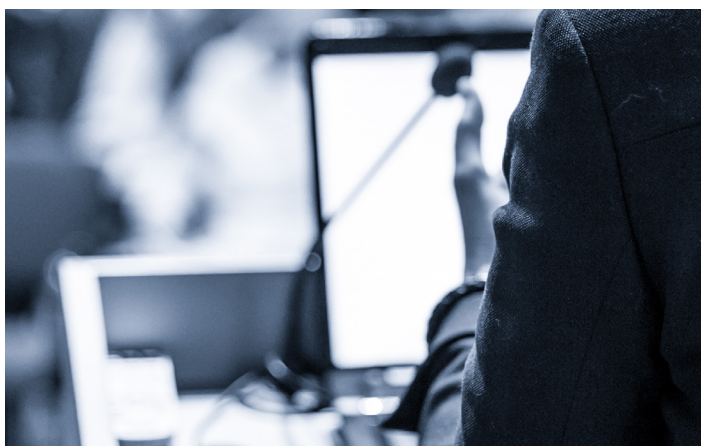
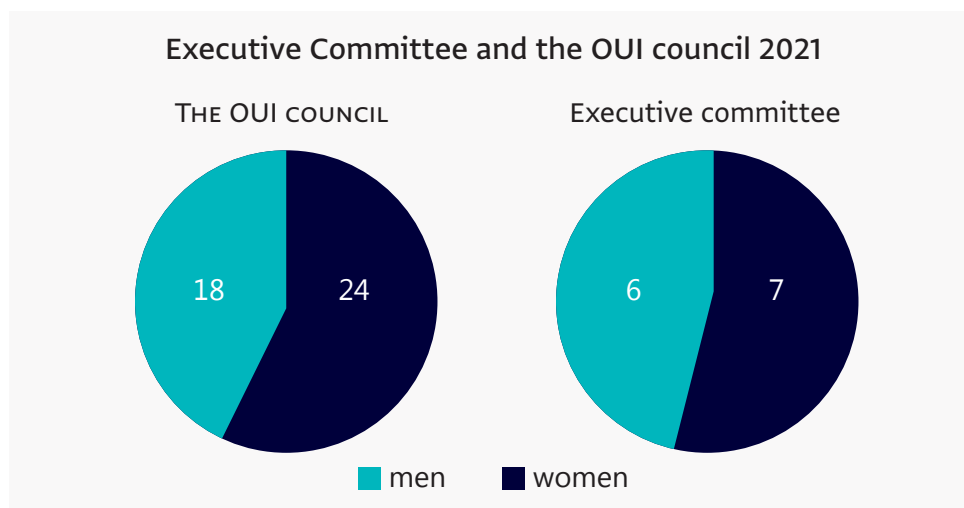


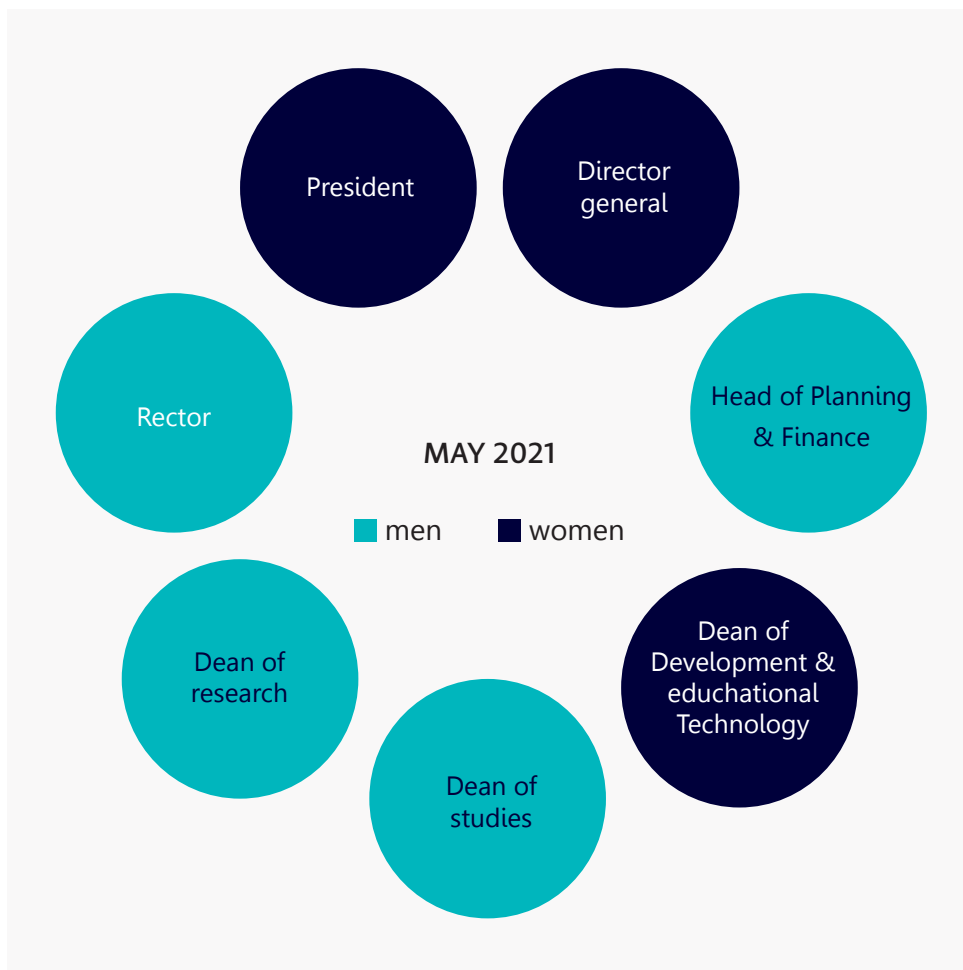
Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Gender Equity at The Open University 2022-2027



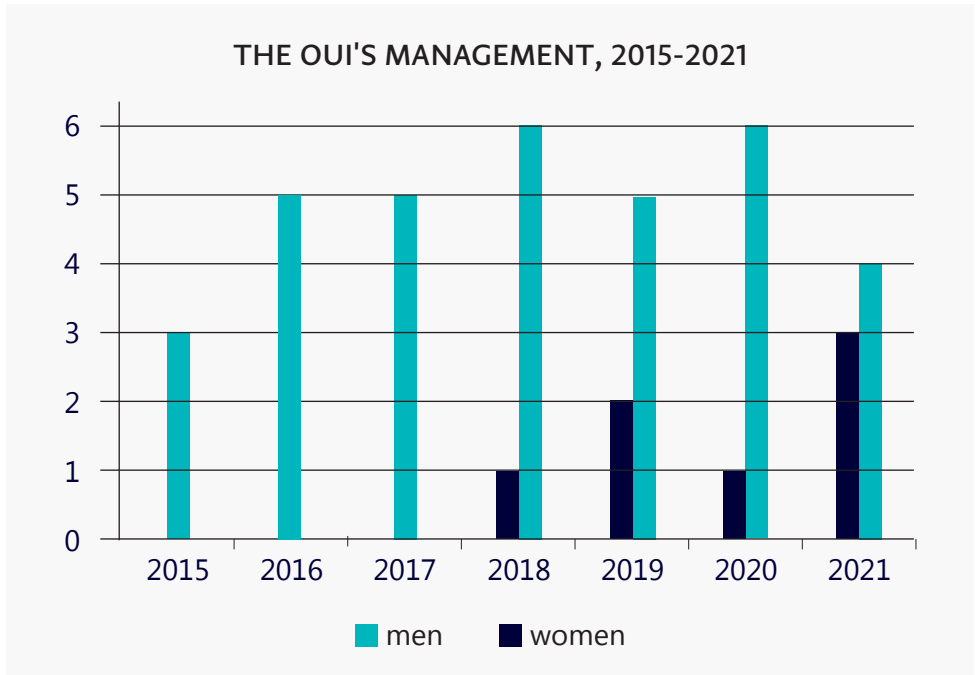
Since its establishment, The Open University has strived to make higher education accessible to the entire population in Israel, while maintaining academic and research excellence. In order to preserve and further advance this standard of excellence, it is necessary to prevent gender bias, rectify existing biases, provide solutions for the unique needs of women, and include gender considerations in ongoing research activities. Therefore, The Open University has placed activities related to gender equity high on its list of priorities, and it pursues this objective throughout all of the faculties at the university: the senior academic faculty, the teaching faculty, and the administrative faculty, as well as among its students.

In 2013, The Open University created the position of the president's advisor on gender equity affairs. The advisor meets with the president once a month to discuss the impact of the various operations designated for advancing gender equity, examine the data, and make decisions regarding the next steps. The advisor is responsible for holding a wide range of activities throughout the year to advance the subject among the various faculties, including seminar days, workshops, training sessions, work groups, and special scholarships for female students from various social groups. A long-term perspective confirms the importance of these activities, which reinforce the female researchers at The Open University in the research arena and increase awareness of gender equity at the university; therefore, the plan is to continue to organize them in the future. In addition to these operations, the university actively advances gender equity among the administrative faculty. In this paper, we will present the university's objectives for the upcoming years and the work plan that will be implemented throughout all of the university's departments and institutions.





The Open University has characteristics that are unique to it and differentiate it from other universities. The rate of women who are members of the academic faculty and of the administration at The Open University was always higher, compared to other universities in Israel. For example, a report by the Knesset's Research and Information Center on representation of women in academia in 2018 (Lerer and Ahbar, 2018) notes that while the average rate of women on the senior academic faculty at universities was 30%, at The Open University, this rate was slightly higher than 40% (and in 2021, this rate was 45% women). The Open University is the only university today with three women on its senior administrative forum (chancellor, president, and director general), two women on the NMR forum (president, director general, and rector), six women on the executive committee (and seven men), and 18 women on the council of The Open University (and 24 men). In 2021, five women were recruited as members of the senior academic faculty (and 4 men), three of whom are at the level of lecturers, and two at the level of senior lecturers (among the men - one is at the level of lecturer, and three are at the level of senior lecturer).



However, despite the relative gender equality, the university still faces many challenges, and the following plan proposes methods for dealing with these challenges. First, we will present the goals and indices on a general level, followed by the goals and indices for each respective faculty.

Goals and Activities - General

- The Open University will continue to appoint women to the most senior positions and will strive to achieve proper representation (on par) for women on the executive committee, the university council, and all of the search committees for the central positions, such as president, director general, and executive committee chairperson.
- An institutional steering committee will be established that will focus on advancing gender equity at The Open University, led by the president of the university and composed of male and female faculty members. The committee will convene on a regular basis for updates and to render decisions.
- Gender equity will be included in all of the official reports and summaries issued by the senior administration of The Open University.
- The Open University's administration will actively increase budgeting for the advisor on gender equity affairs, for designated activities for the administrative faculty, and to implement gender sensitivity at the organization.
- The university administration will support activities that advance gender equity and will actively increase awareness among the faculty and students regarding the importance of the subject and its implementation as part of the institution's organizational culture.
- The Open University spokesperson will actively promote the visibility of the female researchers at The Open University.
- The different faculties of the university will actively use gender-equal language on all official university documents.



Designated strategy for all of the faculties:

1. Senior faculty

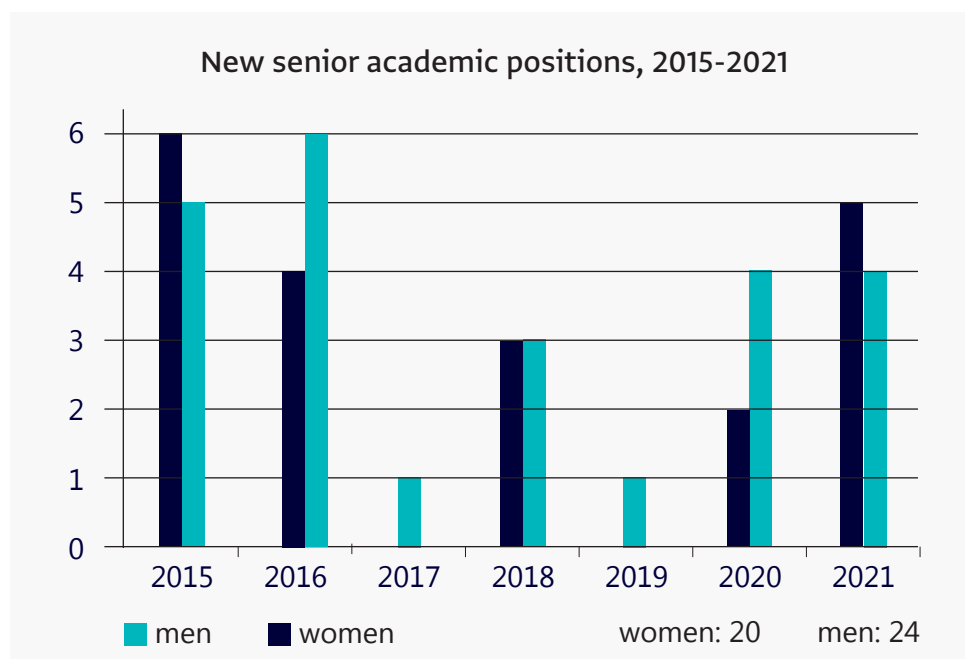
I. Current Situation

Rate of women on the senior academic faculty:

The Open University is very close to equal representation of women and men on the senior faculty (45%-55% respectively). Since the university faculty is very small, every new hire or resignation of a woman or a man impacts the ratio of women to men. For many years, The Open University has maintained a similar ratio of women and men on the senior faculty.

Analysis of the number of faculty members in the academic departments at The Open University shows that, like other universities, The Open University also has departments where the gender gap among the faculty is greater compared with other departments. This is especially apparent in the Department of Mathematics and Computer Sciences, and in the Department of Natural and Life Sciences.

Rate of intake of women compared to rate of intake of men on the senior academic faculty:



As aforementioned, in 2021, The Open University hired four men and five women as senior academic faculty members. However, since The Open University hires only a few faculty members each year, it would be more accurate to track this trend over the course of several years, not according to data from a specific year.

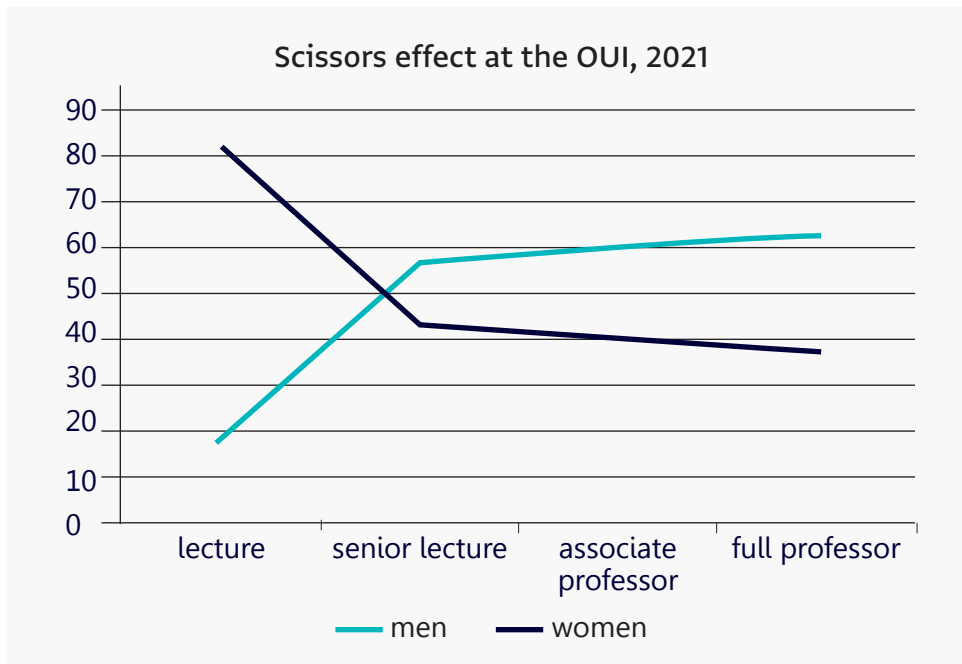
While the gender balance among the senior administration and in recruiting new faculty members to the university is positive and is constantly improving, the rate of women and men hired at the level of lecturer and senior lecturer is still in favor of the men: the number of women at the level of lecturer, the lowest entry level, is 10, while the number of men at this level is just two. It is important to recall that the entry level sometimes represents obstacles that precede receipt of the position, such as age, giving birth during the course of the doctorate or post-doctorate, difficulty traveling for a post-doctorate abroad, or caring for young children, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. These obstacles at the beginning of an academic career are likely to result in women having a smaller list of publications than men at the time of receipt of the position. Therefore, hiring women at the level of senior lecturer only is liable to cause a loss of excellent female researchers at the beginning of their careers.

Rate of women at the level of associate professor and full professor

The rate of women at the level of associate professor at The Open University was 43% in 2021, and the rate of women at the level of full professor was 36%. Minimizing the “scissors effect,” meaning the high rate of women at lower levels compared with the low rate at the higher levels (see graph), is one of the central challenges that The Open University will be facing in the upcoming years.

Average duration at level

The senior faculty at The Open University is very small, and at each level, there are only a few male and female faculty members. An even smaller number of male and female faculty members receive a promotion each year. In examining all of the promotions over the past seven years, no substantial difference was detected between the duration of the promotion of women and of men at all of the levels, with the exception of promotions from the level of lecturer to the level of senior lecturer, which was about a year and a half longer on average for women compared with men. As aforementioned, these are averages based on small groups, and it is possible that the difference that was identified reflects a delay in the promotion of just a few women.



Applications for external excellence scholarships

The Open University submits applications for both women and men as candidates for external scholarships, pursuant to the specific area of the scholarships proposed. In 2019-2020, applications were submitted for five faculty members and post-doctoral candidates for external scholarships, one of whom was a woman.

Gender-sensitive plan of action for dealing with the damages of the COVID-19 pandemic

The Open University does not have tenures, so extension of the “tenure clock” is unnecessary. Since the senior faculty is small, appointment extension and promotion processes are sensitive to personal characteristics, both for men and for women. The Open University will propose to female and male candidates for a promotion to incorporate a reference to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their research, for any portfolio raised for discussion during the next five years. The senior faculty at The Open University is not required to teach, so reducing teaching requirements, as was done at other universities, is not applicable.

II. Goals

- The university will strive to recruit more female senior academic faculty members and to achieve gender balance among the academic faculty, especially in the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science and the Department of Natural and Life Sciences.
- The university will do its utmost to promote quicker promotion of female academic faculty members from the level of lecturer to senior lecturer, and to increase the percentage of women at the level of associate professor and full professor.
- The university will aim, as much as possible, for gender balance among the directors of the academic departments.

III. Activities

- Recruitment of academic faculty to the university, and specifically to the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science and the Department of Natural and Life Sciences, will also be conducted by initiating direct contact with relevant women in the field.
- When a man and a woman have reached the final stage of the tender, and their levels of academic excellence are similar, preference will be given to the woman. An effort will be made to recruit women at the level of senior lecturer.
- Contact will be initiated with female researchers in order to promote their level.
- A male or female mentor from the senior academic faculty will be paired with each young female researcher at the university in order to advise the young researcher and provide guidance on her academic journey.
- The Open University will take care not to assign too many administrative tasks to new female faculty members during the first years of their intake, in order to allow them to establish their research and advance from their entry level to the next level. Furthermore, research and writing workshops will be held for female researchers in order to assist in advancing their research, publishing papers, and creating a multidisciplinary research community.
- A research and writing group will be established for the university's female researchers.

- Leadership workshops will be held to encourage female senior faculty members to apply for senior management positions.

III. Indices for assessing the actual effectivity of these measures

- The gender aspect is taken into account as a consideration during the faculty member recruitment process.
- Increase in the number of female academic faculty members recruited at The Open University.
- Decrease in the average duration of time between transitions in level among female faculty members.
- Increase in the rate of female faculty members at the level of professor.
- Increase in the number of female academic faculty members participating in research and writing workshops.
- Increase in the number of publications of female faculty members.



2. Doctoral and post-doctoral students

I. Current Situation

Due to the unique status of The Open University, which is not entitled to award doctorates in most of the disciplines, male and female researchers at The Open University mentor the male and female doctoral students together with researchers from other institutions. Therefore, it is not always possible to integrate the gender equity consideration in the selection of these students. However, the Council for Higher Education recently authorized the university to award a PhD in the field of Education: Technologies and Learning Systems, and the process of recruiting doctoral students in this department will begin soon.

The number of male post-doctoral students mentored by male and female academic faculty members from The Open University is increasing over the years, and is currently at 11; most of them are in STEM disciplines. In contrast, the number of female post-doctoral students has remained very stagnant, and is currently at four. This indicates that the rate of women among the total post-doctoral students at the university is decreasing. Therefore, it is important to raise awareness among male and female researchers regarding gender-fair recruitment of male and female doctoral and post-doctoral students, with emphasis on recruiting Israeli female post-doctoral students, who face greater difficulty traveling abroad for their post-doctorate. Furthermore, the number of male researchers mentoring male and female post-doctoral students is double the number of female faculty members acting as mentors (eight to four).

II. Goals

- Increase in the number of post-doctoral students at the university in general, and in the exact sciences departments specifically.
- Increase in the number of Israeli female post-doctoral students at the university.

III. Activities

- The university will emphasize gender-fair marketing in recruiting male and female doctoral and post-doctoral students.



- The university will initiate contact with potential female candidates for post-doctoral studies.
- The university spokesperson will provide a proper platform on a range of social media networks for the work of female researchers at The Open University, especially researchers in STEM subjects.
- In workshops for the academic faculty, emphasis will be placed on the importance of selecting women for post-doctorates.
- The university will offer incentive stipends for female students studying advanced research degrees.

IV. Indices

- Taking into account gender considerations during the recruitment process for female post-doctoral students.
- Increase in the number of female post-doctoral students accepted for mentoring by male and female researchers of The Open University.
- Increase in the number of female post-doctoral students recruited in STEM subjects.
- Increase in the number of Israeli female post-doctoral students at the university.

3. Teaching Faculty

I. Current Situation

In addition to the senior academic faculty, which is responsible for research and for development of the content taught, The Open University also employs teaching coordinators (male and female) who manage the courses, and a faculty of instructors (male and female) who teach the courses. Today, like in the past, the number of female teaching coordinators and instructors is greater than the number of their male counterparts, and their rate out of the total teaching faculty is 60%. A few teaching coordinators are also involved in research, and can submit proposals to external research funds after receipt of special approval from the Research Authority.

In recent years, The Open University has held a range of workshops on the subject of gender-appropriate teaching and gender-fair writing, intended for the senior academic faculty and the teaching faculty. However, most of the activities on the subject of gender equity at The Open University focused on the senior academic faculty, and there is a need for activities specifically for the teaching faculty.

II. Goals

- Increase in the number of female teaching coordinators submitting proposals for external research grants.
- Increase in the number of workshops and specific content related to gender-appropriate teaching that is intended for male and female teaching coordinators.
- Updating of current teaching content and development of new teaching content written in gender-neutral language or gender-equal, and discussing the subject of gender when relevant.

III. Activities

- The university will actively recruit female teaching coordinators with a PhD who are involved in research.
- The university will hold workshops for the teaching faculty on the subject of gender-appropriate teaching and gender-neutral writing.



- The Research Authority will personally contact relevant female teaching coordinators in order to encourage them to submit proposals to external research funds, and will offer incentive stipends to increase the number of proposals.

IV. Indices

- Increase in the number of female teaching coordinators submitting proposals for external research grants.
- Holding workshops for the teaching faculty on the subject of gender-appropriate teaching and gender-neutral writing.
- Increase in the number of female participants in gender-focused workshops.



4. Research grants and research budgets

I. Current Situation

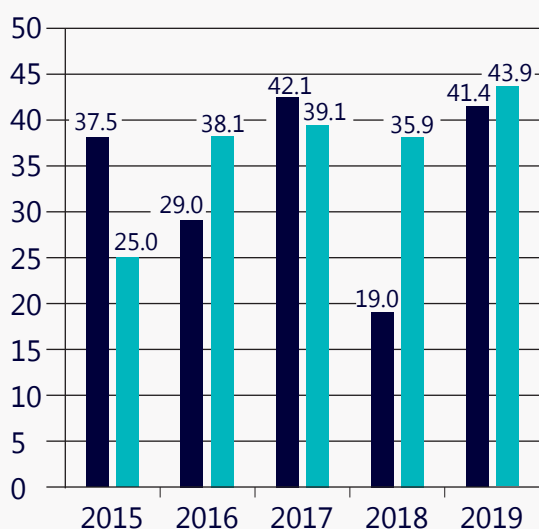
The percentage of female researchers submitting proposals to external funds is lower than the rate of male researchers doing so. In addition, the amounts that the female researchers request are lower (average research budget requested by senior female faculty members was only 59% of the amount of the research budget requested by senior male faculty members). Yet, the percentage of approvals among female researchers is not lower than the male researchers. It is possible that the reason for the difference is that women tend to feel less confident about the quality of their proposals, or they do not receive sufficient encouragement to submit proposals to external funds. In this context, it is important to note that being approved for a research grant from an external fund, and the amount of the grant, impact the researcher's salary and contribute to the wage discrepancies between women and men.

In contrast, the number of female faculty members submitting proposals for internal grants is higher than the rate of men submitting such proposals, while the approval rate compared to the number of proposals

External fund proposals, 2016-2020

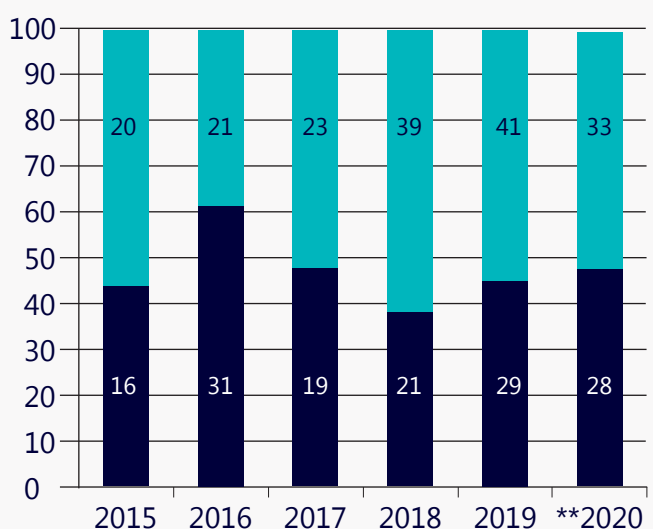
men women

Presentence of wins



Overall: 34% women, 36% men

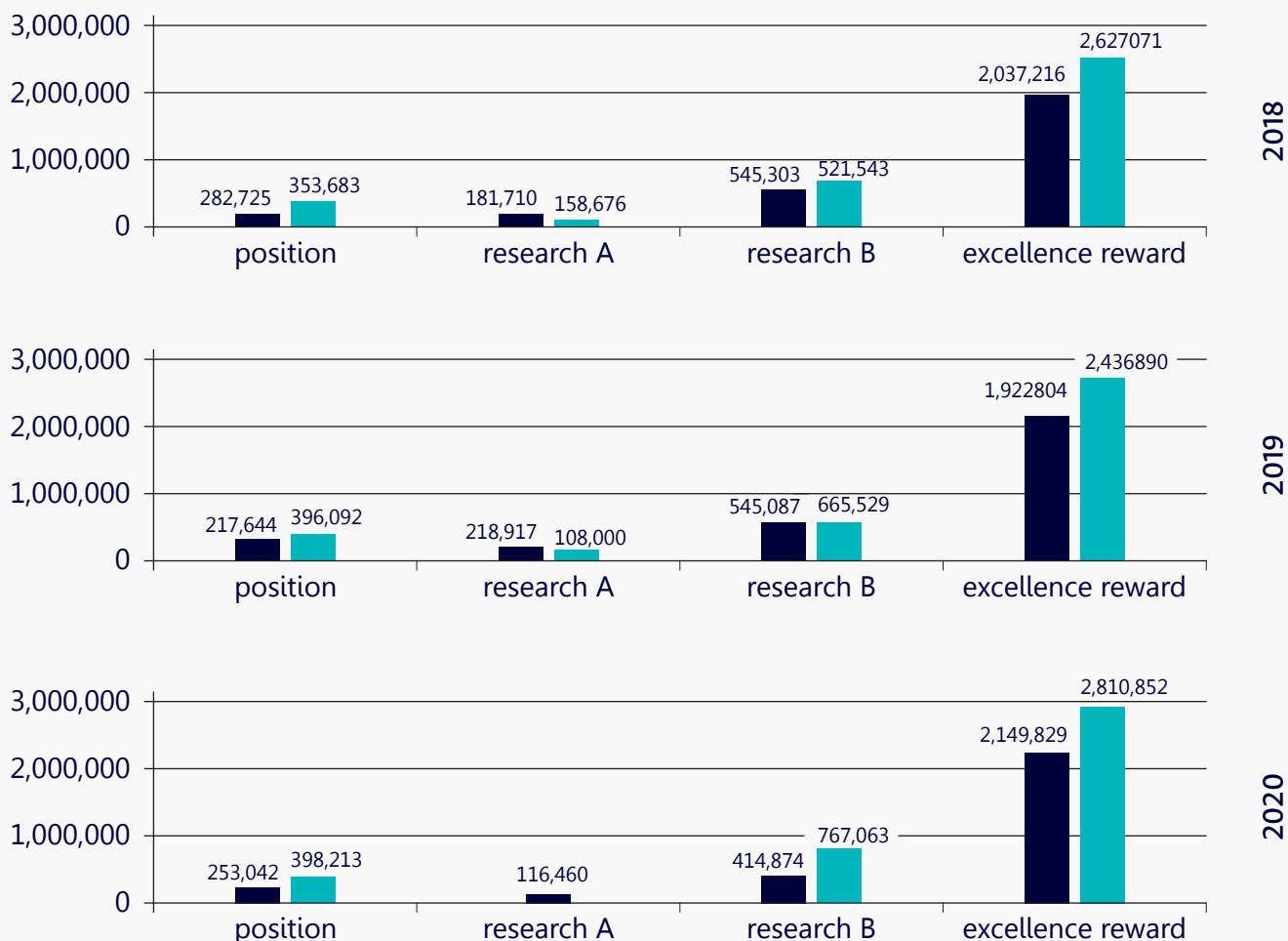
Number of submissions



Overall: 45% women, 55% men

Overall wage supplements, 2018-2020 According to position, research and excellence

men women



is similar, with a certain advantage for the women. It is worth noting that more than half of the female applicants for internal grants are teaching faculty members, and not senior faculty members. This is because female teaching coordinators hardly ever submit proposals for external research grants, since research is not included in their job description and they must receive approval from the Research Authority prior to any submission.

Today, the research proposals do not make any reference to the gender equality dimension defined by the European Union. The gender equality dimension notes the attitude of the research regarding gender ramifications of the research topic, gender equality among the research subjects, and so forth. As of 2022, this dimension will be included as a central criterion in all European proposals and calls for papers, and therefore, it is extremely important to address this dimension when writing research proposals and assistance requests submitted to the Research Authority.

II. Goals

- Increase in the number of senior female academic faculty members submitting proposals for external grants.
- Increase in the number of female teaching faculty members submitting proposals for external grants.
- Increase in the budgets that female faculty members request in their proposals for external research grants.
- Increased awareness among the academic faculty of the importance of the gender dimension in research.

III. Activities

- Targeted contact with female members of the academic faculty and female teaching coordinators in order to encourage them to submit proposals to competitive external funds.
- Encouraging female faculty members to submit requests for higher budgets (similar to the budget scopes requested by male faculty members).
- Appointment of women to the steering committee of the Research Authority, in order to give the gender consideration a more central place in the overall set of considerations involved in the steering committee's decisions.
- Holding writing workshops and research groups for female faculty members, in order to support research and publications.
- Holding workshops to promote gender research.
- Pairing a female mentor with each new young female researcher recruited to the university. The female mentor will be responsible for notifying the young researcher of the various options for submitting proposals for research support, such as research funds.
- The possibility of providing incentive stipends to female teaching coordinators who submit proposals to competitive research funds will be considered.

IV. Indices

- Increase in the number of senior female academic faculty members submitting proposals for external grants.
- Increase in the number of female teaching faculty members submitting proposals for external grants.
- Increase in the research budgets that female faculty members request in their proposals for external research grants.
- Many research proposals that include the gender equality dimension.
- Increase in research support for female members of the academic faculty while fulfilling administrative positions.
- Continuation of research work among senior female faculty members in an administrative capacity.



5. Administrative faculty

I. Current Situation

The administrative staff is composed of 601 female employees and 203 male. In 2021, there were two female Deputies to the Director-General and one man. Women were also the majority in middle-level management positions.

II. Goals

- Promotion of women within the system to management positions.
- Writing external tenders in gender-neutral language, and management of a gender-fair process.
- Attempt to equalize pay for female and male employees on the administrative faculty in identical positions, with similar skills and backgrounds.

III. Activities

- Addition of a day dedicated to gender-related topics to all leadership development workshops held at the university.
- Establishment of a steering committee to examine the gender aspect of the work of the administrative faculty on the university campuses.
- Workshops and designated training for the administrative faculty on the subject of gender-neutral writing.
- Designated workshops and training on the subject of gender equity for the administrative faculty.
- Updating the procedures and writing new procedures using gender-neutral language.

IV. Indices

- Participation of male and female administrative faculty members in a day dedicated to gender, as part of a leadership development workshop.
- Updating old procedures and writing new procedures using gender-neutral language from the start.
- Increase in the number of male and female administrative faculty members who have undergone training and workshops on the subject of gender equity.



6. Male and female students

I. Current Situation

The Open University believes that the female students of today are the future of tomorrow's management and academia. Therefore, The Open University encourages gender-sensitive activities among its female students, starting from their Bachelor's degree. As part of these activities, interested female students participate in programs where they encounter leading female personalities in today's market in order to create a strong (pro-women) network in the workforce .

Unique activities are held to recruit female students to STEM subjects from as early as high school, with the goal of achieving gender equality in the fields of natural sciences and exact sciences. An example of this type of activity is an annual conference attended by male and female researchers from these fields, together with women from the industry. The activity is organized in conjunction with the Ministry of Education's Department of Gifted and Excellent Students, and in 2022, an academic class was opened for religious female students pursuing a degree in Computer Sciences. In addition, scholarships are granted to women studying these subjects in order to encourage them to continue in their programs. There are also programs especially for female Arab students, and at The Open University, a Bachelor's program in Humanities and Social Sciences was opened for Arab single-mothers from Jaffa. The program is sponsored by the Tel Aviv Municipality and the Mahapach-Taghir organization, who provide these students with scholarships, activities for their children while the courses are in session, opportunities to meet leading female managers, and more.

The university also awards over 100 scholarships to women from other underprivileged populations, such as ultra-Orthodox women, disadvantaged mothers, Ethiopian women, and more.

ii. Goals

- A constant increase in the number of female students participating in networking programs.
- Increase in the number of students registered for STEM courses.
- Strengthening the preparations of female graduates of The Open University for integration into the workforce.

- Increase in the number of female students who continue to pursue advanced degrees in STEM subjects, and the opening of additional academic classes.

iii. Activities

- Targeted marketing of women to encourage registration for STEM subjects.
- Increasing the number of teaching coordinators (male and female) participating in gender equity workshops, in order to motivate them to push and encourage female students to pursue advanced STEM degrees.
- Personal, targeted contact with female students to encourage participation in mentoring programs with female managers.
- Holding preparatory workshops about interviews and presentation skills, resume writing, and negotiation skills with potential employers.
- Continuing to hold the annual conference to recruit high school students to STEM subjects.

iv. Indices

- Constant increase in the number of female students participating in networking programs.
- Increase in the number of students registered for STEM courses.
- Participation of female students in workshops preparing them for integrating into the workforce.
- Increase in the number of female students who continue to pursue advanced degrees in STEM subjects.

7. Male and female honorary fellows

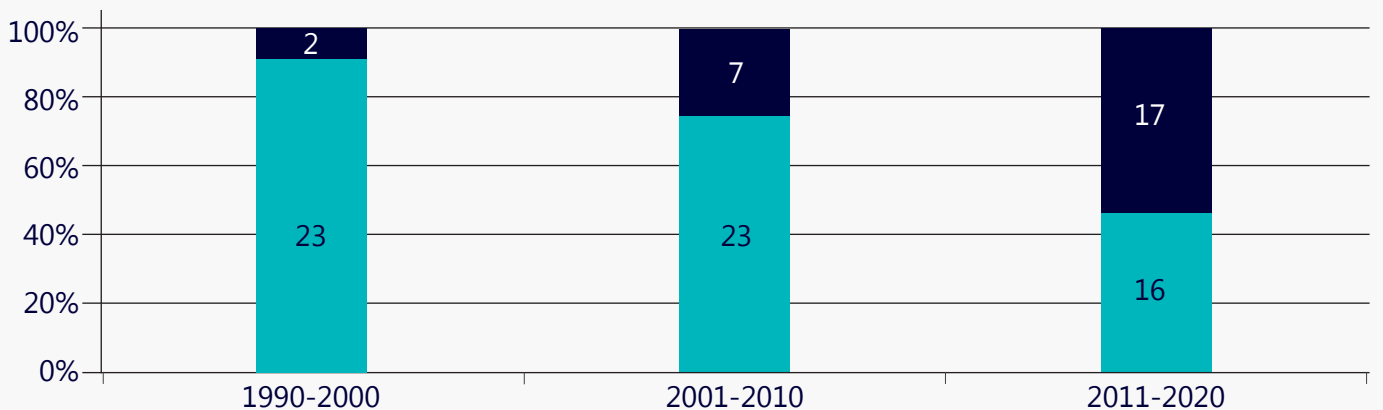
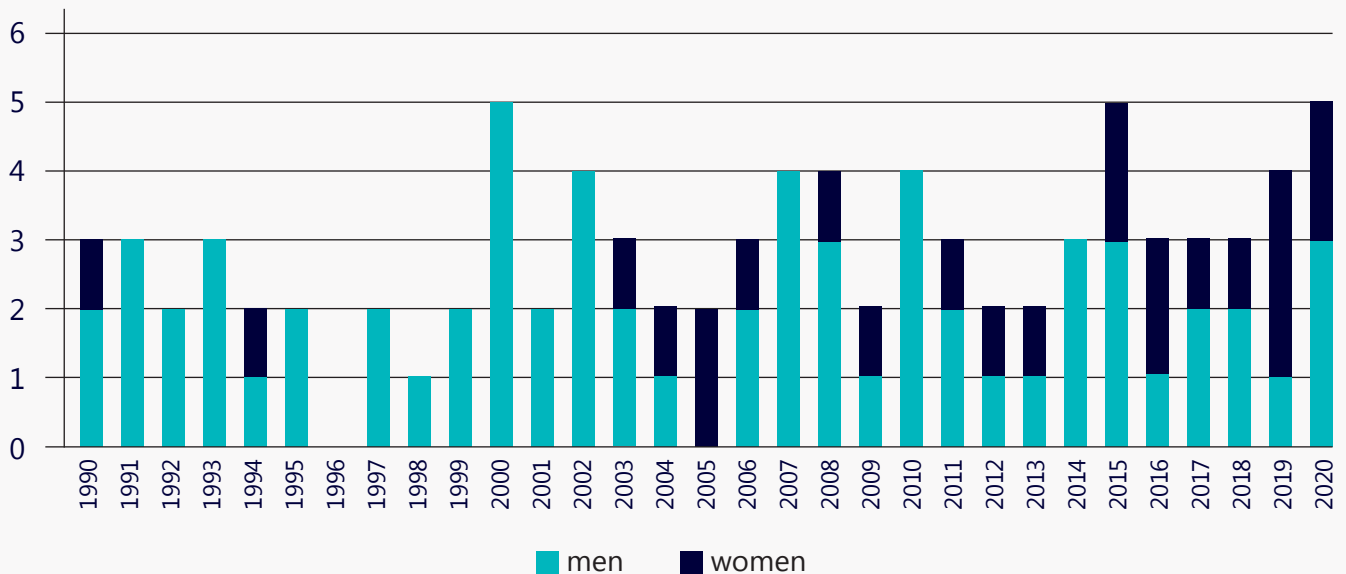
i. Current Situation

As of the 2000s, the university has started to take care to present the title of honorary fellow to women as well, and on a yearly basis, a focused effort is made to identify women worthy of receiving this honorable title. These efforts have succeeded, and over the past decade, the numbers of male and female honorary fellows have been almost equal.

ii. Goals

The university will continue to identify female candidates for receipt of the title, and will make an effort to reach an equal number of male and female fellows each year.

Honorary fellows, 1990-2020



8. Implementation of gender-oriented thinking at the organization

Gender-oriented thinking is implemented at The Open University on a regular basis and as an inseparable part of the university's other activities on the subject, as described throughout this strategic plan. Inter alia, the university holds workshops to implement gender-oriented thinking for all of its faculties, workshops on the subject of gender-appropriate teaching and gender-fair writing for the teaching faculty and the administrative faculty, and events such as "Female Scientist Day." The spokesperson of The Open University expresses this perspective in its publications and on social media.

In upcoming years, The Open University will hold a workshops on the subject of "gender-fair writing" for the departments of marketing, the spokesperson, human resources, the academic office, and the Research Authority, and it will promote gender-appropriate teaching. Gender-oriented thinking is also implemented at the organization through "Female Scientist Day," held annually and open to all male and female employees, as well as through the university's journal, website, and social media presence. Between 2022-2025, The Open University will update the recordings on all of the telephone systems so that they fairly and equally address women and men. The regulations and procedures will be gradually updated to gender-fair writing, in order to avoid writing in the masculine form with the addition of a note that this was done for purposes of convenience and that the text is addressing people of both genders.

The Open University will make an effort to enable senior female faculty members with young children to work at an office close to their home at one of The Open University's main campuses, if they are interested. The Open University will increase the exposure of all of its female researchers to the general public, by creating personal websites, using the designated website for gender equity, and by creating Wikipedia entries.

9. Sexual harassment

At The Open University, there is a managing supervisor responsible for implementing the regulations for prevention of sexual harassment, who is directly subordinate to the President of the university. She is assisted by three supervisors who oversee this subject. The managing supervisor has an annual budget for training, continuing education, and various activities, as well as administrative assistance for her operations.

The Open University will strive to appoint a faculty member at the highest possible level for this role of managing supervisor.



10. Method of data collection

I. Current Situation

The university has a business intelligence system called Maayan. The system collects data on an ongoing basis according to definitions set in advance, analyzes the data, and then makes it accessible in a visual, accessible, and open format. The system is managed by the university's computing department. Today, the system also collects and analyzes data related to gender balances among the faculty, both administrative and academic, as well as data about male and female students.

ii. Goals

- Examination of the impact of the activities held at the university for the purpose of raising awareness of gender equity.
- Addition of data that will facilitate gender comparisons according to a wide range of criteria.

iii. Activities

- Working closely with the university's computing department in order to define additional data and indices related to gender equity at the university.
- Renewed, joint assessment and analysis of the impact of various activities.
- Establishment of focus groups to assess effectivity and influence of the activities.

iv. Indices

- Introduction of new assessment indices into the Maayan system.
- Sending in-depth analysis of the data and the effectivity of the various activities to the steering committee of The Open University on the subject of gender equity, to be used when rendering its decisions.



Prof. Mimi Ajzenstadt,
President