

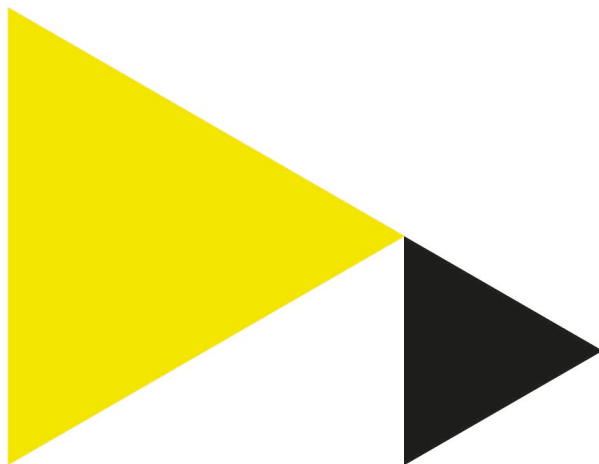
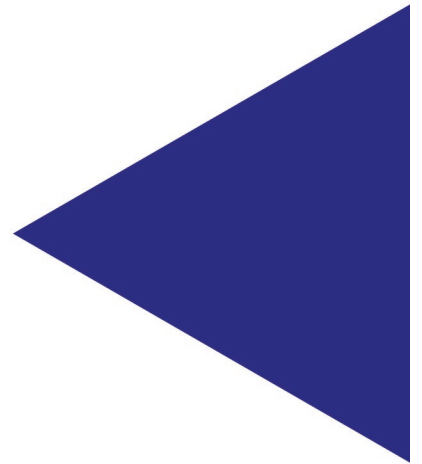
# Gender Equality Plan

Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences

HR Policy Office, Executive Staff Department

Date: 2 March 2022

1.0



# Gender Equality Plan

Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences

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# 1. Introduction

Diversity & inclusion are high on the agenda at Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (AUAS). They form one of the three central themes of the Strategic Plan (2021–2026): The AUAS in 3 dimensions: Sustainable, Inclusive and Digital. The Strategic Plan sets out five ambitions (SP, 2020):

1. *Sustainability, diversity & inclusion and digitalisation can be found everywhere*  
To us, it is only natural that we work and learn in an inclusive environment where our actions and choices are as sustainable as possible and digitally innovative. In doing so, we contribute to the quality of education and research and to significant social transformations.
2. *Increase our impact together with urban partners*  
As a knowledge institution, we integrate developments in urban society and the professional field into our education and applied research. Together with our partners, we create a substantial boost towards the future.
3. *Enable students to have more control of their own learning pathway*  
Students will have more control of their own leaning pathway, so that they can make their own choices with respect to content, time, form and place to suit their personal talents and ambitions.
4. *Students and staff continue to shape a rich and stimulating learning environment*  
In everything we do, we ask ourselves how it will contribute to student success and to a stimulating learning environment on location, digitally and in the city.
5. *Improve our own flexibility and resilience*  
We are a learning organisation where everyone contributes to the quality of education and research and to the professional field and society with a sense of ownership and professionalism.

As an organisation, AUAS wants to be a reflection of the student population and the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, in which differences are embraced and everyone's unique talents are put to good use and in which diversity and inclusion are seen as both an imperative and a sign of quality, as we continue to serve as a knowledge institution for Amsterdam and the surrounding area.

With 4,530 staff,<sup>1</sup> almost 50,000 students and more than 90 different nationalities, AUAS wants to be a place to learn, work and develop for all students, staff and stakeholders and is therefore committed to ensuring fair and equal opportunities for all, becoming a university of applied sciences that is free from discrimination and any other form of exclusion and being a university of applied sciences where everyone feels valued and at home.

Of the more than 4,530 staff at AUAS, no 2 are alike. Each staff member has entirely different qualities and talents from the next. They have different ambitions, characters, physical and mental qualities and limitations. Sex, gender, age, socioeconomic background, nationality,

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<sup>1</sup> As at 31 December 2021, including staff on a temporary contract from Jobservice. The number of Jobservice staff is 278.

worldview and religion are among the aspects that give colour to diversity. Diversity is the rule rather than the exception. We aim to be inclusive: all of us together make up AUAS. Everyone is equally important and has the same value, and all staff have the same rights and obligations.

Every talent counts. Together, staff and students, we form the AUAS community that serves all of us and to which we all contribute openly and constructively.

We want to continue to develop into a more inclusive organisation. Accordingly, we have asked ourselves how we can ensure that AUAS is a place where everyone feels at home, where everyone feels seen and valued and where all students and staff flourish professionally and personally with the right attention and supervision.

We are committed to the goals of the Diversity for Higher Professional Education Charter (2018), which was signed by the Association of Universities of Applied Sciences. In September 2020, to reinforce our commitments under the Charter, we signed the Amsterdam Agreement, along with eight other educational institutions. We are working with the other educational institutions to share our knowledge and experiences around diversity and inclusion. The five objectives set out in the Amsterdam Agreement (2020) will be achieved through collaboration within AUAS and by seeking connections with businesses and social organisations in and around the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area.

In the 'Being an Inclusive Employer' programme line (part of the Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) programme), we are developing our objectives for staff into a detailed action plan. This document will focus on gender equality and form an integral part of the D&I programme plan.

## 2. Purpose of this document

Gender equality is one of the pillars of AUAS' HR Diversity Policy, which aims to help AUAS develop into an inclusive organisation. The purpose of this Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is to provide insight into how AUAS' HR policy with regard to gender equality forms part of the wider HR programme.

The urgency to develop this GEP stems from the European Commission's decision to commit to promoting gender equality in research and innovation, as part of its gender equality strategy for the labour market. The EC believes that specific measures are needed to close the persistent gender gaps in the research sector. There are still many structural obstacles to gender equality in research and innovation. To support the promotion of gender equality, universities of applied sciences and research universities must now have a Gender Equality Plan in place to be eligible for research grants and scholarships, including from Horizon Europe, the European Union's major research programme.

AUAS endorses the need to establish active policies to promote gender equality in applied research and innovation, and to that end it has formulated this GEP.

## 3. From ambition to action

In the ambition to become an inclusive university of applied sciences, the Executive Board of Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences is applying the gender equality objectives of the

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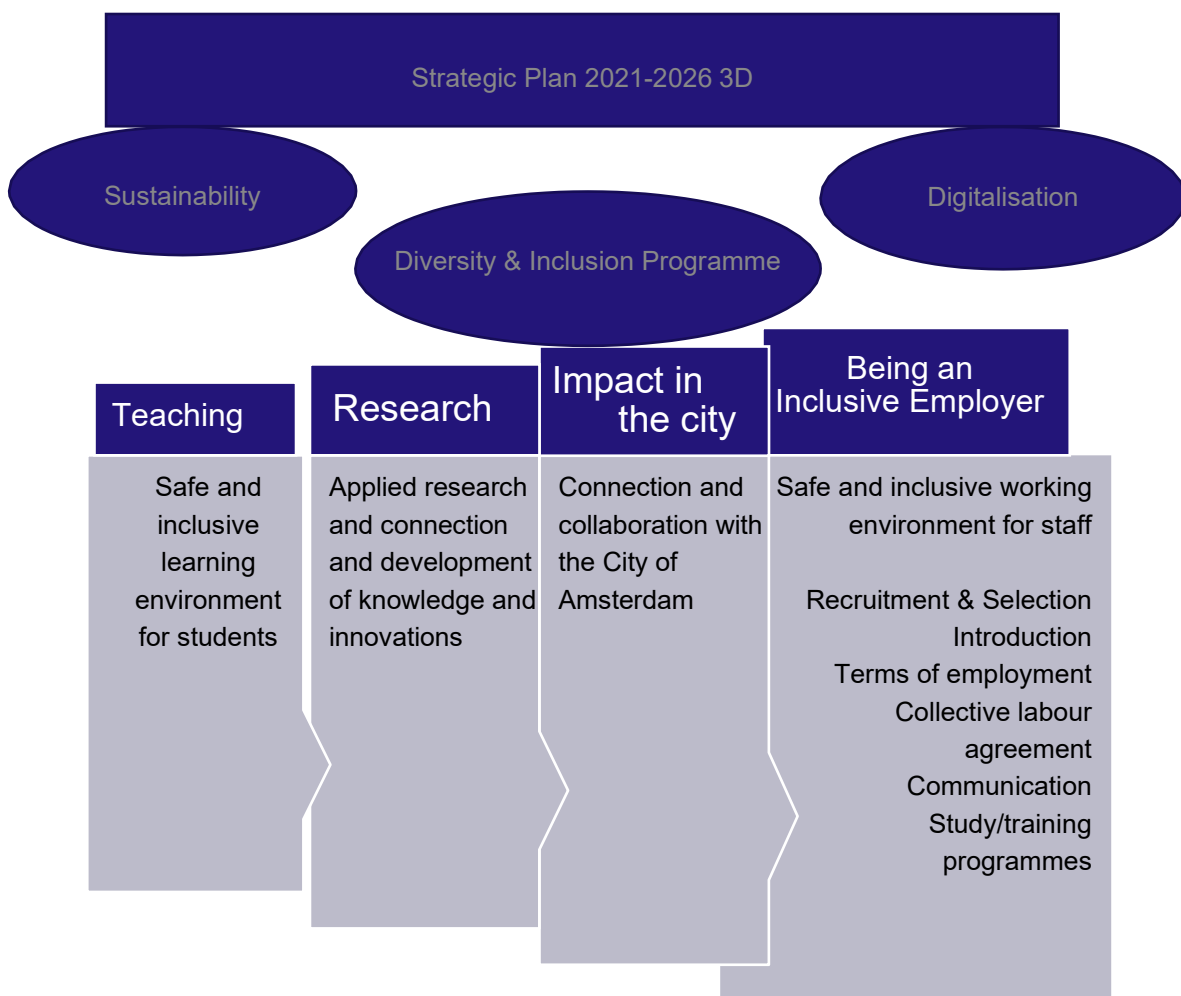
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European Union and the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals, 2020). The Executive Board sees the gender equality objectives as part of the goals for broader inclusiveness and diversity in the organisation and has therefore approached the HR policy and its facilitation in that manner. In turn, the HR D&I programme is part of the Diversity and Inclusion ambition in the Strategic Plan, for which a dean from the Central Executive Council is the portfolio holder. The next few sections will set out how the ambition has been translated into strategic objectives and what elements will be used to work towards gender equality among staff.

The D&I ambition in the Strategic Plan encompasses four lines:

- teaching;
- research;
- impact in the city;
- being an inclusive employer.



The 'Being an Inclusive Employer' programme line is assigned to the HR Department with a D&I Programme Manager as coordinator. A broad group of staff will be involved in this programme line.

In each faculty, diversity owners focus on promoting diversity and inclusion; gender equality forms part of these efforts. In addition, within the HR organisation, we have staff whose specific focus is promoting well-being and a vibrant, safe and healthy working environment, which also covers the theme of social safety (Safety and Security Vision and Governance, December 2020). Social Safety is embedded in the Safety and Security Vision.

Areas covered by this policy include strengthening the organisation and organisational culture of social safety, welfare and prevention; the handling of queries, complaints and incidents; monitoring (the Employee Monitor for job satisfaction and data analysis (including AUAS data)) and reporting; and the physical environment, including the availability of lactation rooms and gender-neutral toilets (at least one in every AUAS building).

## 4. Figures and monitoring

AUAS collects and monitors data about staff, with a gender breakdown, for reporting purposes. In the personnel management system, as well as M/F, it is possible to select 'other' for staff who do not identify with the gender categories of 'male' or 'female' (non-binary). This percentage is 0.07% out of a total staff population of 4,530.

AUAS is aiming for equal (50:50) gender representation in senior and middle management and research positions by 2025. In Section 7, we explain how we intend to achieve this goal.

In 2014, the proportion of women in the AUAS workforce was 56.6% (IR, 2018). This proportion was 57% in 2018 and 58% in 2021. The proportion of women in management positions has also increased in recent years (49.5% in 2014, 52.6% in 2018) to 57.5% (in 2021). The proportion of women in senior and other management positions (Step 14 and above on the salary scale) has also risen (from 36.3% in 2014, 37.1% in 2018), to 49.1% (in 2021). These data have been broken down by the various levels of management and by professorship. Women are under-represented in director positions and professorships. Attention is also required at the programme manager and senior lecturer-researcher level, where the proportion is under 50%.

Table 1. (Data as at 1 July 2021)

| <b>Management</b>   | <b>Percentage of women</b> |
|---|----------------------------|
| Head of department (management and support staff)                                   | 73.3%                      |
| Executive Board (management and support staff)                                      | 66.7%                      |
| Dean (management and support staff)   | 50.0%                      |
| Director of operations/policy or department director (management and support staff) | 44.0%                      |
| Programme manager (management and support staff)                                    | 45.0%                      |
| Project manager (management and support staff)                                      | 51.6%                      |
| Senior lecturer-researcher (teaching and research staff)                            | 44.9%                      |
| Professor (teaching and research staff)   | 33.3%                      |

### M/F split among students/faculties in 2020

We have also looked at the percentage of female students within each faculty. Women are significantly under-represented in the Faculty of Technology and significantly over-represented in the faculties of Health and Applied Social Sciences and Law.

Table 2.

| <b>Faculty</b>                                | <b>Women</b> |
|---|--------------|
| FBE – Business and Economics                  | 38.3%        |
| FSN – Sports and Nutrition                    | 45.2%        |
| FDMCI – Digital Media and Creative Industries | 53.1%        |
| FH – Health                                   | 70.0%        |
| FASSL – Applied Social Sciences and Law       | 74.2%        |
| FE – Education                                | 66.9%        |
| FT – Technology                               | 25.6%        |
| <b>Overall total</b>                          | <b>51.7%</b> |

Finally, we looked at the M/F split for other positions among management and support staff and teaching and research staff. Women are proportionally represented in these positions (the percentages exclude management positions).

Table 3.

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| <b>Other management and support staff</b> | 66.0% |
| <b>Other teaching and research staff</b>  | 54.3% |

These data paint a picture of the situation with regard to gender equality in the various parts of the institution.

This picture is a starting point for HR and the faculties to formulate ambitions, define frameworks, write policies and carry out interventions. By continuing to monitor the data and evaluating the effects of initiatives, we can learn from experience and adjust policies and implementation where necessary.

Monitoring is done through the annual report with all staff and the HR monitor, which is shared each quarter with senior and other management and the HR chain. This requires constant development and sharing of knowledge, as well as collaboration with partners.

## 5. Work-life balance and organisational culture

AUAS is conscious that organisational culture and work-life balance are important components for creating an environment in which both men and women can thrive and have equal opportunities to build a satisfying career. 'Organisational culture and work-life balance' is a broad thematic area that covers issues such as:

- childcare facilities;
- maternity/paternity/parental leave provisions;
- long-term employability.

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AUAS believes it is important to have a healthy balance between work and private life. Worries, sadness, workload, a negative self-image and stress are among the mental health issues staff may have to deal with. Staff can complete modules (in person or online) or talk to a coach (such as a career coach). Through these modules and conversations, staff gain tools to prevent mental health issues from growing worse. Tools and tips have been created for staff dealing with workload pressure, particularly when working online. These cover staying healthy while working from home (good workstation equipment, the right to be uncontactable, the number of hours working in front of a screen), physical vitality and ensuring a good balance between work and private life.

We collaborate with companies such as Good Habitz and offer these modules through AUAS Academy. Staff can also ask for advice about staying healthy while working (whether from home or on campus) from one of our OHS coordinators.

Feeling at home and feeling safe mean that our staff are facilitated and supported by confidential advisers when they experience obstacles, barriers and forms of exclusion such as sexism, racism and discrimination. AUAS has drawn up regulations concerning inappropriate behaviour that cover discrimination, racism and inappropriate, boundary-crossing behaviour (2019).

### **Leave**

The right to maternity leave applies both before and after the birth. At a minimum, pregnant employees are entitled to 16 weeks of leave. Within that allotment, employees may decide how many weeks of leave they want to take before and after the birth. Parental leave around the time of the birth is also available to partners. Parental leave is sometimes called paternity leave or partner's leave. After the birth of a child, partners are entitled to a maximum of one working week of paid parental leave starting from the first day after the birth. The number of hours of leave is equal to the number of working hours per week and must be taken within four weeks after the day the child was born. After that, partners can request additional parental leave for a maximum of five weeks. Although this leave is unpaid, employees are offered legal compensation of 70% of their taxable salary. On top of the usual parental leave, since 1 July 2020, partners have been entitled to additional parental leave under the Additional Leave (Introduction) Act (WIEG). Based on this Act, partners can take five weeks of supplementary parental leave. They will not receive their usual salary; instead, the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV) will pay them an allowance.

There is also the option of paid carer's leave if an employee has a partner, parent or child who is sick and requires care. Carer's leave can also be used to care for brothers, sisters, grandparents, grandchildren, flatmates and friends.

The term 'gender transition leave' does not yet appear in the terms of employment. For operations in the context of gender reassignment surgery, employees can take sick leave. They are not required to make arrangements with or request permission from the employer. They will continue to receive their salary. It would be desirable to give the employer an idea of the length of the recovery period, so a temporary replacement can be arranged. The occupational physician or another doctor can explain how long the recovery is likely to last.

In the higher education sector, there is also the option of taking long-term employability hours for specific purposes (LE hours). The scheme is intended to give staff an opportunity to continue to perform their work well, in a healthy state and with enjoyment, and to be able to combine

### **Gender Equality Plan**

work with their private lives. Employees can improve their resilience and employability. Within the LE scheme, there is also an option to use the hours to improve employees' vitality and capacity for work.

Employees are entitled to LE hours across a three-year reference period. Full-time employees are entitled to 45 LE hours per year; for part-time employees, the entitlement is calculated in proportion to the number of hours they work. Older employees who are within 10 years of reaching the age of entitlement for the government pension are entitled to 90 hours per year if they work full time, or a percentage of that based on the number of hours they work.

Managers and employees are jointly responsible for long-term employability and how the available LE hours are used. LE hours are becoming increasingly important as employees grow older and continue working for longer (even once they reach the age of entitlement for the pension). Employees are actively encouraged to use their LE hours, and their managers will help them to do so.

## 6. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

AUAS strives to be a gender-balanced institution, where female staff have equal access to and equal participation in leadership and other decision-making roles.

AUAS offers training to staff to increase awareness about gender equality (and other forms of equality), as well as unconscious bias training. In addition, various managers and HR professionals have received training over the past two years on using inclusive language in general, and specifically when advertising job vacancies. Improvements have been made to ensure AUAS job vacancy notices are always written using gender-neutral language.

Over the next few years, AUAS will further develop the training courses and tools around preventing/reducing bias in ordinary work processes and offer them more widely within the organisation. These training courses should support employees in increasing their awareness and their resilience in interviews and help give managers guidance in managing a diverse team.

Managers throughout the organisation contribute to an inclusive culture, harness differences as a source of strength and promote an open working environment in which everyone can make optimal use of their talents. AUAS has a development programme aimed at managers: the Unifying Leadership Programme. Prominent themes covered by this programme include diversity, inclusion, the influence of bias and the role of the manager. In addition, customised training courses have been developed for new managers, team leaders and coordinators. These courses focus on the role and phase of managers' own teams and the complexities and context in which managers are involved.

### Gender in communication

Systems such as the HR system are designed in such a way that, by definition, M/F categories are not assumed; instead, employees can indicate when they register that they do not identify with the typical M/F option. Work to provide a similar option to students is ongoing. In addition, inclusive image material is used in communications with staff and students.

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## 7. Gender equality in recruitment and career prospects

At AUAS, we believe it is important to have an equal gender split at all levels of the organisation. Accordingly, we believe it is important that our educational environment is free from gender bias. The recruitment and selection process has an important role to play here.

AUAS has applied a range of measures to ensure gender equality in recruitment, selection and career development. In 2021, in terms of the recruitment and selection process, an audit was conducted to look at how we can improve the recruitment and selection process to minimise bias. The outcomes will help us formulate and implement interventions in and around the recruitment and selection process. These could include recruiting from within a broader and more representative network, setting up a diverse selection committee and training selection committees in inclusive selection and competence-based interviewing.

In 2022, any differences between men's and women's pay will be investigated. The outcomes of this investigation will lead to recommendations and actions, where necessary.

AUAS is aiming for an equal gender split in senior and middle management and research positions by 2025. Places where the balance is still a long way from this goal will be the subject of specific attention and actions, in this case professorships, directors of operations and policy/department directors (see Table 1). To achieve the 50% goal in four years' time, an average of two staff must be appointed each year. This goal is based on the average natural outflow (from staff reaching the age of entitlement to the pension and from voluntary resignations) and the proposed measures in the recruitment and selection process. More detailed agreements will be made on this subject with the faculties and HR. It should be noted that gender will be addressed as part of a unified approach that also encompasses other diversity aspects such as bicultural backgrounds.

## 8. Integration of the gender dimension in research and educational content

AUAS strives to be a socially responsible institution that successfully integrates and disseminates gender-aware research and education.

At present, 52.4% of students in higher education in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area are women. This percentage fluctuates within degree programmes, depending on the sector. For example, female students are over-represented in the faculties of Health and Applied Social Sciences and Law, but under-represented in Engineering and Architecture (Faculty of Technology) – see Table 2.

These data paint a picture of the situation with regard to gender equality in the various faculties. This picture is a starting point for the faculties to formulate ambitions, define frameworks, write policies and carry out interventions, such as study choice days and information sessions in schools. In collaboration with our partners in the city (in primary and secondary education), we

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will also look at how we can attract more female students to technology degree programmes. By continuing to monitor the data and evaluating the effects of initiatives, we can learn from experience and adjust policies and implementation where necessary. This requires constant sharing and development of knowledge.

The goal of higher education is to prepare students for their second or third post-graduation careers. For example, if they want to be a marketing manager, students generally start out as junior marketers.

Once they become marketing managers, students from diverse backgrounds can encounter a range of obstacles and issues. Accordingly, higher education needs to be structured around a gender-sensitive framework. In practice, this means that, when higher education courses are developed, the various obstacles that students from different backgrounds may face in their careers are taken into account, and all students are trained in how to deal with them. One such initiative is AUAS' Tune In programme. This bridging programme runs each summer, prepares first-generation students, among others, to take the step up to higher education and provides support on successfully navigating higher professional education with as few obstacles as possible.

Equality (or inequality) and diversity are key topics in the curriculum, regardless of degree programme. For example, students learn about topics in which stereotypes are common and also learn about the bias resulting from those stereotypes. Students use a tool to assess how inclusive language use is, examine whether they are provided with a variety of role models (both normal lecturers and guest lecturers) and look at the use of examples. The focus here is not only on representation in terms of numbers; students also look at how teaching materials talk about the subject area or the extent to which gender stereotypes are incorporated into the teaching materials.

There are currently several professorships with a gender dimension in their research vision that is then translated into research projects. One example is the professorship in Entrepreneurship and its 'inclusive entrepreneurship' pillar, in which research is conducted into how female entrepreneurs and potential female entrepreneurs can be better embedded into the entrepreneurial climate, starting with entrepreneurship education. To strengthen the integration of research into education, arrangements have been made for close collaboration between professorships, project leaders within professorships and programme managers, who must collectively ensure that research insights are sustainably incorporated into education.

There are also a number of women-centric networks within AUAS. There are networks for female managers at AUAS, women in Aviation and women in IT (FEMit). Within these networks, we want to share knowledge and experiences about gender diversity, strengthen the position of women by increasing the visibility of these networks, expand the networks and enter into partnerships, both internally and externally.

## **9. Actions to prevent gender-related violence, including sexual harassment**

We strive to ensure the AUAS community is inclusive and strongly connected, where interpersonal interaction takes place in an open, vibrant learning and working environment – a

community where everyone is valued and treated with respect. Accordingly, gender-related violence is totally unacceptable within our institution.

AUAS has developed a range of measures to tackle gender-related violence (under the banner of social safety), such as sexual harassment and sexism, and to ensure it is not tolerated within our community.

We have a network of confidential advisers and student counsellors to support students and staff members. In training courses, managers can learn how to deal with inappropriate behaviour in their teams and what they can do to prevent it. In addition, AUAS has developed guidelines on its website for how staff and students should deal with inappropriate behaviour. We all have a collective responsibility for recognising inappropriate behaviour and ensuring it can be talked about. Staff and students must comply with the code of conduct. If the code is breached, the person responsible may be denied access to the building. Gender-related inappropriate behaviour is covered in the general regulations on inappropriate behaviour.

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