



**L-Università
ta' Malta**

**Gender Equality
&
Sexual Diversity
Committee**

Annual Report 01 October 2020 - 21 September 2021

Members

Prof. M.T. Camilleri Podesta	Chairperson
Prof. JosAnn Cutajar	Chairperson replacing Prof. Camilleri Podesta as of 12.11.2020
Mr. Roderick Vassallo	Co-Chair
Prof. Janet Mifsud	
Ms Carmen Mangion	
Ms Nika Levikov	left UM for MCAST in January 2021
Ms Anna Zammit	
Dr Marceline Naudi	
Dr Anna Borg	
Dr Colin Calleja	
Mr Pierre Cassar	resigned June 2021
Prof. Andrew Azzopardi	resigned May 2021
Ms Jacqueline Fenech / Ms Victoria Perici	
Ms Yasmine Ellul / Julia Cini	replaced by Kylie Fenech / Alexandra Gaglione as of 01.06.2021
Prof. Ruben Paul Borg	
Ms Simone Ellul	(minute taker)

Attendance

Key: A = Absent, P = Present and R = Resigned

		2	2	0	1	1	2	3	1	0	
		7	9	4	5	9	6	0	5	6	
		/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	
Members	Role	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		9	0	2	1	2	3	4	6	7	
		/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
		0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Prof. M.T. Camilleri Podesta	Chair			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Prof JosAnn Cutajar	Chair										
Mr Roderick Vassallo	Co-Chair										
Prof. Janet Mifsud	Member							A		A	
Ms Carmen Mangion	Member										
Ms Nika Levikov	Member					N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Ms Anna Zammit	Member									A	
Ms Simone Ellul (minute taker)	Support									A	
Ms Julia Cini	KSU Rep	A			A	A	A	A	A	A	
Dr Marceline Naudi	Member	A				A				A	
Dr Anna Borg	Member	A	A			A	A	A	A	A	
Dr Colin Calleja	Member	A			A					A	
Mr Pierre Cassar *	Member	A	A		A	A	A	A	R	N/A	
Prof. Andrew Azzopardi **	Member	A				A	A	A	R	N/A	
Ms Jacqueline Fenech / Ms Victoria Perici	HR Rep	A	A	A					A	A	
Ms Yasmine Ellul	Co-opted	A				A		A	A	A	
Prof Ruben Paul Borg	Co-opted	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	
Guests											
Prof Carmen Sammut			P	P	P		P		P		
Dr Karen Cacciattolo						P					
Prof. Paul Bartolo							P				
Dr Maureen Cole							P				
Ms Marchita Mangiafico							P			P	

Amb. Cecilia Attard Pirotta										
Dr Manuel Debono	P									

* Resigned June 2021

** Resigned May 2021

Change in name

The Gender Issues Committee changed its name to Gender Equality and Sexual Diversity Committee via Council decision at its meeting of 18 June 2020.

Setting up an archive for Women's History

Pro-Rector Sammut underlined that the Library has started archiving documents relating to women's recent history in Malta.

Sexual Harassment Policy, Awareness Campaign and Survey

A Sexual Harassment Awareness Campaign was conducted in December 2020 in collaboration with KSU and the Communications, Marketing and Alumni Office. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected for this evaluation. KSU was involved in the research design. Survey was disseminated via the Office of the Academic Registrar. The data was analysed by Dr Manwel Debono and Prof JosAnn Cutajar. The qualitative part was undertaken by the students for the Masters in Gender, Society and Culture, Gender and Social Justice study-unit. Members of the committee are in the process of writing a report with the data collected during April-June 2021.

Evaluation of Sexual Harassment Policy - Research was also conducted with students and staff to find out how familiar these were with the what is sexual harassment, the UM Sexual Harassment Policy, and its procedures. GESDC designed two questionnaires. One was a survey conducted with students and staff focusing on how familiar these were with the sexual harassment policy and protocol. The other was conducted with student societies to find out whether they have been approached by students who needed help, and what they did thereafter. Before conducting the survey or interviews, the research project was submitted to SWB FREC. The survey was conducted in April 2020; the interviews with student's organizations were conducted in June/July 2021. Survey data was presented on 14 of June 2021 to Prof Sammut, Prof Maureen Cole and GESDC.

The updated Sexual Harassment Policy was approved by Senate and Council in October 2021. The policy was uploaded¹ on UM website to replace old versions. Manual of Conduct was also updated with a url which redirects to the new policy.² Consequently, the old policy has been archived. HRMD updated the list of policies page and have informed Office of the Registrar and Junior College. The policy has been included on the following pages:

- um.edu.mt/services/policiesforstaff
- um.edu.mt/about/gender/policies
- jc.um.edu.mt/services/manualsguidelines/studentguidelinesforwellbeing
- um.edu.mt/hrmd/policiesprocedures

Mentorship Scheme

GESDC underlined the need of a mentorship scheme set up throughout the UM. Peer to peer training was also raised. It was underlined that mentorship should occur during orientation week -which occurs during the beginning of the first term - and at the end of the term. GESDC highlights with disappointment that the time academic staff spent on mentorship was not acknowledged in the last academic collective agreement.

Preferred names and pronouns for non-binary and transitioning students

The Chair and co-Chair met with Rector, Marketing, Communications and Alumni Office, e-SIMS and the Assistant Registrar to discuss how the preferred names for non-binary and transitioning students

¹ https://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/478940/SexualHarassmentPolicy-18Oct2021.pdf

² <https://www.um.edu.mt/hrmd/secure/policies/ManualofConductandProcedures.pdf>

should be listed on attendance lists, and on email addresses. It was also suggested that the preferred pronouns may be included under the signature section in the e-mail. It was noted that due care should be given to the preferred name, while at the same time retaining the official name until the transitioning students/alumni produces affirmation of the name change. The chairs had another meeting with IT services regarding the name that appears in e-mail addresses. IT suggested that they were more than willing to change it once a policy was drafted and sanctioned by Senate. Mr Vassallo used a policy from Lancaster University and started working on the first draft of the Gender Identity and Expression Policy and its respective Gender Identity and Expression Guidelines documents. The two documents are being reviewed with the Academic Registrar, the Director of HRMD, the UM Legal Office, the DPO, the UM Counselling Services and IT Services. Other stakeholders have already been consulted namely the Malta Gay Rights Movement and Ms Gaby Calleja, Head of the LGBTIQ Unit of the Human Rights Directorate within the Ministry for Justice, Equality and Governance. When finished will be liaising with Prof. Sammut and GESDC members to go over the policy before this is presented to Senate.

Another meeting was held with Dr Joan Camilleri from the Counselling Services to discuss this and together GESDC and Wellbeing Clinic came up with a procedure which was communicated with Registrar's office (22 June 2021), HR and the IT services.

Extension and suspension of studies in relation to reproductive issues

GESDC was asked by the Student Request Committee to give recommendations on a potential policy to help students who have issues relating to pregnancy, miscarriages or stillbirths, adoption, fostering and IVF procedures regarding extension and suspension of studies. Prof. Sammut communicated that presently students may apply for an extension of studies, and when that is over, they can apply for a year of suspension of studies. She did not agree with the suspension of studies and suggested lengthier extensions. Senate agreed to lengthier extension of studies for students on a humanitarian basis.

Issue of the most quoted scholars

An email received from a female academic on April 13 communicated that an article about the 100 UM most cited researchers on Newspoint, listed only the first ten which happened to be male. This issue was raised with the Communications, Marketing and Alumni Office. GESDC felt that Newspoint can report the first ten most cited males, and the ten most cited females in future communication. This revealed the need for UM to have proper guidelines about reporting the achievements of UM academics and avoid systematic discrimination.

Dearth of female academics on decision-making committees

An email was sent by a female academic regarding the dearth of female academics on decision-making committees. GESDC agreed that there should be a gender balance in Senate and Council. During the meeting, which took place on the 30 April, members suggested training sessions should be held to empower more women to run for Senate and Council. It was however pointed out that training on the issue is scarce, and when people leave and newbies are elected to office, there is no induction course for those who replace them. UM needs to ensure a proper hand over and/or mentoring to increase the representation of women in decision making levels. It was also suggested there should be regulations for gender balance in every Faculty.

Gender Mainstreaming training

The Gender Mainstreaming lecture suggested by the committee to OPAD was taking place. This lecture will help sensitize UM lecturers to this issue. GESDC members underlined that an hour of lecture is not enough and that there should also be some time left for reflection during the lecture.

Dearth of female students in STEM related faculties

Two faculties with a low number of female students, the ICT and Engineering faculties, are working to attract more female students through outreach. On a similar note, the Faculty of Education is also finding it hard to attract male students.

Nomination of more women for the *Honoris Causa*

Prof. Sammut encouraged nominations of women for the *Honoris Causa*. She suggested that GESDC members take note to make sure that more women are nominated every year.

Campus FM radio programme *Linja Campus*

Chair and co-Chair took part in this programme on 1 February 2021. The objective was to delineate what GESDC was about.

Certification Award Systems to Promote Gender Equality in Research (CASPAR)

During the 2020-21 academic year, the Chairperson was involved in a number of workshops linked to the EU Project CASPAR. This is an EU study with the objective of helping EC to set up awards which can entice universities to promote gender equality as well as diversity and inclusion in research.

Lack of study-units dealing with gender within the Faculty of Laws

This issue was raised and a sub-committee was established to find more information regarding this issue. It was concluded that the dearth of gender content should be an issue which needs to be dealt with by the Gender Equality Diversity and Inclusion plan.

Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan

GESDC started by first preparing the preamble to justify the need of a gender, diversity and inclusion (GEDI) plan, as well as its set up and the areas that should be covered. The preamble was discussed with GESDC members, the Rector, the Director of Finance, the Director of HRMD and the Office of the Registrar in March 2021. It was decided that a GEDI Committee, Equality Office and an implementing structure should be set up. The GESDC would be in charge of designing the plan, while the Equality Office would be in charge of the monitoring and evaluation of the plan.

The key areas to be covered by plan should be:

Key Area 1	A The governance bodies, key actors and decision-makers B Changing organisational culture
Key Area 2	Diversity, equality and Inclusion (Measures and policies promoted by the different entities at UM)
Key Area 3	Recruitment, career progression and retention
Key Area 4	Work and personal life integration, including Interpersonal Violence
Key Area 5	Sex/gender, diversity and inclusion perspective & approach in research and research teams.
Key Area 6	Integration of diversity, equality and inclusion in teaching curricula

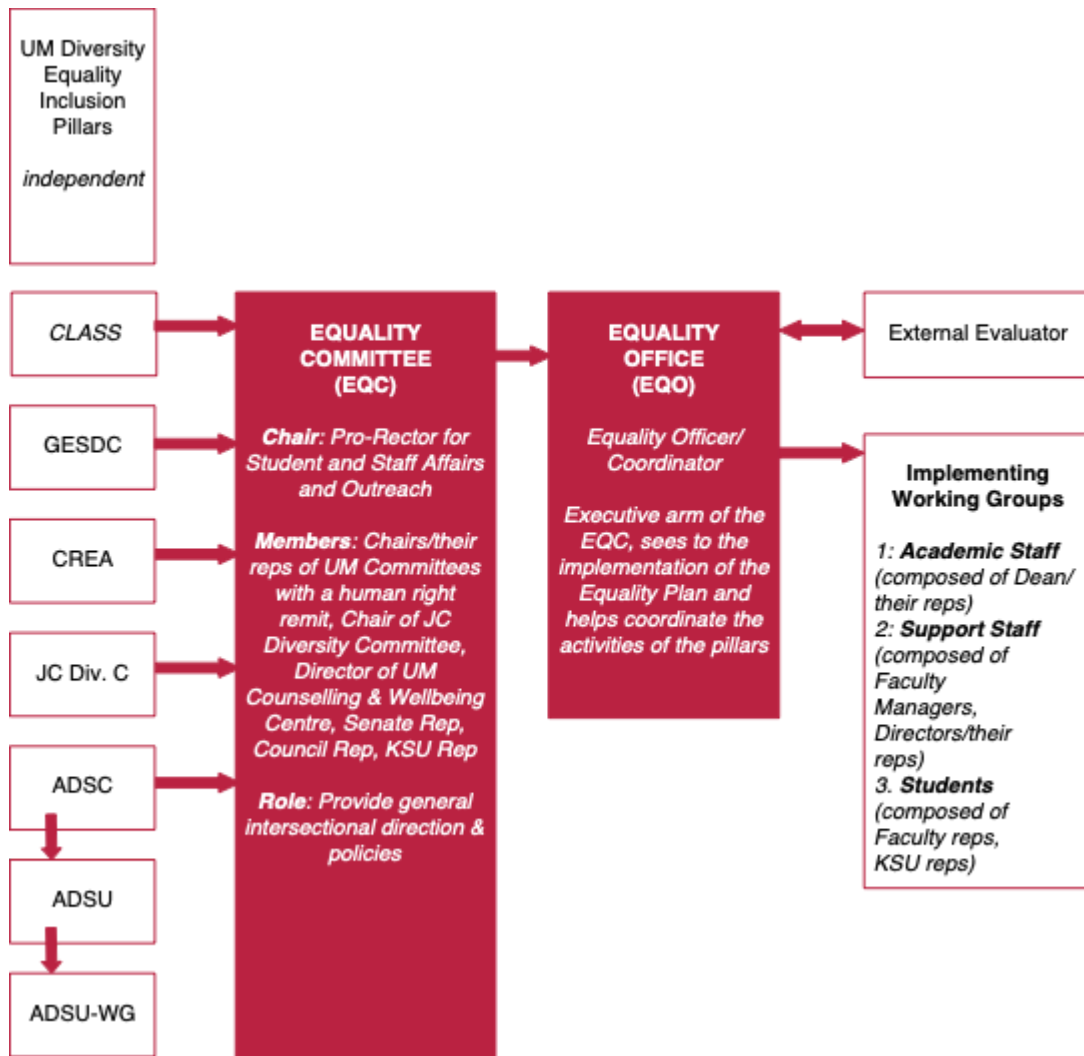
Following these meetings, Prof Cutajar and Mr Vassallo started compiling qualitative and quantitative data for the first gender audit plan with the help of the Office of the Registrar and HRMD. Ms Nadia Abdilla was engaged to help in the analysis of the data. The data was presented in June 2021 meeting.

Pro-Rector Prof Carmen Sammut called a meeting of the chairs of GESDC, ADSC/U, CREA on the 1 July 2021. Prof JosAnn Cutajar and Mr Roderick Vassallo explained how they envisaged the institutional set for the GEDI plan. The GEDI plan evolved to an Equality Plan (EQP).

a. Equality Committee - The objective of this Committee is to design a plan after consultation with the various university's stakeholders, and then proceeds to establish targets and timeframes - what to do and achieve within particular time frames. Have **dedicated resources**: Resources for the design, implementation, and monitoring of the EQP will include funding for the position of **Equality Officer** as well as **earmarked working time for academic, management and administrative staff**

a. Equality Office (EQO) – executive arm of Equality Committee. This entity oversees the implementation of the plan, training, monitoring and evaluation process of the different policies, measures and practices; Conducts on-site audits; Mainstreams internal policies, measures and plans to ensure non-discrimination; Stores proof of policy development and planning; Collects and analyses indicators, metrics and statistics to produce sex/race/nationality/disability/age/dependency/ etc. disaggregated data on an annual basis. It is also in charge of the compilation of the annual report on EQP as well as the dissemination of results. The EQO will compile an annual report underlining what has been achieved, with what success and the way forward. This office needs to have an allocated budget.

b. Implementing Working groups: academic staff, support staff, students. The working groups shall be part of the executive structure of the EQO with the Equality Coordinator present in every single one. Each Equality Working Group (EQWG) features representatives from the different sectors of the university. The members of the working group are appointed to include representatives of different staff groups (lecturers, admin, researchers, technical staff, other), and students with particular insight or experience regarding equality, diversity and inclusion. The set up can replicate the ADSU-working groups, a structure which works. Three essential working groups shall be set up as follows:



Meeting with Hon. Carmelo Abela MP – new employment legislation

A hybrid meeting with Hon. Carmelo Abela MP took place on the 29 January 2021. The programme of the meeting was as follows:

- 10.10 Welcome speech by Prof. Carmen Sammut, Pro-Rector
- 10.20 Equal work for pay of equal value by Prof. JosAnn Cutajar
- 10.35 Issues linked to tele and remote working at UM by Ms Jacqueline Fenech
- 10.50 The implementation of the EU Work Life Balance Directive in Malta by Dr Anna Borg
- 11.05 Workers' and students' wellbeing at UM by Dr Mary Joan Camilleri

The following UM staff and students joined the meeting:

Dr Marceline Naudi, Ms Anna Zammit, Ms Carmen Mangion, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi, Dr Colin Calleja, Ms Yasmine Ellul, KSU, Ms Donatella Pace Olivari, Prof. Janet Mifsud, Ms Amy Camilleri Zahra, Ms Marchita Mangafico, Dr Maureen Cole, Dr Mary Joan Camilleri, Prof. JosAnn Cutajar and Mr Roderick Vassallo.

During the meeting it was underlined that the University has a lot to offer where gender and work issues were concerned. The Minister underlined that he would be happy to meet again and discuss further. He said that at the moment there were internal discussions regarding the new employment and equality laws. UM should be at the forefront of these discussions. As Prof. Sammut pointed out, UM trains decision makers. He added that this is a challenging time – not only because of COVID-19

but the pandemic accelerated some things on which we need as a country to take action. One issue is tele and remote working. With the correct legislation it should be a win-win situation between employer and workers. It makes sense from an economic perspective, as well as work-life balance. Remote working would enable Maltese companies to employ people who might work from abroad. The right to disconnect will be included in legislation – and employers might also need to consider wellbeing for all of us as in the case of the University of Malta. He also underlined that the Department for Industry and Employment Relations is working on the gender pay gap. This is an issue for HR and higher education – women’s work should not be paid less. With regards to the work life balance directive –we have challenges persuading some employers to implement this, never mind go further! Bone of contention is compensation – who is going to pay!

The Co-chair thanked the Minister for finding the time to come to University and involve the academics in the consultation regarding the new employment legislation. Chair felt that academics and NGOs should not be limited to this short timeframe in the consultation, but should be involved in the meetings conducted by MCESD. Amy Camilleri Zahra added that they can if this entity adopted the format adopted by the European Economic and Social Committee.³ This entity is made up of the Employers’ Group, the Workers’ Group and the Diversity Group. The Diversity Group is made up of organisations and representatives from a very wide range of areas such farmers’ organisations, women’s organisations, academics, etc. Malta has representatives in all three groups and currently the President of the Employers’ Group is Maltese - Stefano Mallia.

GEPARD – Gender Equality Programme in Academia – Raising Diversity (Erasmus+)

GESDC was approached by Profs Jarosz and Margiel from the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland, who asked UM if it was interested in joining a number of universities who are applying for Erasmus+ funds on a project related to gender equality plans. The universities involved include:

- Uniwersytet Śląski, Poland Śląskie Katowice
- Miskolci Egyetem Hungary Borsod-Abaújzemplén Miskolc
- European University Cyprus Cyprus ΚΥΠΡΟΣ (Κύπρος) Nicosia
- Università ta’ Malta Malta Msida
- Euniversity Italy Campania Salern
- Paris-Lodron-Universität Salzburg Austria Salzburg.

The project's main objective is to include and counteract gender exclusion and create conditions for equal opportunities in institutions of higher education. This goal will be achieved by developing, within an international consortium, a system of actions understood as an organisational policy leading, on the one hand, to the elimination of gender discrimination in the academic environment (both among employees and students) and, on the other hand, to an increase in the diversity of the academic sphere in order to take into account the gender perspective and data on it in every aspect of the university operations.

UM Employment Record Form

GESDC was copied in an email NCPE sent to HRMD regarding UM’s employment record. NCPE underlined that the employment record form was asking for information from female staff, which should not be asked. NCPE pointed out that this form was not observing the Gender Identity, the Gender Expression and the Sexual Characteristics Act and that the information elicited by such documents should be the same for both men and women.

MCST – Webinar on Gender Equality Plans

The webinar was attended by Prof. JosAnn Cutajar and Mr Roderick Vassallo on 30 June 2021.

³ <https://www.eesc.europa.eu>

Meeting with Ambassador Cecilia Attard Pirotta

The online meeting took place on 16 July 2021 at 10.00 with JosAnn Cutajar, Roderick Vassallo, and Carmen Mangion from GESDC. Prof Cecilia Pirotta spoke about Women, Peace and Security and their collaboration with other UM entities. The role of the GESDC was explained. It was agreed that we do a joint event for Women's Day 2022 linked to Social Justice. This should involve female ambassadors from France, Ghana, England, Spain, Egypt.

Merging of the FSW Gender Audit with that of GESDC

A meeting with Prof. Andrew Azzopardi, Jamie Bonnici, Dr Marceline Naudi attended by JosAnn Cutajar for GESDC was called in to discuss the merging of the FSW Gender Audit with that of GESDC on 20 July 2021.

It was agreed that there should be one document, and credit will be given to the parts written by FSW.

Think Magazine interview on Gender Equality at UM

The interview with Belle de Jong took place online on 27 July 2021. It was attended by JosAnn Cutajar, Roderick Vassallo and Claire Borg. The article was also published⁴ on *lovinmalta.com* site.

Webinar on the use of the new GEAR.

The webinar was organised by EIGE on 24 September 2021 and was attended by JosAnn Cutajar.

Malta Parliament gender audit

Prof. JosAnn Cutajar was invited by OSCE/ODIHR to take part in the gender audit of the Parliament of Malta on 27-28 September 2021.

Meeting with civil society and EU Commissioner Dalli

Prof. JosAnn Cutajar was invited to attend a group meeting on 30 September 2021 at the Mediterranean Conference Centre to meeting civil society and EU Commissioner Helena Dalli. The meeting was organised by the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament.

Administrator to replace Ms Simone Ellul

Chair has written to HRMD and Pro-Rector Students and Staff to underline that Ms Simone Ellul needs to be replaced since the latter will be working full-time on the University of the Third Age.

Gender audit

The chair is compiling data for the 2019 gender audit

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<https://lovinmalta.com/lifestyle/living-in-malta/i-consider-myself-lucky-to-be-single-the-challenges-female-professors-face-at-malta-university/>