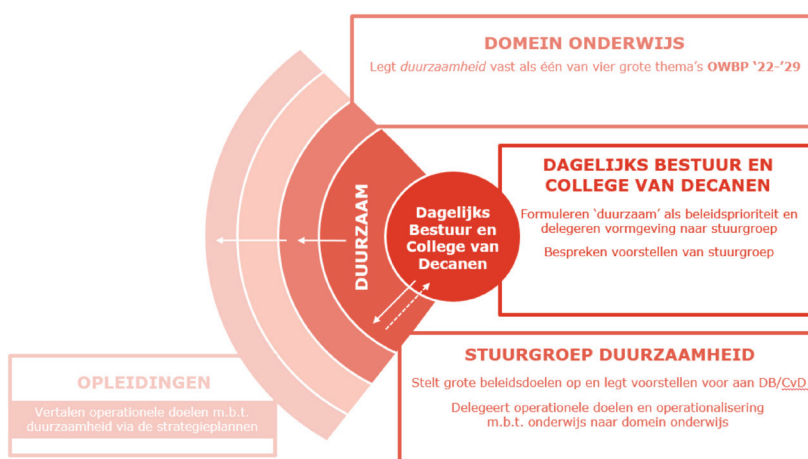
**Example:**  
the theme 'sustainable',  
translated to the education domain



- Plan 2** The steering group develops a strategy for the cross-cutting theme based on a vision. This strategy is aligned with the academic and management domains. This reality check is important in order to ensure feasibility. The steering group then submits its strategy to the Day-to-Day Management Team and the Board of Deans.

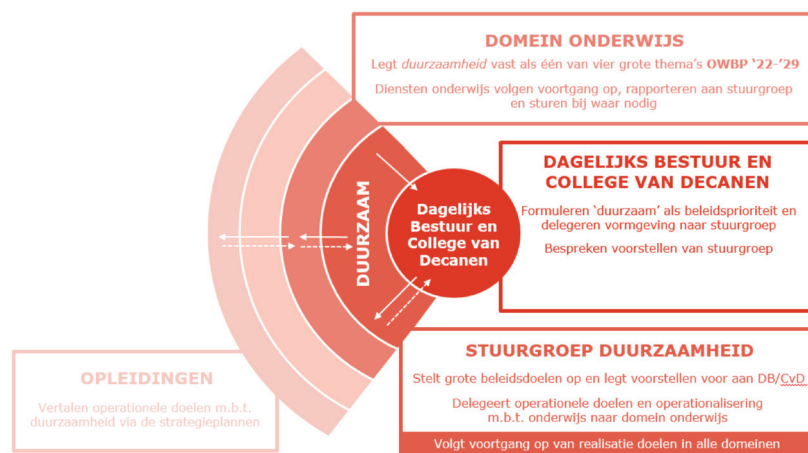


- Do 3** After approval, the steering group operationalises the strategy by formulating its own operational goals or by delegating operationalisation to the academic and management domains. The academic and management domains operationalise the strategic goals of the cross-cutting policy themes in their own policy or in their functioning. The steering group monitors the coherence and implementation of the cross-cutting policy theme according to goal, action and budget.



- Do 4** Programme teams translate the operational goals with regard to the cross-cutting theme into the programme strategy plan whenever there is a new strategy plan or revision.

- Check 5** The academic and management domains monitor the progress made on the specific goals of the relevant cross-cutting theme and report on this at least once a year – to coincide with the annual reporting – to the steering group. The steering group coordinates the monitoring and subsequently reports at least annually (in May) to the Day-to-Day Management Team.



- Check 6** The Day-to-Day Management Team undertakes coordinated reporting on the progress of all cross-cutting policy themes at least annually (in June) to the Board of Deans.



## Act 7

Based on the monitoring and the feedback from the reporting, the steering group makes adjustments where necessary or delegates the adjustment to the academic and management domains.



Across the cross-cutting policy themes, the liaison officers coordinate at regular intervals (monthly), under the leadership of the general academic director, on the content and practical follow-up points. At least every six months, the academic leads share their practices with the rector and the general academic director. The liaison officers also participate in this consultation.



# BIJLAGE 2:

## List of terms/abbreviations and definitions

### Staff statuses

Administrative and technical staff	The staff members referred to in Article V.47 ff. of the Higher Education Codex, and the management supporting, administrative and technical staff who are not paid from the operational allowances
Independent academic staff	The staff members referred to in Articles V.3 and V.4 of the Higher Education Codex
AUHL	Limburg Association of University and University Colleges
	Consultative bodies
BC	Executive Council
CvA	Advisory Committee

### Hasselt University research institutes and centres

BIOMED	Biomedical Research Institute
CMK	Center for Environmental Sciences
IMO-IMOMEC	Institute for Materials Research
DSI	Data Science Institute
LCRC	Limburg Clinical Research Centre
EDM	Expertise Centre for Digital Media
IMOB	Transportation Research Institute

### Faculties and schools

Fac ARK	Faculty of Architecture and Art
Fac BEW	Faculty of Business Economics
Fac GLW	Faculty of Medicine and Life Sciences
Fac IIW	Faculty of Engineering Technology
Fac REC	Faculty of Law
Fac RWS	Faculty of Rehabilitation Sciences
Fac WET	Faculty of Sciences
ISES	Interfaculty School for Educational Studies
ISVM	Interfaculty School of Transportation Sciences

### Research funding

BOF	Special Research Fund
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CAD	Central Administrative Offices
RACA	Academic Management Rectorate
RALG	General Management Rectorate
OBKZ	Educational Policy and Quality Assurance
OCSZ	Education Coordination and Student Affairs
DOC	Research Coordination
DIOS	International Office
TTO	Tech Transfer Office
DCM	Communication and Marketing
FIN	Finance and Purchasing
P&O	Human Resources
FCT	Facility Management & IT
CID	Central Information Technology Service
ISA	Information Systems and Applications
MAT	Material Facilities
ABA	Association - Policy and Administration





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