



supera

Supporting the Promotion of Equality  
in Research and Academia

**Guidelines for gender-  
sensitive communication in  
research and academia**



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## Purpose

SUPERA - Supporting the Promotion of Equality in Research and Academia - is a 4-year project funded under a “Science with and for society” call of the Research and Innovation EU program Horizon 2020. The main aim of SUPERA is to design and implement Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) in six European organizations: four universities (Complutense University of Madrid; University of Cagliari; University of Coimbra and Central European University) and two research funding organizations (Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation and Autonomous Region of Sardinia). The GEPs will help to articulate a structural understanding of gender inequalities, stereotypes and biases in research as a cross-cutting issue to be tackled in their complex dimensions, and to foster the inclusion of a gender mainstreaming in research and academia.

The activities included in the work package dealing with Communication, engagement and sustainability seek to effectively communicate the project and its results, and to target internal and external audiences, both academic and non-academic, encouraging active support. The activities are also essential for raising public awareness about the importance of gender equality in Research Performing Organizations (RPOs) and Research Funding Organizations (RFOs), supporting the sustainability of changes and the institutionalization of gender equality policies.

These **Guidelines for gender-sensitive communication** in research and academia consider the main factors influencing the development of an academic institution’s communication strategy through the lenses of gender-sensitivity, with **three main aims**:

- Raising awareness on the pervasive role of communication and language in academia and its function in contributing to institutional change towards gender equality;
- Introducing a deeper awareness of the gender biases and stereotypes that affect daily communication;
- Providing advice and guidance in adopting a gender-sensitive approach in the communication strategies and practices of an academic institution.

The concepts and practices proposed in these Guidelines are fully aligned with the framework of **Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI)**, a “cross-cutting issue” in Horizon 2020 that redefines the role of researchers in society and the interactions between science and society, promoting an inclusive approach to research and innovation, through a set of five thematic elements: multi-actor and public engagement in research and innovation, open access, the promotion of gender equality and ethics in the scientific content and process, formal and informal science education.

In Horizon 2020, RRI is also a key action of the **Science with and for Society** paradigm, that implies that a wide range of societal actors (researchers, citizens, policy makers, business, third sector organisations, etc.) contribute to the research and innovation process taking into account the values, needs and expectations of society, with the aim



to foster cooperation between science and society, recruit new talent for science and to align scientific excellence and social awareness and responsibility.

Since communication reflects, and partly influences, what happens in social contexts, understanding the relationship between gender and communication requires first of all an awareness of the role of communication in sense-making processes and of the main sources of inequalities and gender disparities within academic and organizational contexts.

These Guidelines have been primarily **tailored** for everyone who has a communication responsibility in RPOs and RFOs, as well as for those who are involved on a daily basis in communication activities within universities and research institutions. Although communication and media relations activities are mainly developed and implemented by specific offices within these institutions, it should be stressed that nowadays communication tends to be a distributed and pervasive skill, and that every action carried out in research organizations has implications in terms of communication, taking on different meanings for different audiences. This dissemination process has been accelerated by the use of digital technologies and social media that represent new communication environments, where different kinds of communication flows and actions take place, between the private and public spheres, as well as internal and external dimensions within organizations.

Thus, these guidelines are designed to be used by everyone in **academia**: from administrative or technical staff to researchers; from student communities to media specialists. They identify specific channels and communication touchpoints, producing and disseminating institutional messages that require the adoption of a gender-sensitive approach. The guidelines are also designed taking into consideration the professionals working in **research funding organizations**, since tools, communication practices and general contexts are mainly shared by research performing and funding organizations.

**Part A** of the guidelines begins with the mapping and critical analysis of available resources dealing with gender-sensitive communication and gender communication in RPOs and RFOs, produced and disseminated by EU-funded projects, international organizations and European academic institutions.

It goes on to describe the characteristics of communication in research and academia, highlighting specific features and levels, and detailing interrelations among the main publics that these institutions need to consider when targeting communication activities through dedicated offices (e.g., communication and media relations offices) or in their unfolding in formal and informal contexts. Moreover, it will introduce the key concepts, challenges and resistances referred to in the current debate about gender equality in research. They all have an important role in how communication is being developed and performed in academia, research centers, and research funding organizations.

**Part B** draws on insights gained through recent EU-funded initiatives. This part will define what is meant by “gender-sensitive communication” in an academic and organizational





context. It will cover five interrelated communication areas that might contribute towards or benefit from a gender-sensitive approach: gender-sensitive language; visual and graphic communication, planning and organization of the events, digital communication; media relations. For each area, the document provides in-context examples taken from the daily communication activities of academia and research institutions.



## Part A

### 1. Mapping the institutional context: review of existing instruments and inspiring practices

#### 1.1 Methodology

To be effective, every communication initiative starts with an initial phase of situation analysis, conceived as a detailed explanation of the opportunities and challenges that exist within the organization and its environment (Austin & Pinkleton, 2006). This means a thorough understanding of the object of analysis, discussion of the relevant publics and collection of different sources of information that should lead the analysis. In this perspective, these guidelines start mapping the available resources dealing with gender-sensitive communication.

In order to identify the sources of information, the mapping activity was carried out analysing different projects' websites and similar guidelines available online. This activity was integrated by direct email contact with EU-funded projects focusing on the topic of gender in academia, in order to broaden the corpus of analysis with further materials besides those publicly available online. The portal for the gender and science community GENPORT was also consulted as a relevant resource. This mapping and the subsequent qualitative analysis (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) of the corpus collected has provided a clear picture of the state of the art of similar activities at a European level, in order to choose and define the specific approach for the SUPERA Guidelines.

The mapping focused on **two main corpora**:

- (A) resources on gender-sensitive communication developed within the framework of EU-funded projects;
- (B) guidelines on gender-sensitive communication developed by international organizations and universities.

The complete list of references of the analysed projects is available in Appendix 2.

#### 1.2 Main highlights of the analysis

A) As regards the analysis of available resources related to the topic of gender-sensitive communication **within EU projects**, a sample of **32 European projects** was taken into consideration. Among these, 30 projects deal with institutional change towards gender equality in research and academia environments, funded under the FP7 and Horizon 2020 framework programs since 2009. Some of them choose a specific disciplinary field (e.g. focusing on physics or agriculture research institutions), while others focus on a specific geographic area.

The remaining two projects were chosen because of the specific resources they have developed. The first one (the H2020 project "Hypatia") deals with the communication of



STEM disciplines aimed at girls and teenagers. The second (AGEMI, co-funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship EU Program) focuses on the advancement of gender equality in media industries.

The role of gender-sensitive communication in contributing to institutional change is included in the activities of eight of the selected projects, including specific actions, training or dedicated research streams. None of the projects investigated have yet published specific gender-sensitive communication guidelines, but the analysis has identified several valuable resources that were taken into consideration when drafting these guidelines.

**Table 1** includes the selection of EU projects that generated outcomes or included specific activities related to gender-sensitive communication.

**Table 1. EU-funded projects with activities or outcomes related to gender-sensitive communication**

PROJECT NAME	ACTIVITY RELATED TO GENDER-SENSITIVE COMMUNICATION	LINK
<b>WHIST</b> (Women's careers hitting the target)	The WHIST project implemented three experimental initiatives of gender diversity management in three European institutions. The Guidelines issued in 2011 highlight the impact of communication on the implementation of the initiatives and provide guidance based on the lessons learnt during the project.	<a href="https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.retepariopportunita.it%2F Rete_Pari_Opportunita%2FUserFiles%2Fwhist%2Fwhist_gl_def_ok_28112011.pdf">https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.retepariopportunita.it%2F Rete_Pari_Opportunita%2FUserFiles%2Fwhist%2Fwhist_gl_def_ok_28112011.pdf</a>
<b>STAGES</b> (Structural Transformation to Achieve Gender Equality in Science)	In 2015, the guidelines devote a part of the recommendations to “Communication and visibility”, stating that: <i>“Communication is an essential part of the scientific process, closely dependent on the exchange of data and ideas. Yet, in the context of “post-academic science”, the role of communication even increased, as the number of players involved in science and technology (funding institutions, private companies, governmental agencies, local authorities, and, in many cases, the public at large). In this framework, unequal access to communication leads to increasingly negative effects, since it reinforces the unbalanced distribution of power and roles between women and men and amplifies the masculine image of science. Effectively communicating the Action Plan and making women in the institution visible are, then, of pivotal importance to counter these trends, which impair both women and science”.</i>	<a href="http://www.stages.unimi.it/upload/documents/Guidelines_STAGES_new.pdf">http://www.stages.unimi.it/upload/documents/Guidelines_STAGES_new.pdf</a>
<b>FESTA</b> (Female Empowerment in Science and Technology Academia)	In 2015 the work package 4.1 aimed at <i>“increasing transparency and inclusivity in the informal decision-making and communication processes in the research units and at enabling/creating an enduring transformation of the organisational culture favouring a more active participation of women in all the decision-making and communication processes.”</i> The idea behind this approach may be summarised as follows: <i>“a careful analysis of the informal layer in organisations is of paramount importance if we intend to implement policies which are actually capable of transforming organisational</i>	<a href="http://www.festa-europa.eu/site-content/festa-documents">http://www.festa-europa.eu/site-content/festa-documents</a>



	<p><i>communication and decision-making practices in the direction of improving inclusion and transparency</i>”.</p> <p>A sample of departments and research units, heads of departments, department and research unit boards of the partner institutions have been included in the research. Special attention has been devoted to “Informal decision-making, inner circles and lack of transparency”, as well as to communication means and tools.</p>	
<b>TRIGGER</b> (Transforming Institutions by Gendering contents and Gaining Equality in Research)	The project issued in 2017 the deliverable “Toolkit for reviewing and modifying administrative language in a gender perspective (an introduction to)” with the goal of describing, revealing and coping with the gender biases present in a university’s administrative speech and writing. The deliverable includes a cross-examination of projects and actions carried out in recent years by three public Universities.	<a href="http://triggerproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/D1.7_Completo.pdf">http://triggerproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/D1.7_Completo.pdf</a>
<b>EGERA</b> (Effective Gender Equality in Research and the Academia)	In 2017 the Rectors of the academic partners of the EGERA project agreed to sign a common charter committing to gender-sensitive communication in their academic institutions, aimed at raising awareness and sensitivity, recognising that <i>“one important reason for this (vertical) segregation is people’s repeated exposure to pervasive cultural stereotypes that portray women as less competent for, and dedicated to, an academic and/or professional career.”</i>	<a href="https://www.egera.eu/de/publications/others.html">https://www.egera.eu/de/publications/others.html</a>
<b>EQUAL-IST</b> (Gender Equality Plans for Information Sciences and Technology Research Institutions)	In 2017 the project organised a webinar open to the wider public, covering the topics of the linguistic structures behind gender bias and illustrating existing available guidelines on gender-sensitive communication.	<a href="http://www.equal-ist.eu">www.equal-ist.eu</a>
<b>GENERA</b> (Gender Equality Network in the European Research)	The toolbox issued in 2018 contains over 100 recommended measures classified as relevant for the category “presence and visibility”. This mapping exercise provided examples and inspirations to other academic and research institutions.	<a href="https://www.genera-network.eu/genera-toolbox">https://www.genera-network.eu/genera-toolbox</a>



PROJECT NAME	ACTIVITY RELATED TO GENDER-SENSITIVE COMMUNICATION	LINK
<b>PLOTINA</b> (Promoting gender balance and inclusion in research, innovation and training)	<p>The project website provides a library of implemented actions that includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· "Reviewing institutional documents: regular revision of any text, communication, images, from a gender equality and diversity standpoint and provision of relevant training".</li> <li>· "Providing staff members with useful tools that will help them to use an inclusive language: Adopting gender neutral pronouns (University of Warwick)".</li> <li>· "Formal process in place for contacts and communication with women and men during parental leaves".</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.plotina.eu/plotina-list-of-actions/">https://www.plotina.eu/plotina-list-of-actions/</a>
<b>HYPATIA</b>	<p>In 2016 the project issued the report "Good practices on gender inclusion in STEM communication". The report analyses within a gender inclusion framework 49 science education activities, ranging from practical, hands-on activities to leisure-style games and competitions, reported by institutions from 14 European countries, including science centers, museums, research institutions, industrial institutions, and other science education institutions. Good practices and areas for further consideration are highlighted.</p>	<a href="http://www.expecteverything.eu/good-practices-gender-inclusion-stem-communication/">http://www.expecteverything.eu/good-practices-gender-inclusion-stem-communication/</a>
<b>AGEMI</b> (Advancing Gender Equality in Media Industries)	<p>The project aims to combat gender stereotypes and promote an equal, diverse and inclusive media sector, encouraging media and journalism students to develop a gender-sensitive practice when they enter the industry. It has developed a Resources Bank of good practices, learning resources that focus on different aspects of the gender-media-equality relationship and an app to monitor news media to determine the extent of gender sensitivity and collect examples of good practices.</p>	<a href="https://www.agemi-eu.org/">https://www.agemi-eu.org/</a>

B) The second step of the qualitative analysis aims to identify **guidelines** on gender-sensitive communication **issued by international organizations and by universities**. 13 guidelines developed by international organizations and 44 developed by universities were explored to find elements that could be relevant for choosing the SUPERA approach to gender-sensitive communication guidelines. The sample was selected based on the criterion of availability, with many of the materials to be investigated not always published online and therefore difficult to find, and guided by “purposeful sampling”, where “cases are chosen because there may be good reason to believe that “what goes on there” is critical to understanding some process or concept” (Schwandt, 1997, p.128).

The sample includes guidelines issued by organizations at a national and international level, including non-profit and **non-governmental organizations** such as UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO, IOM (International Organization for Migration), United Nations and **European institutions** such as the European Institute for Gender Equality, the European Commission and European Parliament [see 1.1 for the complete list] as well as documents at the national level issued by France, Italy, Slovenia, Luxembourg and Sweden.

A number of the guidelines sampled show a specific **area of specialization**, such as development, media sector and health. Some of the guidelines considered (e.g., UNDP, UNICEF) provide practical **examples** and checklists, while others offer an **in-depth overview** of the ways to approach gender-sensitivity in the communication projects promoted (for instance the Guidelines for reporting developed by the Republic of Slovenia).

Only a part of the analysed guidelines cover a **wide range of areas** such as gender-sensitive language, graphic and visual, events management and media relations, while the majority focus on gender-sensitive language and the use of visuals, not considering other important dimensions of contemporary communication, such as the layout of communication artifacts (brochures, press releases, front offices, etc.) or how to manage gender-sensitive communication in digital communication platforms, such as websites or social media channels. As for gender-sensitive language, the challenge to produce guidelines suitable for **multilingual contexts** has been taken up in the guidelines issued by the European Parliament.

It is important to highlight that more than once in the sample analysed, gender sensitivity has been contextualised in the wider framework of **intersectional discriminations**, providing reminders of all the other discriminations that might occur in combination to the ones related to sex and gender (e.g. abilities, ethnicity, religion).

As regards official documents issued by **universities**, the sample investigated includes 44 guidelines and internal documents issued in Spain, France, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Ireland, UK and Austria. These are in general short and concise documents developed to provide the academic community with a general overview of aims and a list of practical suggestions, mostly covering the topic of gender-sensitive language (with a specific focus on language for administrative documents), but sometimes also covering the selection of images, event management and the naming and labelling of webpages (see for instance the webpage developed by Trento University in Italy). The University of Italian-speaking Switzerland (USI) provides advice in the form of a checklist covering morphological, quantitative, semantic and visual aspects of gender-sensitive



communication. Following the 2002 University Act, the University of Wien (Austria) specified that academic degree certificates must use the respective masculine or feminine written form [see Appendix 2 for all the references].

Moreover, it is interesting to note that, when available, universities tend to frame the guidelines provided in **plans for positive actions** towards gender equality or other official statements and plans.

Indications, good practices and advice from all the analysed guidelines and documents were taken in consideration in order to identify the SUPERA approach to gender-sensitive communication [see Section 5].

## References

- Austin, Erika Weintraub, & Pinkleton, Bruce E. (2006). *Strategic public relations Management. Planning and managing effective communication programs*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Schwandt, Thomas A. (1997). *Qualitative inquiry: a dictionary of terms*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lindlof, Thomas R., & Taylor, Bryan C. (2002). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*. London: Sage.

## Web sources

- GENPORT, community sourced Internet Portal on gender and science (EU-funded project).  
<https://www.genderportal.eu/>
- Horizon2020. *Science with a for Society*  
<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/science-and-society>
- Horizon 2020. *Responsible Research and Innovation*  
<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/responsible-research-innovation>
- RRI TOOLS, participatory Toolkit about Responsible Research and Innovation (EU-funded project).  
<https://www.rri-tools.eu/about-rri>





## 2. SUPERA approach to gender-sensitive communication

### 2.1 The strategic role of communication in research and academia

Managing **communication of a research institution** is a multi-faceted task. Universities and research institutions (RPOs) are, at the same time, learning environments, places where scientific research takes place and workplaces for large communities of human beings. Teaching, research, outreach, public engagement, fundraising, promoting enrolments, establishing partnerships are only some of the tasks a university or research organisation must manage according to its mission and values (Bleiklie, 1998; Mazzei, 2004). Nevertheless, they must act as places where knowledge can be developed and shared at the highest levels, ensuring academic freedom and visibility to all the actors involved, including the less represented within the framework of inclusion (EUA, 2019). At the same time, **research funding organizations** (RFOs) play a central role in developing knowledge, funding research at university and research center levels. Indeed, these organizations can enhance specific lines of research that might shadow certain research areas or typologies of researchers, or they can be inclusive not only in their services, but also in communicating with external publics.

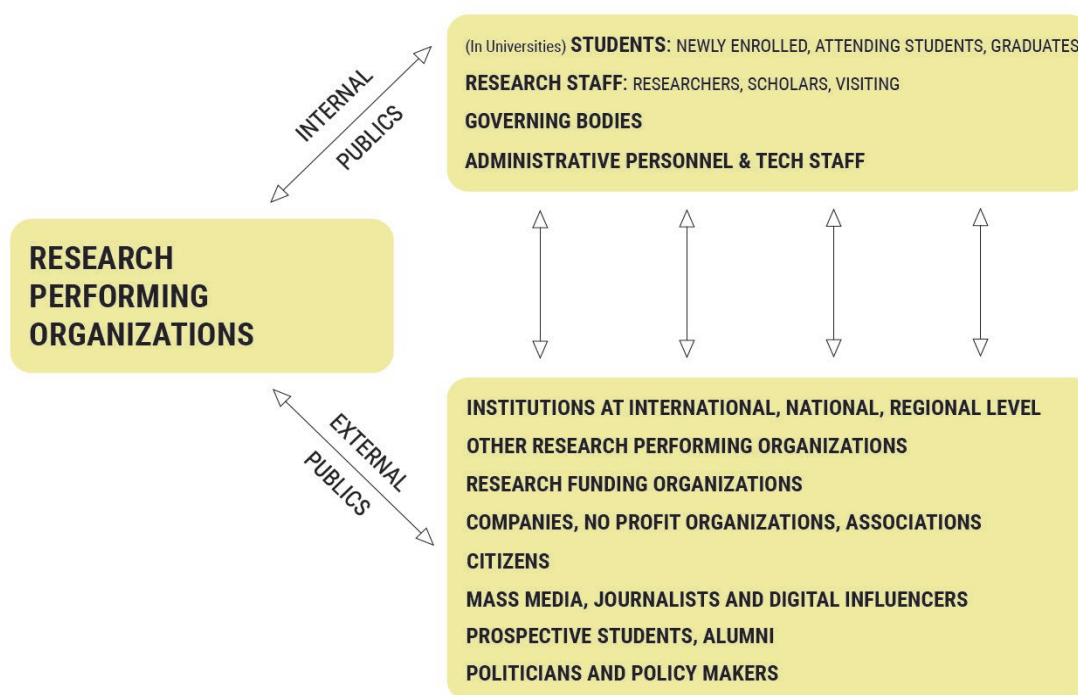
It seems important to stress the extent to which academia is becoming an increasingly open network (Bleiklie, 1998; Mazzei, 2000, 2004). Having abandoned the role of keeper of knowledge and finally left the ivory tower (McNay, 1995; Raanan, 1999), the university, in this new millennium, has "*a fundamental task, indeed a moral obligation: that of participating in the great debates concerning the orientation and future of society*" (UNESCO, 1996). A high level of professionalism, and the awareness of having a strategic role to play in the growth of society at a local and international level, have driven academia to develop its own communication tools and channels and to foster relationship management, which is becoming increasingly crucial for supporting sustainable and inclusive development (Lovari, Mazzei & Vibber, 2015). Today, universities and research institutions in general communicate and relate with States, businesses, research funding organizations, students and their families, media and journalists, citizens and visitors. Moreover, in addition to the Humboldtian ideal (training and research), the university now has a new mission to develop in relations with society and its various divisions. Indeed there is now talk of a third stream, a "**third mission**" for universities (Gulbrandsen & Slipersæter, 2007; Loi & Di Guardo, 2015), enabling new forms of collaboration with different stakeholders and society as a whole, including new practices of public engagement fostered in part by digital technologies (OECD, 2009).

This new model requires an attitude of openness, dialogue and listening (Grunig, 2009; Lumby & Foskett, 1999), and a proactive multichannel approach in communication that considers various communicative needs, different languages and tools. This model involves universities but also other types of research performing organizations, and research funding organizations, mostly in the perspective of fostering transparency, accountability and participation. Nowadays, RPOs and RFOs inform and actively communicate with different types of publics, both inside and outside of the organizations, both a local and an international level.

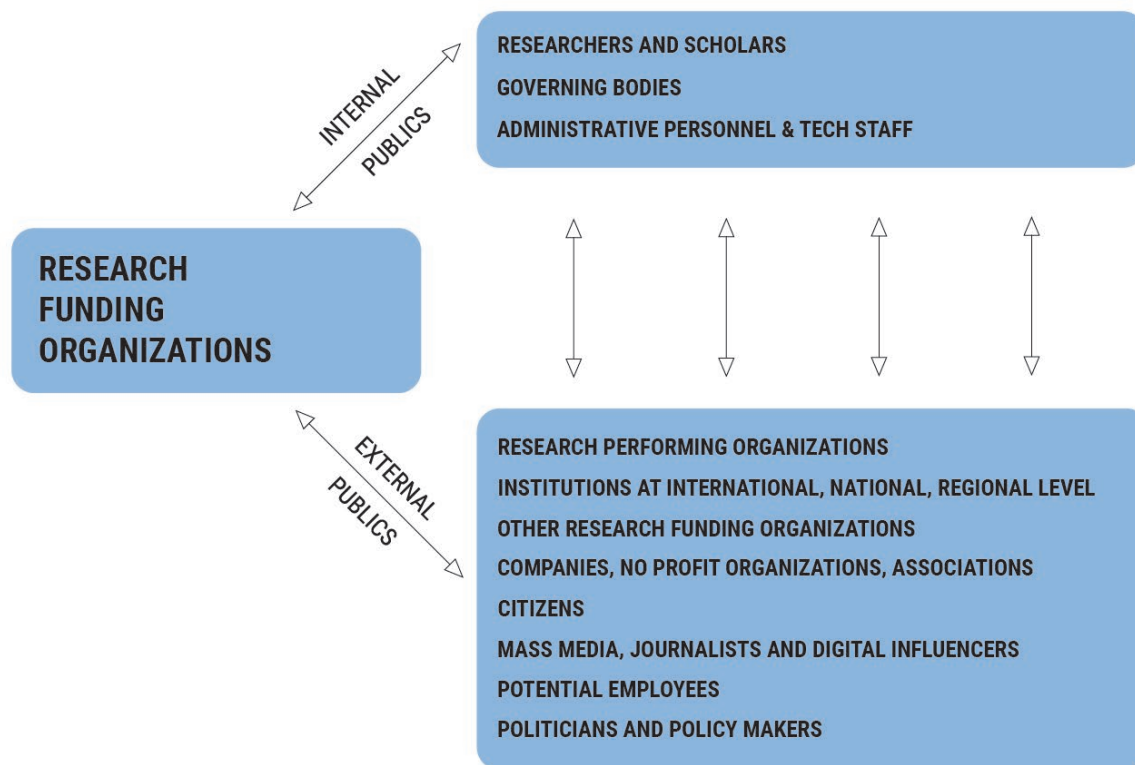


As regards **internal publics/stakeholders**, RPOs communication flows (fig. 1) are aimed at students (only for universities), researchers (professors, assistants, lecturers, scholars), administrative and technical staff, all of different genders, abilities and ethnicities, age, etc. At the same time, universities and research institutions communicate with different **external publics/stakeholders**: higher education ministries and other governing bodies, prospective students and alumni, applicants for jobs in research or administration, businesses (e.g. employers, partners, contractors), decision makers, research funding institutions, journalists and digital influencers, citizens, again of varying genders, abilities, ethnicities, age. RFOs communication flows are addressed to similar publics, but with some specificities according to their roles and nature, as can be seen in figure n.2.

Relating with this variety of different publics, universities, research organizations, and RFOs play a fundamental role in communicating the importance of the principles of equity, inclusion and enhancement of differences in their messages and organizational behaviors.



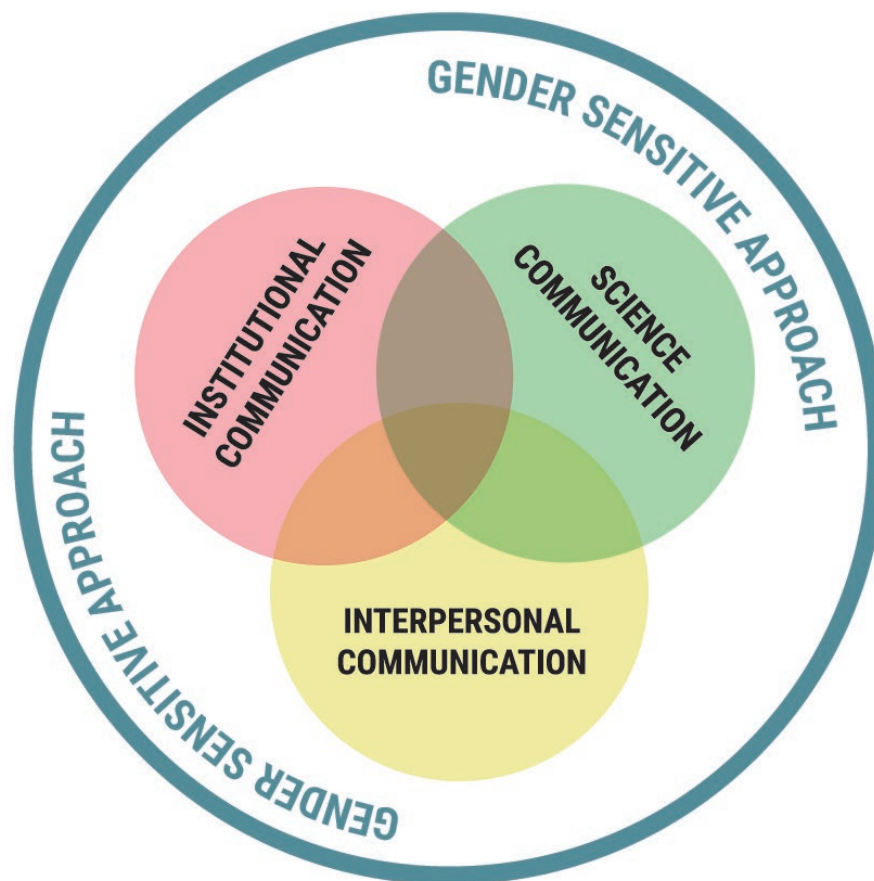
**Figure 1.** Internal and external publics of RPOs



**Figure 2.** Internal and external publics of RFOs

Within this framework, university and research communication contains at least **three different communication levels and functions**: institutional, scientific and interpersonal. And, of course, all three levels can be (or not) gender-sensitive.

The **first level** - institutional - covers all aspects of “public sector communication” (Canel & Luoma-aho, 2019; Luoma-aho & Canel, 2020), with its own specific paradigms and rules.



**Figure 3.** Communication levels and functions

According to Canel and Luoma-aho (2019), pp.33, **public sector communication** is

*“Goal-oriented communication inside organizations and between organizations and their stakeholders that enables public sector functions within their specific cultural and/or political settings, with the purpose of building and maintaining the public good and trust between citizens and authorities”.*

This definition includes *“organizations owned and controlled by the state/government, plus any organization involved in the provision of public services”* (2019, p. 39). This means also private or semi-public organizations can be involved in such flow of communications. Generally, under the heavy influence of specific national laws and shaped by well-established organizational practices, public sector communication is designed to ethically serve the public interest and ensure transparency, accessibility to services and openness in a democratic environment.



Investing in institutional communication means to strategically manage communication flows to promote different types of services (didactic, research, orientation, knowledge transfer, funding, etc.) using both traditional channels and digital tools in order to make them visible and searchable for the widest variety of publics. In this sense, the visibility of RPOs and RFOs in public opinion is not dependent only on media coverage and its bias (Krijnen & Van Bauwel, 2015; Ross, 2011). Rather communication is a structured and organised function, with ad hoc staff and professionals in charge to plan, produce and disseminate institutional messages at different levels (Lovari, Mazzei & Vibber, 2015; Luoma-aho & Canel, 2020). Thus, in selecting topics for a communication campaign or a press release, in building scenarios or storytelling for official websites and social media, or in choosing the panelists for an official event, these professionals need to take into account the possible gender bias or stereotypes that this type of communication may produce or reiterate.

The **second level**, defined as **scientific**, concerns both RPOs and RFOs communication closely intertwined with the field of **science communication** (Bucchi & Trench, 2008; Burns, O'Connor & Stocklmayer, 2003; Gibbons et al., 1994). From the dissemination of scientific findings by university scholars to the launch of a research grant call by a funding organization, such communication often adopts a specific jargon, often choosing specific channels and platforms to be visible only for specific communities. Recently, thanks in part to the diffusion of digital technologies and social media, science and research topics have become more visible and easier to find for lay persons, journalists and society at large, creating new challenges for what the journal *Science* called in 2002 "Public Engagement with Science and Technology" (PEST).

Communicating science means also to **select** areas of research, researchers or publications to make them visible to public opinion and to strategic publics, including RFOs. In this perspective, several studies have shown the lack of visibility of women researchers and their achievements, due to the scarce interest of specific publics (e.g., certain types of media outlets), but also due to the gender bias related to organizational decisions and policies. On the contrary RPOs should be promoting the representation of men and women in science communication in line with the principles of equal opportunities and plurality, as well as RFOs should consider funding studies and research without procrastinating gender imbalances or segregating certain fields of knowledge or typology of researchers.

Last, but not least, communication is not only a function managed by communicators and media professionals working for universities and research institutions. Indeed, as Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1967) stress, it is impossible not to communicate: all types of behavior are forms of communication: **communication crosses across all organizational activities and places**, both at the formal and informal levels. Thus, the **third level**, the **interpersonal** one, concerns communication that happens in very specific contexts (rooms, labs, offices, etc.), with unique scripts and routines (from lectures and graduation ceremonies to office hours, talking with international research funders, indeed any type of daily interaction). Moreover, all the events taking place in academia and research organizations, involving internal and external publics, have a communicative impact. From the layout of a stand at a career guidance fair to the structure of university



offices, from emoticons published in a Lab's official social media account to the internal messaging board in a RFOs. These formal contexts and relations should not perpetuate gender inequalities. At the same time personal relationships, informal jokes and comments should not be excluded by a gender sensitive approach, since everything helps to build a specific positioning and communicate pieces of information and meanings.

Today in the so-called "network society" (Castells, 1996) the persistence, spreadability and scalability of information (Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2013) make these messages and meanings even more pervasive, visible and resilient. This is also true for stereotypes, asymmetries of knowledge and misconceptions about gender equality that may disseminate or reiterate a power imbalance: between students and professors, with desk staff when asking for a service or information, whenever a researcher interact with a RFOs' employee via email or in the workplace (Barret & Davison, 2006; Perry, Turner & Sterk, 1992).

Therefore, in addition to **specific skills and competencies** assigned to communication and media relations offices (usually in charge of communication planning and management), a **widespread** general **communication sensitivity** is today required throughout the organization, involving all relevant actors. And this sensitivity must be accompanied by a similar awareness and sensitivity towards inclusion and gender equality.

## 2.2 The importance of gender-sensitive communication in research and academia

As many scholars in the field pointed out, communication can be considered as "*the practice of producing and negotiating meanings, a practice which always takes place under specific social, cultural and political conditions.*" (Schirato & Yell, 1997). Thus, every organization actively contributes to transmit but also evolve and innovate knowledge, social norms and cultures. Gender awareness can have a positive impact in this process, acting as a cultural leverage that can contribute to a more inclusive community, build more inclusive workplaces, improve the communication of research results, address teaching contents to a wider public and allow everyone to feel welcome to access all the opportunities and services provided (Barret & Davison, 2006). In this context, what can be the pillars and the trajectories needed to spread a sensitivity toward gender-sensitive communication in academia and research organization?

### The fundamental role of research institutions in society

In research and academia, knowledge is produced, transmitted and disseminated. These institutions have a central role in the development of a society and in particular of new generations, also with regard to gender awareness and combating any form of



discrimination. One of the ways an organization can act towards this goal is by changing its approach to communication in order to counteract inequalities and challenge stereotypes and traditional roles in society. Universities can help to build a more democratic and tolerant and less conflictual society, aware of differences and open to the fulfilment of everyone's aspirations.

Language and communication are tools and contexts where inequalities can develop, be transmitted and reiterated. Institutional communication should instead promote an inclusive approach, embedding equity, openness and inclusion as central values.

### **Addressing power relations in research institutions**

Communication shows and reflects power relations rooted in every organizational structure (Crozier, 1963; Merton, 1949), including public sector organizations and research institutions. This could happen both in interpersonal communication and in mediated types of communications, such as emails, regulations or documents. Most of the time power relations are unbalanced from a gender perspective, because of the uneven gender distribution of roles and responsibilities in research organizations. Informal communication can also be deeply biased by a lack of gender sensitivity, resulting in a confirmation of the existing imbalances and rooted stereotypes.

Adopting a gender perspective in communication can contribute to highlighting imbalances in these interactions and suggesting strategies to overcome them in ordinary activities.

### **Fighting stereotypes in organizations and careers**

Administrative and scientific careers are affected by unbalanced gender distribution among disciplines and along the career ladder (She Figures, 2018). Scholars have pointed out how several forms of academic work and certain ideas about the role of researcher become privileged in shaping the distribution of rewards and opportunities, while others do not (Bailyn, 2011; Kumra, Simpson & Burke, 2014; Meyerson & Kolb, 2000). The phenomenon is often accompanied by deeply rooted gender stereotypes. Research organizations often approach this issue by promoting initiatives that may have a limited impact and sometimes even a ghettoising effect.

From an early age, human beings learn to associate women with specific traditional professional roles (e.g. nurse, secretary), while men are mostly connected with jobs like being a professor or a scientist. As shown in a recent study covering 66 countries worldwide (Miller, Eagly & Linn, 2014), there are strong relationships between women's representation in science and national gender-science stereotypes, meaning that men tend to be more associated with science than women. This finding also holds true for countries where women were approximately half of the nation's science majors and employed researchers (EIGE GEAR TOOL, 2016).



Reflecting on communication issues may play a role in broadening the approach to gender equality in science, since it invites the questioning of well-established daily routines and habits.

### Supporting structural change in academia and research organizations

A gender-sensitive approach to communication makes an effective contribution to a holistic approach towards gender equality. In most cases specific guidelines dedicated to communication are part of broader programs aimed at achieving gender equality in academic institutions, with actions to tackle not only communication issues but also recruitment, work-life balance, harassment and the inclusion of diversity [as seen in Section 1]. In adopting an effective Gender Equality Plan (GEP), both RPOs and RFOs need to implement a communication strategy. This strategy should be guided by a specific communication plan aiming to identify inclusive initiatives and accessible messages in order to support the proper implementation of the GEPs.

To change the way academia and research organizations communicate and relate with different stakeholders, these institutions should adopt a more inclusive approach, providing positive examples and messages on a daily basis, for instance learning how to recognise and avoid sexist expressions [cf. Section 5]. Less represented groups will be empowered because they will feel more visible and encouraged to contribute more to academic life and to organizational mission. Furthermore, challenging gender stereotypes can also contribute to overcoming them and changing our mindsets.

The following sections of Part A cover the main **key terms, challenges and resistances** [Sections 3 and 4] that impact on universities and research institutions and that can impede or slow down the adoption of a gender-sensitive approach in communication.

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### 3. Key terms and challenges

#### 3.1 Main challenges

All aspects of communication policies should be gender-sensitive. Without a conscious effort to include a gender equality perspective, communication is very likely to reinforce gender stereotypes (Heilman, 2012), or simply to make gender equality issues or women invisible (Lombardo & Meier, 2008).

**Gender-sensitive communication** means using inclusive **language**, which promotes gender equality and the equal visibility of women and men. The Council of Europe has been committed to using inclusive language for over 20 years, since Instruction no. 33 of 1 June 1994 concerning the use of non-sexist language at the Council of Europe. The Committee of Ministers Recommendation R (90) 4 on the elimination of sexism from language also recommends that member states use language reflecting the principle of equality and take measures with a view to:

- Encouraging the use of non-sexist language to take account of the presence, status and role of women in society, as current linguistic practice does for men.
- Bringing the terminology used in legal drafting, public administration and education into line with the principle of sex equality.
- Encouraging the use of non-sexist language in the media.

Thus, even within the context of research and academia it is important to review the use of language that currently makes women who are involved in research or who occupy key roles within the academy invisible.

Certainly, it is right to emphasise the fact that the use of gender-sensitive language has different implications depending on the language. Many countries have their own guidelines and/or practices regarding this issue. Gender-sensitive communication also relates to carefully choosing **images** that are inclusive of both women and men, if possible that also reflect diversity among women and men, that promote a non-stereotypical image of both sexes and support gender equality. Why is it important? Communication forms an integral part of **policy-making**, especially when it comes to how messages, objectives, results and impact are successfully communicated inside and outside of academia. This part of policy needs to fully reflect gender equality. This is particularly important given that efficient communication tools, including visual and digital communication, can have a very powerful effect on the public.

**Gender stereotypes** can manifest themselves in three different ways in communication:

- women can be underrepresented or absent in communication tools, both written and visual, for example less present and valued in those disciplines which have an influence on the life of all citizens (i.e. medicine, economics, engineering and architecture, just to name a few);



- women and men can be represented in stereotypical roles and situations, which *de facto* limits their opportunities;
- a flagrant or subtle hierarchy of status or functions can be observed in communication tools to the detriment of women (e.g. images of men as speakers and women as listeners). (EIGE Glossary)

### **3.2 Glossary on gender and gender-sensitive communication in research and academia**

This section gives the main key terms, in the form of a basic glossary, relating to gender and gender communication. It aims to explain gender equality-related key concepts that could also impact on communication activities in universities and research institutions. It may be useful to note that relevant complete glossaries and thesauri already exist [see References].

#### **Empowerment**

The process of gaining access and developing one's capacities with a view to participating actively in shaping one's own life and that of one's community in economic, social and political terms. (OECD)

An example related to research and academia: *through training, mentoring or peer support processes, allow women staff to develop the leadership and knowledge skills required to increase their participation in the University's decision-making processes and to facilitate their leadership at all levels.*

#### **Gender**

Gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are created in our families, our societies and our cultures. The concept of gender also includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviours of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). Gender roles and expectations are learned. They can change over time and they vary within and between cultures. Systems of social differentiation, such as political status, class, ethnicity, physical and mental disability, age and more, modify gender roles. The concept of gender is vital because, applied to social analysis, it reveals how women's subordination (or men's domination) is socially constructed. As such, the subordination can be changed or ended. It is not biologically predetermined nor is it fixed forever. (UNESCO)



An example related to research and academia: *organisational structures (therefore also Universities and Research Institutes) are not gender neutral, and that gender is not an addition to ongoing organisational processes but an integral part of those processes. Thus, organizations are inherently gender-based, and several studies have shown that work practices considered "normal" have a tendency to privilege characteristics that are socially and culturally ascribed to men and devalue traits ascribed to women.*

### **Gender awareness**

The process that aims to show how existing values and norms influence our picture of reality, perpetuate stereotypes and support mechanisms (re)producing inequality. It challenges values and gender norms by explaining how they influence and limit the opinions taken into consideration and decision-making. In addition, awareness-raising aims to stimulate a general sensitivity to gender issues. (EIGE- Glossary)

An example related to research and academia: *the distribution of power in academia or in research institutes is not the same between men and women as most institutional governance structures are largely male dominated. This explains why there are only few women rectors all over the globe.*

### **Gender bias**

Gender bias is a preference or prejudice toward one gender over the other. Bias can be conscious or unconscious, and may manifest in many ways, both subtle and obvious. Academia is not immune to gender bias. Recognizing common stereotypes of women in the workplace and taking measures to eliminate them would improve the climate for all genders. (EIGE- Glossary)

An example related to research and academia: *several findings on gender inequality in academia, have led to calls for more transparent and open recruitment procedures and accountability among decision-makers in order to remedy the bias and arbitrariness of opaque appointment processes and guard against the reproduction of gender inequality practices that hamper the career progression of women.*



## Gender balance

This term is commonly used in reference to human resources and equal participation of women and men in all areas of work, projects or programs. In a gender equality scenario, women and men are expected to participate in proportion to their share of the population. In many areas, however, women participate less than might be expected based on gender distribution of the population (underrepresentation of women), while men participate more than expected (overrepresentation of men). (original source: United Nations Statistics Division – UNSD. Global Gender Statistics Program; secondary source: EIGE)

An example related to research and academia: *the presence of women in Academia is still highly unbalanced in the STEM areas, as well as in decision-making positions.*

## Gender equality

This term refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development. (EIGE- Glossary)

An example related to research and academia: *several researches have highlighted that academia appears to be one sphere in which men and masculinity are locked into one another in ways that, whether or not by intention, exclude or marginalise women and femininity.*

## Gender equity

The concept of gender equity refers to “fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different, but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities”. (International Labour Office - ILO, 2000)



An example related to research and academia: *the underrepresentation of academics women at higher classifications has been widely publicised, nationally, internationally, as well as across disciplines.*

### **Gender mainstreaming**

It is characterised by top-down approaches, with global, national, and local agencies setting rules and deciding on policies for increased gender equality (Eurydice, 2020).

An example related to research and academia: *in Academia this can be achieved by raising awareness, the implementation of specific measures to promote a gendered perspective, and the promotion of structural changes. It aims at changes in the mainstream processes, challenging the existing norms built on the experiences of men and, more generally, power relations based on gender.*

### **Gender-sensitive language**

Gender-sensitive language aims to apply gender equality to written and spoken language. It is realised when women, men and those who do not conform to the binary gender dichotomy are made visible and addressed in language.

Due to the importance of the gender dimension in public policy, enhancing gender visibility is an important way for public policy to positively affect all members of society. Law- and policy-makers are always advised to use gender-sensitive language, rather than gender-neutral language. This is a relevant aspect to consider for all the texts within universities and research institutions. (EIGE, 2019)

An example related to research and academia: *languages such as German, Romance languages and Slavic languages, where every noun has a grammatical gender and the gender of personal pronouns usually matches the reference noun, should use the feminine correspondents of masculine terms for instance for job titles; furthermore, replacing the generic masculine with double forms for specific referents has gained acceptance in many languages.*



## Gender stereotypes

Gender stereotypes are preconceived ideas whereby males and females are arbitrarily assigned characteristics and roles determined and limited by their sex. Sex stereotyping can limit the development of the natural talents and abilities of boys and girls, women and men, their educational and professional experiences as well as life opportunities in general. Stereotypes about women both result from and are the cause of deeply ingrained attitudes, values, norms and prejudices against women. They are used to justify and maintain the historical relations of power of men over women as well as sexist attitudes which are holding back the advancement of women.

An example related to research and academia: *evidence suggests that stereotype-based cognitive bias negatively impacts women's career advancement in traditionally male fields, especially toward leadership in these fields.*

## Glass ceiling

The difficulty for women in reaching top positions, together with both horizontal and vertical segregation, still act as powerful determinants of gender discrimination in the workplace. The problem of the glass ceiling persists and next to it the obstacles have multiplied rather than the opportunities for female work. The problem of job discrimination does not only concern the advancement of the career, but it infiltrates all levels and areas within the organization, in a point that we can reasonably speak not only of a crystal ceiling, but of a labyrinth path, a sort of tangle of joints and curves, visible or not, which prevent linear career paths (Eagly & Carli, 2007). The glass ceiling in academia is well documented.

An example related to research and academia: *academics women are more likely than men to end up in non-tenure-track positions.*

## Glass Ceiling Index

It is an index that measures the probability of women compared to men to reach the highest qualification in the academic hierarchy. The index is given by the ratio of two shares: that of women permanently present in the academic world in Grade A, B and C and that of women in Grade A. The GCI assumes a value of 1 when there is a perfect gender equality in Grade A; the more the index takes values higher than 1 the more women are underrepresented in Grade A.





An example related to research and academia: *in 2007 the value of the GCI for European women academics (EU28) was equal to 1.80, in 2016 there is a trend towards a decrease in the index and the estimated value corresponds to 1.64. (She Figures, 2018)*

### **Glass cliff**

The glass cliff is a relative of the “glass ceiling” – a metaphor for the invisible, societal barrier that keeps women from achieving the highest positions in business, politics, and organizations. The glass cliff is a twist on that: women are elevated to positions of power when things are going poorly. When they reach the upper ranks of power, they’re put into precarious positions and therefore have a higher likelihood of failure, meaning there’s a greater risk for them to fall (Ryan & Haslam, 2005).

An example related to research and academia: *the history of leadership in academia was (maybe yet is) basically male. When a woman holds leadership positions, her leadership and management style is often challenged.*

### **Horizontal segregation**

This refers to gender imbalance across broad economic sectors. The distribution of women and men by field of study has been studied over time in order to evaluate the evolution of the situation of men and women in different fields. This allows us to identify recent trends in the distribution of women in different areas of science and to uncover any (de)feminization/(de)masculinization of certain fields of study. (EIGE- Glossary)

An example related to research and academia: *the analysis of gender representation in each academic field reveals imbalances in the distribution of men and women, in almost all EU countries.*

### **Intersectionality**

With reference to gender equality, intersectionality is an analytical tool for studying, understanding and responding to the ways in which sex and gender intersect with other personal characteristics/identities, and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences of discrimination. It starts from the premise that people live multiple, layered identities deriving from social relations, history and the operation of structures of power. Intersectional analysis aims to reveal multiple identities, exposing the different types of



intersectional and multiple discrimination and disadvantage that occur as a consequence of the combination of identities and the intersection of sex and gender with other grounds. (EIGE- Glossary)

An example related to research and academia: *failure to recognise the existence of biases born of privilege, and the importance of marginalised experience in understanding certain phenomena, enables the designation of bias to deny academics with this marginalised experience the right to a personhood. It is still common to hear words like “woman”, “black”, “queer-scientist”, highlighting the rarity of these identities coexisting with that of “scientist”. Meanwhile, white male scientists are referred to merely as “scientists”, which acknowledges that initiates of academia frequently have that identity and implies that it is irrelevant to their status as a scientist.*

### **Leaky pipeline**

The leaky pipeline is a metaphor used to explain that if you pour water (young girls) into a pipe, and it leaks along its length (girls and women exit at various times), very little water (professional women leaders) will emerge at the end of the pipeline. (Cronin & Roger, 1999).

An example related to research and academia: *in academia or research institutions, at every stage of the appointment process the number of women academics decreases and, as a result, the percentage of women full professors does not reflect the proportion of qualified women.*

### **Maternal wall**

This metaphor gives a clear image of how women’s careers are negatively affected by the breaks in employment necessary for motherhood (Crosby, Williams, & Biernat, 2004; Williams, 2005).

An example related to research and academia: *some scholars have documented the sharp impact of having children on academic women’s careers. Women who have children soon after receiving their Ph.D. are much less likely to achieve tenure than men who have children at the same point in their career.*



## Scissor effect

In the literature on gender and science this uneven trend in the careers of men and women is referred to as the "scissors effect".

An example related to research and academia: *the result of unequal participation of men and women in science allows a graphic representation in the shape of a scissors that shows how the percentages of men and women reverse their positions as the scientific career advances.*

## Sexism

Definitions of sexism generally emphasize two components: hostility toward women (i.e., hostile affect and negative stereotypes) and the endorsement of traditional gender roles (i.e., restricting women's conduct to fit societal prescriptions and confining women to roles accorded less status and power than those of men). (Glick, & Fiske, 1997)

An example related to research and academia: *two researchers, obviously women, were advised by an anonymous reviewer from an international journal to "find one or two male biologists to work with". The reviewer supposes that having a male co-author would improve the paper.*

## Sexual harassment

It is a form of gender-based violence encompassing acts of unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature, which have a purpose or effect of violating the victim's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Acts of sexual harassment are, typically, carried out in the context of abuse of power, promise of reward or threat of reprisal (EIGE).

Sexual harassment involves a significant number of women on Academia across the EU nations. Controversies remain about what constitutes sexual harassment, although most agree that the power differential between harasser and victim is central to the definition, its existence, and lack of reporting. The discussion of the cultural context of sexual harassment illustrates the strong underpinnings of this phenomenon and the resistance to its elimination.



## Sticky floor

It is a metaphor that has been used to account for women being held back in lowly paid jobs at the bottom levels of organizations. It was initially used in 1995 to describe how the careers of women in academic medicine were stalled due to a lack of institutional resources and support (Carnes, Morrissey, & Geller, 2008).

An example related to research and academia: *academic women are more present in researchers and associate professors' roles, while they are much less present in full professor roles. Careers are generally slower than male colleagues.*

## Unconscious bias

Bias is a cognitive process which can be defined as skewed information processing under the influence of context and accumulated experience. Broadly speaking, we act on the basis of internalised schemas, which we use to make the task of processing information efficient and manageable. However, these useful, cognitive “short-cuts” can also mislead us, because they tend to make us pay more attention to information that confirms our expectations and less attention to disconfirming information, thus introducing biases. Bias is at play in many everyday situations, it affects all of us, and there are many issues influenced by bias in specific situations, among them ethnic and regional identity, age, sexual and religious orientation and gender effects, for which intersectionality effects may occur. Unconscious (or implicit) bias is used to mean that human beings are not neutral in their judgment and behaviour but have experience-based associations and preferences (or aversions) without being consciously aware of them.

There is ample evidence that unconscious gender bias plays a role in academia in several ways (as it does in other organisations and in society at large). For example, bias is a factor contributing to vertical segregation, i.e. the fact that women do not reach the most senior and prominent positions at universities in the same proportions as men. Moreover, there is an undeniable body of evidence showing that bias against women is already present in recruitment and selection processes for early-career female researchers. Bias can creep in when advertising vacancies, in the composition and working methods of selection committees and in the language itself used in evaluations. Lastly, EU statistics show higher male applicants' success rates in funding competitions (about 4% on average across Europe), and some studies point to male applicants receiving higher quality evaluations of researchers, although not higher quality of proposal, in funding competitions. (LERU.ORG)



An example related to research and academia: *the belief that academic institutions and networks are essentially unbiased and that appointments, rewards, and recognition are based upon objective judgements on excellence or talent. There is thus the assumption that individual career progression follows “merit” and that if there are imbalances these are due to inequalities existing in society (outside of academia). This view perpetuates the illusion of academia as a meritocratic “sanctuary” located outside/or parallel to society, but whose organizational participants (students, staff) are still affected by it (Hardin & Banaji, 2013).*

### **Velvet ghettos**

The glass ceiling is not only due to the late entry of women in organization but is also linked to an obvious process of horizontal job segmentation. Women are generally concentrated in traditional ‘velvet ghettos’ (communication, finance, HR (Guillaume & Pochic, 2009).

An example related to research and academia: *academic women are mainly present in careers related to human and social studies and less in STEM careers.*

### **Vertical segregation**

The research concerning vertical segregation in academia generally starts with a descriptive overview and analysis of the statistics on the representation of women and men across the hierarchical levels. It might be defined as a description of the under-representation of women in higher or management positions (glass ceiling), taken as a starting point for discussions on the causes of and explanations for segregation. (Blackburn, Brooks, & Jarman, 1999; 2000; 2001a; 2001b).

An example related to research and academia: *the vertical segregation of women's career in the academic field is represented by a scissor trend: the higher the hierarchical scale the more the gap in favour of men widens.*



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## 4. Resistances

### 4.1 Introduction

The hardest challenge faced by organizations is to manage and gain support for change, especially when their adaptation is made mandatory by the legal directives in force on a European (Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, European Commission)<sup>1</sup> and national<sup>2</sup> scale.

A gender-sensitive communication in academia relates to the dual objective of developing awareness about the relevance of this issue, and of promoting organizational changes that reduce the gender gap in every area: recruitment and career paths of male and female researchers in all disciplinary areas; contents of teaching and research activities; definition of decision-making processes; strategies to combat sexist stereotypes and behaviors (Bagihole & White, 2013; Riegraf et al., 2010).

Nevertheless, transformation efforts may fail for three main reasons: change fatigue, lack of skill in sustaining change and resistance to change (Lewin, 1951; Moss Kanter, 2012). While preventing resistance completely is an unrealistic goal, the ability to manage it effectively is an essential skill within the Academia, especially when evidencing gender biases, in order to trigger structural changes to foster gender equality and integrate the gender dimension in research, can be assumed as a challenge to established way of working and power relations (Forest & Périvier, 2019).

**Resistance** is a state of mind reflecting unwillingness or unreceptiveness to change in the ways people think and behave. It manifests itself behaviorally by either active opposition to change or by attempting to escape or avoid it (Hultman, 2003; Aguirre et al., 2013). The distinction between passive and active resistance can help to define a phenomenology of the most plausible reactions to the introduction of gender-sensitive communication, both with respect to its formal expression (language, production of visual material, etc.) and substantial contents (e.g. documentation of the inequalities actually present in organizational practices) (Marchand & Sisson Runyan, 2011).

Passive reactions include behavioral mechanisms which, in the case of resistance to change in gender-sensitive communication practices, can result in agreeing verbally but not following through; feigning ignorance about the issue; withholding information, suggestions, help or support.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy\\_en#gender-equality-strategy-2020-2025](https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en#gender-equality-strategy-2020-2025)

<sup>2</sup> For instance, in Italy, the main legal tool is given by Directive 2/19, Measures to promote equal opportunities and strengthen the role of guarantee committees in public administration, Ministry for Public Administration, 16 July 2019.





## 4.2 Recurring examples of resistances

Some **recurring examples** in literature (Diaz Gonzalez, 2001; FESTA, 2016; Mergaert & Lombardo, 2014) concern the denial of the existence of the problem or a general judgment of its substantial irrelevance, especially **regarding communication aspects**.

**“Gender-sensitive communication is not a priority, you/we should focus on other things”**

In order to overcome this kind of resistance, communicating in a gender-sensitive way will not tackle all the problems related to gender equality, but it will help to build a more inclusive environment for all and to identify bias and stereotypes. In addition, tackling a complex issue from the communication point of view is a plus, not a minus.

**“It is completely useless, a total waste of time”**

It is commonly agreed that the way in which institutions communicate matters. The way we use language and communications has an impact on social power relations and may contribute to positive change. For many less represented categories, being visible can be a matter of life and death: a good example is that of transgender people, who still suffer because of discrimination and harassment. For them, and for everyone feeling underrepresented or discriminated against, becoming visible in institutional communication can matter a lot.

Equally varied are active resistances, which include behavior such as being critical, ridiculing or using facts selectively, sabotaging, manipulating or distorting facts, raising objections focusing on the instrumental use of gender-sensitive communication to undermine the fairer principle of meritocracy regardless of gender (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2003).

**“We already communicate in a gender-sensitive way”**

When we begin analysing a communication area with a new gender-sensitive awareness (and this also applies to services and processes), we will soon start noticing things we were not aware of, for example realising how an equal gender representation in public events (such as public conferences or official presentations) is not yet an established practice, especially for the purpose of depicting a fairer image of academia as an educational institution.

It is like progressively adopting a completely new paradigm: after having acquired new awareness and competence, new areas of improvements will gradually be revealed.



### **“Gender-sensitive guidelines go against freedom of expression”**

Institutional communication is a planned activity with rules and regulations to follow, in order to be effective, ethical and inclusive. What the SUPERA guidelines propose is to start considering that the way things have been communicated until now may be improved, for everyone’s benefit.

### **“The neologisms you propose are horrible, cacophonous”**

In Grammatical gender languages [crf. part 5.2] the feminine correspondents of masculine terms have started to be progressively accepted, with particular reference to the professional contexts, (such as job titles when referring to women). In these cases, the perceived attractiveness of the terms appears to be more important than what happens with other neologisms. This should make us reflect on the fact that this argument is not the real problem, because as a rich literature suggests language creates and reproduces realities (Pawels, 2003; Thimm et al., 2003).

### **“The masculine form must be intended as gender neutral and gender inclusive, so this is not a problem at all”**

Some university departments started to use a footnote at the beginning of each document, saying that for the economy of language use, the masculine form should be intended as a generic one, including also the feminine forms. This is a way of deactivating any intent to use a gender sensitive language, and institutional communication should be able to explain that this kind of solution can be even worse than doing nothing.

The resistances that we have seen in this section and the possible solutions to deal with them will be illustrated from an operational point of view in the second part of this Guidelines, also taking into account the theoretical framework and the implications that emerged concerning the role of communication in the first part.

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# GENDER-SENSITIVE COMMUNICATION IN PRACTICE





## Part B

### 5. Gender-sensitive communication in practice

Part B of the SUPERA Guidelines provides practical advice and examples to support RPOs and RFOs in progressively **adopting a gender-sensitive approach** in their communication activities, learning to identify and avoid gender stereotypes, promoting the visibility of women in research and academia and contributing to build a **more inclusive environment** in their organizations.

As reported under the “Purpose” section, these Guidelines primarily **address** everyone holding communication responsibility in academia, as well as those who engage daily in communication activities within universities, research institutions and research funding organizations. Every day, students, researchers and staff produce contents and interact with messages, and contribute to shape the public **image of the organization** for both internal and external audiences.

This is especially significant when we consider the societal role of academic institutions in shaping the cultural and scientific environment [see Purpose and Section 2], through the production, transmission and dissemination of knowledge. In terms of **impact**, adopting a gender-sensitive approach constitutes a cultural change that should be achieved in the mid-long term, which can have a transformative role not only for the institution itself, but for society as a whole, in line with the framework of “Responsible Research and Innovation”.

Everyone can contribute to this **cultural change** in the communication approach. Two different levels coexist, involving specific responsibilities.

At a **primary level**, communication professionals in every organization have the responsibility of the management and implementation of communication activities. For instance, this is the case of the media relation office of a university or of a regional funding agency.

At a **secondary level**, several other roles in research and academia involve communication responsibilities. These include:

- **professors** and researchers communicating with different publics during their research and teaching activities, and during public engagement activities with the wider public;
- the **officers** at the front offices providing services to internal and external publics;
- the **staff** in charge of promoting activities and achievements of their organizations via events, social media or press articles (for instance, a new funding call published by a national research ministry);
- (foreign) **students and scholars** who have a variety of touchpoints during their stay in a university or research institution, including social interactions in public and



shared facilities (libraries, cafes and canteens, students' unions, meeting rooms, offices).

As such, all the academic community share responsibility when it comes to communication.

### 5.1 Gender stereotypes and visibility

Two main general concepts are to be taken in consideration when adopting a gender-sensitive communication perspective: **gender stereotypes** and **visibility**.

#### Identifying and overcoming gender stereotypes

As reported in the glossary, **stereotypes are** generalised images about people within a society (EIGE, 2019). More specifically, gender stereotypes are preconceived ideas whereby males and females are arbitrarily assigned characteristics and roles determined and limited by their sex [cfr. Section 3]. These stereotypes **hurt people of all genders** by placing expectations, which are normative, on what people should be, how they ought to behave, which roles to take on, etc. Repeating them reinforces the assumptions at their core: therefore, the communication should actively avoid gender stereotypes in all the communication contents and practices.

Several **suggestions** may be helpful in identifying and overcoming stereotypes:

- Do not add **irrelevant information** about gender in a description of a person. For instance, an interview for a university/lab/ministry website should not mention details about the marital status of a woman.
- When reporting a fact or an event of the past, as well as when describing a news or an object, check if the **content** includes stereotypes such as: the male seen as the most dynamic, strong, active vs the female seen as the caring, weak, sentimental.
- Perpetuating stereotypes in **non-verbal communication**, such as visuals and video symbols, is very common and should be avoided. For instance, use colors different from pink to identify a service targeting women.
- Professions and **occupations** are often gender stereotyped and this applies to the research and academia sector as well. This bias involves language, visuals and media relations activities.

#### Ensuring visibility

Gender inequality is also performed by obscuring and neglecting a certain part of the society, failing to represent it. In order to overcome this issue in academic communication, it would be important to:



- Avoid **omissions** in visual and verbal communication (for instance, taking care of how many women appear in the overall institutional communication flow). Appendix 3 provides a practical tool to keep track of the presence of women in institutional communication over time, in order to gain awareness of the imbalances and take action to overcome them.
- Try to give preference to women/men in **non-traditional roles** because these are often the least visible in communication.
- Choose to describe topics with a **gender perspective** and use female examples as an alternative to male ones, trying to ensure that the individuals in examples show a mix of genders in different roles.



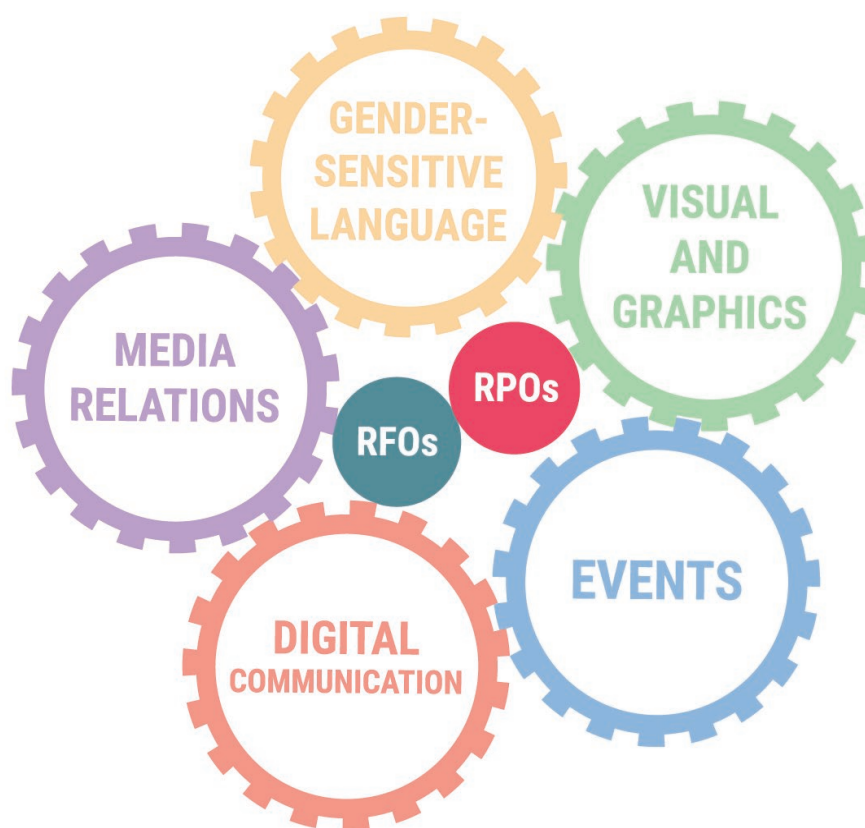
Figure 4. Ensuring visibility to all the components of the research and academia community

Following the two general concepts exposed above, the next five paragraphs present **five areas** that are relevant for the communication activity of universities and research institutions and may be easily affected by gender stereotypes and omission. Empirical and practical insights, together with examples on how to avoid gender imbalances and stereotypes, will be provided, indicating the way towards the adoption of a gender-



sensitive communication approach by RPOs and RFOs. The five areas are differentiated for specific characteristics or typology of medium, but they can be strictly interconnected in any communication flows at various levels and for different aims. The areas are:

- **Gender-sensitive language:** it involves both written and oral communication and may be performed, among the others, in written texts for different purposes, such as administrative documents, forms or digital media and in interpersonal communication.
- **Visual and graphics:** it refers to the creation and use of images, other graphics and videos in communication activities, for the creation of all the printed and digital materials for a wide range of academic and institutional purposes.



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Figure 5. The five areas of gender-sensitive communication





- **Events:** any kind of event organised by a university, a research organization, a research-funding agency, for different purposes and different publics.
- **Digital communication:** it includes online channels and environments, likewise websites, intranets, social media channels, instant messaging platforms and apps.
- **Media relations:** it embraces tools and practices that the media relation offices use and adopt to ensure transparency but also visibility on media (press, radio, television) as well as relating with journalists and other digital players.

## 5.2 Gender-sensitive language

Reflecting on language with a gender perspective in order to develop a greater awareness of the consequences of linguistic choices is useful to avoid expressions that may be interpreted as biased or discriminatory.

What is important to highlight is that there is the opportunity and the need for improvements in both the **written** and **oral language in any organization**. This is a process that is likely to take time to be completed, requiring an effort to overcome existing resistances [see Section 4]. Adopting a gender-sensitive language protocol or organising specific training sessions with language experts may represent positive actions in this direction.

Following a growing interest over the last years, several guidelines have been developed and implemented across a variety of **international institutions**, professional associations, universities, news agencies as well as many European countries (EU, 2018). A sample of guidelines issued by international institutions and universities has been reported and analysed for the purposes of this work [see Section 1].

In a **multilingual environment** such as the European one, it is important to know that different languages require different strategies with regard to gender-sensitiveness. The “EU Gender-neutral language in the European Parliament” toolkit (2018) classifies the language families as follows:



**Table 2. Language families and strategies for gender-sensitive language**

LANGUAGE FAMILY	STRATEGY	EXAMPLES
<p><b>Natural gender languages</b> (such as Danish, English and Swedish)</p>	<p>Personal nouns are mostly gender-neutral and there are personal pronouns specific for each gender.</p> <p>These languages can <b>replace the use of gender-specific terms with gender-neutral terms.</b></p>	<p>chairman -&gt; chair / chairperson</p> <p>spokesman -&gt; spokesperson</p> <p>headmaster / headmistress -&gt; director / principal</p> <p>“He” used as a generic reference -&gt; He or she</p>
<p><b>Grammatical gender languages</b> (such as German, Romance languages and Slavic languages)</p>	<p><b>Every noun has a grammatical gender</b> and the gender of personal pronouns usually matches the reference noun. Various <b>approaches</b> are recommended, such as the use of <b>feminine correspondents of masculine terms</b> (for instance for <b>job titles</b>).</p> <p><b>Replacing the generic masculine with double forms</b> for specific referents has also gained acceptance in many languages. As a result of this increasingly widespread form, the use of generic masculine terms is no longer the only accepted practice, even in legislative and official acts.</p>	<p>Profesora Administradora Geschäftsführerin Rettrice</p> <p>Tutti i professori e tutte le professoressa; Todos os investigadores e todas as investigadoras.</p>
<p><b>Genderless languages</b> (such as Estonian, Finnish and Hungarian)</p>	<p>They have <b>no grammatical gender and no pronominal gender.</b></p>	<p>No need for a particular strategy to be gender-sensitive.</p>



The **EIGE “Gender-sensitive communication toolkit”** is intended for an audience of international English speakers. Nonetheless, the underlying principles for gender-sensitive writing are universal and remain relevant when using other languages. The following paragraphs of these guidelines **adapt** the classification illustrated in the EIGE toolkit to the research and academic environments.

The toolkit opens with two **definitions**:

- **Gender-sensitive language** aims to apply gender equality to written and spoken language. It is realised when women, men and those who do not conform to the binary gender dichotomy are **made visible and addressed** in language. Different strategies that can be used to express gender relationships with accuracy, such as **avoiding**, to the greatest possible extent, the use of language that refers explicitly or implicitly only to the male gender, and **ensuring**, through inclusionary alternatives and according to each language’s characteristics, the use of gender-sensitive and inclusive language. Due to the importance of the gender dimension in public policy, law- and policy-makers are always advised to use gender-sensitive language: enhancing gender visibility is an important way for public policy to positively affect all members of society. This is a relevant aspect to consider for all the normative and administrative texts within universities and research institutions.
- **Gender-neutral language** is a not gender-specific language that refers to people in general, with no reference to women or men. One potential **benefit** of this approach is that it can be more **inclusive** to those who do not identify in a binary way with one gender. This form can be seen, for instance, when rephrasing a sentence avoiding mentioning specifically the gender or using a term that includes all genders (e.g., “people” instead of “women and men”; “la comunità studentesca” used in Italian with reference to the students of all genders).

How to practically introduce gender-sensitivity in everyday written and oral verbal communication? There are **three broad categories** under which much gender-discriminatory language may fall (EIGE, 2019). They are:

- **Assigning gender** when gender is unknown or irrelevant as a result of **stereotypes**. This can occur:
  - **Using gendered pronouns**. When using a pronoun such as “he” or “she”, the speaker is assuming the gender of the person they are talking about. This practice repeats the most common expectations about the gender of people in certain roles in universities and research institutions. Instead, the gender-neutral plural “they” should be used. It is also important not to rely on



“he/him/man” when talking about an individual in the abstract as this excludes women from conversations.

- **Adding irrelevant information about gender in a description of an individual.** When speaking or writing about occupations, it is important not to provide irrelevant information about people’s gender. For example, in academia, saying “female professor” implies that professors are normally/usually male. Instead, the occupation title with no gender description should be used.
- **Using gender stereotypes to describe objects or individuals.** Do not employ gender stereotypes to describe the way something is or the way the action is done. Avoid using words implying a gender connotation to describe an aspect of a person or object, in particular when the gendered term is used as an insult. Derogatory expressions such as “behave like a girl”, “ladylike”, the verb “to man up”, all describe something as feminine to suggest its weakness or inefficacy. This kind of language is still widespread also in interpersonal interactions, also in academic working environments: it is a sexist behaviour that should be avoided.

**Table 3. Derogatory adjectives and alternatives**

DEROGATORY ADJECTIVES	ALTERNATIVES
Bossy or pushy	<b>Assertive</b>
Loose	<b>Having sexual confidence</b>
Emotional or hormonal	<b>Passionate, enthusiastic, empathetic</b>
Hysterical	<b>Irrational, nervous</b>

- **Invisibility and omission:** language which casts the male as the generic norm and keeps women from being visible in research institutions and in public life in general. Examples are **using “man”/“mankind”** referring to all the human beings; **using “he”** when referring to the generic experience of all people as this removes women from the common experience (“he or she” could be used as an alternative; some people have started to use gender-neutral pronouns in place of traditional gender pronouns, like the pronoun “ze”); referring to a mixed gendered group using expressions such as **“the guys”**: although very common in working and study environments, these expressions take the male as generic and representative of the whole group and therefore should be avoided.
- **Subordination and trivialisation:** language which paints one gender as inferior or belittles them. Very often, concepts related to women are trivialised through terms



that make something sound “small” or “cute”. This may appear benign but can have the effect of reinforcing women’s subordinate place in academia and in society at large. It occurs in different types of circumstances, that have been listed in Table 4.

**Table 4. Subordination and trivialisation examples**

TYPE	EXAMPLES
<b>Naming conventions</b>	Use Ms instead of Mrs/Miss because Ms (as Mr) does not denote marital status.
	Always use the same naming conventions for men and women: using a first name to refer to a woman and a surname for a man indicates a lack of respect, as well as using the formal titles in an asymmetrical form.
<b>Word phrase hierarchy</b>	Consider switching the order of these expressions each time you use one: Men and women, Ladies and gentlemen, Boys and girls. When they are used several times in the same text or speech, invert the order of the words in order to not create gender imbalances.
<b>Patronising language</b>	The addition of diminutive affixes to denote that the referent is female is patronising.
	Language which refers to people unknown to you in terms of endearment (“My dear”, “Darling”, “Love”, and “Dear”) is patronising and promotes trivialisation. These forms should not be used in any working contexts.
	Another common way of trivialising women is to refer to adult women as “girls”. This should be avoided also in academia and research institutions.
	Common expressions in the media regarding women in science are: “the angels of science”, “the ladies of research”. They should be replaced with less derogatory expressions. Communication and media relations offices should accurately select words and metaphors when publishing institutional press releases or creating contents for news websites [crf. par. 5.6].



University, research organizations and RFOs have specific communicative contexts requiring a gender-neutral or gender-sensitive language. Special care should be devoted, among the others, to:

- **Administrative texts**, which should adopt the above-mentioned strategies to ensure that people of all genders are visible and feel welcome and represented in official documents. This is the case, for instance, of the language used in official regulations and forms of a university or of a funding agency. While respecting the need for clarity, the use of a language that is not gender inclusive, in particular the generic masculine, should be avoided in normative documents, such as regulations, strategic plans and other official acts, as this is simultaneously happening in legislative acts at the national and international levels.
- The notices of **vacancies** for working positions, as well as the calls for research funding, should be always written in a gender-sensitive way in order to encourage candidates of all genders to apply. The same should apply to the language used to promote the calls on social media, the institutional website or in a press release.
- Specific attention should be devoted to adopting **appropriate pronouns** for students and employees who identify themselves as gender-neutral. It also involves adding gender-neutral options (gender/name/title) on the electronic platform's records and on all the forms in general (see, for instance, the "PLOTINA Warwick best practice" document: link available in Appendix 2).
- On RPOs and RFOs **websites and social media** channels, news and communications shall target everyone. It is recommended to find a way to combine brevity and ease of reading with the need to make everyone feel included. Possible strategies include ensuring coherence among the gender sensitivity of texts and related images; using a selection of inclusive emojis to accompany the texts; using expressions such as the @ in "student@" for Italian or "tod@s" for Spanish.
- **In interpersonal communication**, with regard to the most appropriate language to be adopted in working environments such as meetings, labs, lectures, office desks, a specific attention is needed in identifying gender stereotypes in oral language. A good practice would be to specifically train employees on how to communicate in a respectful and inclusive way with individuals with special needs, including people with disabilities, pregnant women, foreign students and researchers and people of non-conforming genders. This should be applied in all interactions across every office desk and front office of research performing and funding organisations.
- A good practice in **academic writing** is to explicit the authors' first names in the references in order to give **visibility to female researchers**. Bibliographies and references must be revised to ensure that female relevant researchers are not

forgotten due to gender unconscious biases, which tend to make citations of female researchers much less frequent than male ones in relative terms.



**Figure 6.** Inverting the order of the words in a speech

### 5.3 Visuals and graphics

With the term “**visual and graphics**” this document refers to the creation and use of logos, photographs, images, icons, other graphics and videos in communication activities. Visuals can be used for a wide range of purposes: for instance, for the creation of printed materials (e.g., brochures, leaflets, flyers, research posters, etc.), for the promotion of a service or a campaign in a university or to communicate the program of an event organised by a research funding agency, for digital communication (e.g., websites, e-magazine, intranet of any research institution), for media relations (e.g., to be inserted in the press kit), in social media channels (for enriching posts but also for cover page image on Facebook), or as a part of a multichannel communication campaign for promoting enrolment or enhancing public engagement activities.

**Visual communication** plays a central role in conveying the values and identity of any institutions. The digitization of information has enhanced the circulation of pictures,



infographics and videos, allowing visuals to gain a central role in increasing the visibility of institutional messages, and influencing the perception of universities and research institutions. Thus, it is fundamental to adopt a gender sensitive approach in managing visuals and graphics in communication for RPOs and RFOs.

Visuals can contribute to reinforce the message of a welcoming and inclusive academic organization, contributing to **overcome gender stereotypes** and **reinforce the visibility** of the less represented categories. Indeed, images may “hide” people by neglecting to show some groups or portraying them only as the exception to the “normal” standards (the so-called “tokenism”) (Gunnarsson, 2019). Visually representing gender diversity, and also other diversities, can contribute to highlight the identity of an inclusive and open academic community.

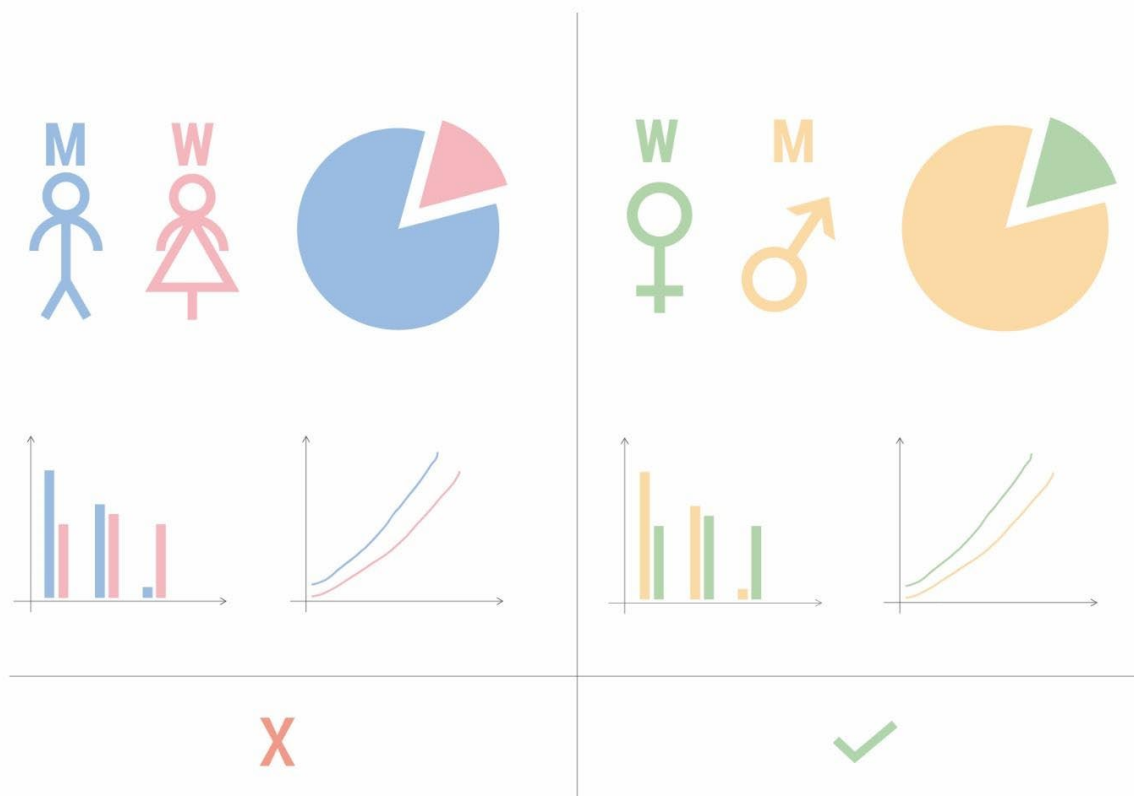
No visual should ever reinforce gender stereotypes, in order to avoid gender imbalance to be perpetuated and reinforced in university messages and in every communication touchpoints (e.g., a stand for a national recruitment fair; a banner in an international conference; the visual layout of a front office or meeting room). To this extent, it is important to consider that:

- **Colours** are often arbitrarily connected to one gender, such as pink for women and blue for men. It would be advisable to avoid this classical representation and also to avoid using pastel colored palettes associated with the feminine (EIGE, 2018). Using different colors (like greens, yellow or orange) can be a good alternative. Avoid using pink or purple when a communication material addresses women specifically (UNDP, 2018), for instance in a university brochure or in the slides used during a meeting among local RFOs.
- **Men and women** should be represented in a diverse and realistic way. Women in visuals should represent the institutional activities of the academic organization (e.g., study, research, teaching or working) and they should not be chosen as merely decorative contents. Texts and images should be coherent (for instance, captions should include the female gender or gender diversity in the languages in which this applies) (Università della Svizzera Italiana, online source).
- The depiction of women and men should **attempt to break with notions of gender roles** that perpetuate gender inequalities. Women should be depicted as being able to leverage opportunities or as having equal opportunities, also being in positions of power as professors, doctors, principal investigators, directors or team leaders. It is important to be mindful of **subliminal messages about gender norms**. For example, it is recommended to choose images in which postures, expressions, gestures and clothing convey equal status and authority for any member of the university community (UNDP, 2014).
- The more institutions depict diversity, the less they will convey stereotypical representations (UNDP, 2014). While it is not necessary to strive for having an equal number of women and men in every visual and graphics, it is important that





the presence of women would be demonstrated as balanced in **the overall institutional communication flows**, not as exceptional or sporadic. A similar approach could be also applied, to people with disabilities, with different gender identities or different ages or ethnicities. All these categories may easily get stuck in the role of mere exceptions to the norm. A possible solution is to represent them **as random individuals**, in any context, like they are in society, and not only linked to their “exceptional” role (Gunnarsson, 2019).

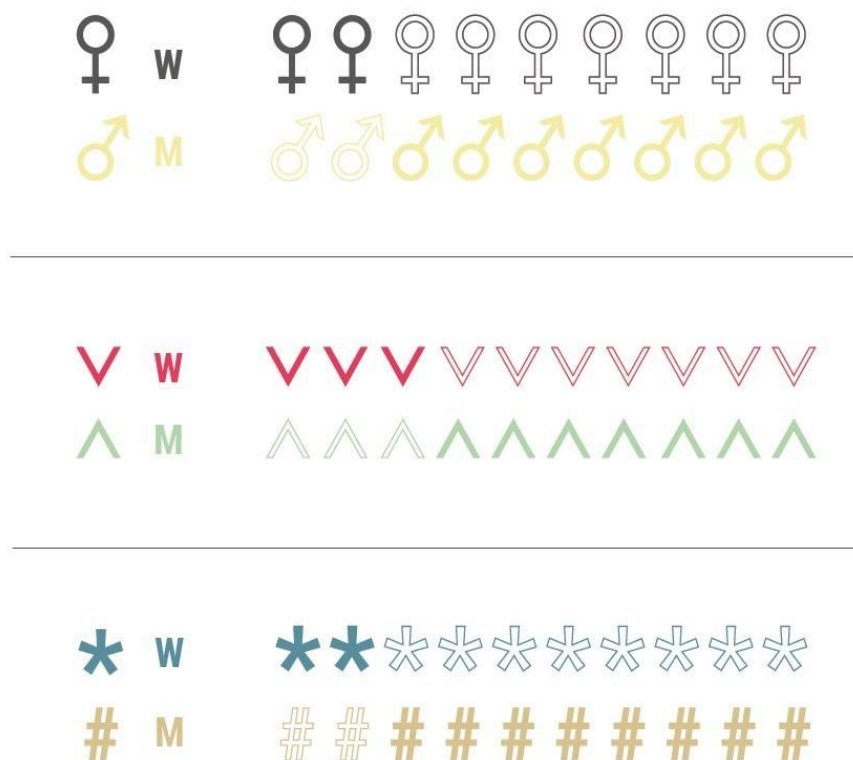


**Figure 7.** Non-stereotypical colors and symbols in data visualisation

- **Icons** are another critical element in visuals because they easily tend to represent stereotypes: for instance, the typical female icon comes with a skirt. When choosing icons, consider carefully the risk of reiterating stereotypes in publics’ perception. Figure 8 shows possible alternatives of gender-sensitive icons.
- **Infographics** combine texts, figures and graphics to convey articulated contents; they are gaining a lot of attention especially on the web, where they are often quickly shared by digital publics in their personal accounts and profiles. This makes it extremely important to address specific attention on their creation and on the subjects they represent. In infographics, synthesis is the norm: it is



therefore easy to stumble into stereotypes with icons and colors. It is important to pay special attention on how human figures are depicted: are they diverse? Are stereotypes used to define genders?



**Figure 8.** Series of non-stereotypical icons

### 5.4 Events

In order to pursue their goals, RPOs and RFOs promote a wide range of events on a daily basis. These guidelines consider event organised for internal and external publics, and for different purposes, such as:

- to engage the wider public in scientific topics,
- to present the educational offer during the open days of a university,
- to support networking and partnership building,
- to promote job placement for students and graduates with job fairs,



- to celebrate the graduation ceremony and in general all official occasions of the academic year,
- to disseminate scientific achievements, also offering opportunities for the advancement of research careers,
- to officially present the results of an action to promote research and innovation to a ministry's stakeholders,
- to promote a new call for research funding or a new mobility program.

Gender equality has an impact on events in different ways. First of all, women are less likely to be chosen as speakers in roles such as keynotes, discussants, and opening panels (Isbell et al., 2012, Jones et al. 2014; Sardelis & Drew, 2016). Over the last few years, the advocacy for calling out **all-male panels** (the so called "manels") has continued to grow, with visibility both on social media and traditional media at both a local and international level. As a result, an increasing number of conferences are committing to gender diversity on panels and among speakers.

**Caring responsibilities** are another considerable barrier to participating at conferences, workshops or other academic events for both men and women, but the responsibility often falls on women only.

Events that do not take these aspects into proper consideration contribute to reproducing strong gender inequalities. The impact of events on the institution's reputation and general perception should not be underestimated. All these types of events, if not inclusive, can contribute to reinforce gender inequalities, thus it is important to adopt a gender-sensitive approach in event planning and management.

Thanks to the penetration of Internet and social media, events can be attended not only in person: all events may also be **streamed** online and broadcast on social media platforms, both via the university's official media channels (e.g. website, Facebook page, etc.) and by the public itself using personal accounts. In this sense, everybody can become a media outlet (Gillmore, 2004) and make events accessible to a broader audience.

After the event, all the relevant materials can be also searched on the web by different users (e.g. students, faculties, journalists, politicians, funders, etc.). What happens during an important event can also be **highlighted by the news and the media**, like the opening of the academic year, an honorary degree ceremony or an international conference.

The guide "**Developing inclusive conferences**" was developed in 2019 by the School of Geography and the Environment of the University of Oxford when planning the REACH international conference. The document is based on the outcomes of an online survey administered to more than 230 academics, researchers and professionals, enriched by a series of interviews with international gender and diversity experts. It also reports a critical analysis of good practices about event management and it provides useful advice



for the organization of inclusive conferences. As the Guide itself states (Chautard and Hann 2019, p. 5), the ultimate goal would be that:

*"In future, the **measure of a successful conference** should be not only that it has provided a showcase for cutting-edge work and sparked productive collaborations, but that it has promoted diversity of attendance and inclusivity of participation."*

Many of the suggestions in the paragraphs below draw inspiration from this guide and are integrated with other projects identified during the mapping described [cfr. Section 1].

### Venue requirements, date and time

- Avoid an attendee **welcome service** provided only by female hostesses. In order to give a non-stereotypical image of the event, consider hiring stewards as well.
- Try to choose a **time** for the start of an event that allows people with caring responsibilities to attend it. For instance, opt for a later start in the mornings, and an earlier finish in the evening. An annual conference that takes place on the same dates every year risks excluding the same categories of people repeatedly.
- The venue should offer small additional **rooms** that can be used as quiet space for breastfeeding, baby changing, etc.
- If the venue does not offer **gender neutral toilets**, consider temporarily re-labelling some toilets as gender neutral.
- As happened in the Critical Management Studies conference (2015), consider providing a list of recommended **taxi companies**.
- Networking sessions are key elements of conferences because they provide opportunities for sharing ideas, making connections and building collaboration. **Schedule** at least one networking session at **different times** of the day to ensure everybody can participate.
- Announce the date and time of the event **in advance**, thus attendees can plan accordingly.
- In order to achieve a higher level of inclusion, the venue of the events (including parking spaces) should be **accessible** for people with reduced mobility. Organizers must be ensured that an appropriate sound system is available. Check the visibility of all the signage and avoid fluorescent lighting and proximity to sources of constant



electrical noise. Ensure chairs are available for places where attendees are expected to stand for long periods.

### Collecting participants information

- A growing number of events include an optional **gender-neutral “Mx” title option** on their registration forms. Alternatively, consider removing titles entirely. Another option is to suggest participants write the text on their own badge, so they can select their name, pronouns and title(s).
- Include a blank space on the registration form to declare specific needs in order to be open and inclusive toward participants.

### Supporting attendees with caring responsibilities

- Offer **childcare options** for the duration of the conference.
- Offer **bursaries to speakers** with caring responsibilities, useful to cover the cost of nursery or find a carer or allow their children to travel with them.
- Give speakers as much **notice** as possible so that they can arrange childcare. Also consider offering the possibility of choosing the most suitable slot in the schedule to take care of children’ needs.

### Programme development

- Many conferences are organised with a keynote speaker and are based on the idea of demonstrating excellence to a large audience and showcasing the work by leading professionals and academics. As this practice may lead to bias, conferences with **multiple keynote speakers** may be a way to give a voice to different groups and to enhance gender diversity.
- It is useful to pursue **diversity in scientific committees**. In their analysis of gender bias at American Association of Physical Anthropologists meetings, Isbell and colleagues (2012) find that the percentage of women participants differs dramatically depending on the gender of the organisers. Symposia organised by men have half the number of women first authors (29%) compared with symposia organised by women (64%) or by both men and women (58%). Additionally, women’s participation in talks and posters at symposia organised by women is twice that at male-organised ones (65%).



- Apart from the simple opportunity to speak or present, the role or visibility of the speakers must be questioned. Diversity has to be spread among all speaking roles: keynotes, session chairs, panelists, parallel session speakers, and poster presentations. It is also advisable to commit to ensuring gender and ethnic or racial diversity on all the panels, adopting a strict **gender-balanced policy**.



X



X

**Figure 9.** Non-inclusive panels in a scientific conference and in a public engagement event



**Figure 10.** Inclusive panel in an event organised by an RFO

- Women's presentations should **not be restricted** to speaking about gender issues.
- Inviting a female speaker within an all-male panel is an example of the practice called **tokenism** and must be avoided. For public engagement events, the Hypatia project guidelines (2016) highlight the fact that it may be tempting to invite STEM professionals to "Meet a Scientist" activities who are young, attractive, charismatic and female, but gender inclusion requires a broader range of potential role models.
- Broaden the search for potential presenters from under-represented groups, whose work or research would be appropriate for the conference. **Databases** are available in many languages, providing lists of female experts in many disciplines, such as "100 donne contro gli stereotipi" ("100 women against stereotypes") available at <https://100esperte.it/>, "Brussels binder" available at <https://brusselsbinder.org/>, or "Por qué tan pocas" ("Why so few") available at <https://porquetanpocas.com/>.



### Encouraging inclusive participation

- The chair should ensure that panel members are given an **equal opportunity to speak** and should stop panelists who monopolise the discussion. A space should be created in every panel for speakers who are less inclined to intervene.
- Research shows that men are more likely to ask a question during “Q&A” sessions; this pattern changes if the first question is asked by a woman (See Hinsley et al., 2017, Pritchard et al., 2014). Consider asking all session chairs to **take a question from a woman first** as this can change the dynamics of the “Q&A” session, allowing a wider variety of views to be expressed in an open and receptive setting.

### Networking sessions

- Networking plays an important role in gaining visibility, building collaborations and supporting career development in any university event, but the form in which they usually take place may be a challenge for some participants. **Different formats** for networking could be introduced, such as being part of a poster session, a “world café”, or an informal “ask the expert” session.
- Consider offering attendees the opportunity to **see the list of delegates before** the event. Plan to pre-book short networking meetings during the research event, thus eliminating the need for “small talk”.

### Communicating diversity and inclusion

- In event communication, specify that all guests will be welcome, **state why diversity matters** and make all key information accessible on the conference website, social media channels and via email before the conference. Remember to contact the institutional communication offices in order to align the event’s gender approach with the general gender-sensitive strategy adopted at central level for digital communication (when available).
- Check the way “**calls for contributions**” should be submitted to ensure that it welcomes women and promotes gender diversity. Use gender-sensitive language in the calls and choose images that depict both men and women for disseminating the call.
- Make sure equal visibility is given to women, but also to young professionals, people with a Black and minority ethnic background or with a disability in the **communication materials**.
- All events, in particular official events, can convey and reflect various symbolic notions of power relations in academia and research institutions, for instance the





protocols to be followed at the opening of the academic year in universities. In this sense, these events can change the perception of the institution as a whole, thanks to a **commitment** to gender equality in terms of language and contents.

- In public engagement events, it is important to ensure that stereotypes are not conveyed by the **dress code** of the people on stage or by the contents conveyed by the presenter and other participants.

### Preventing discrimination and harassment

- An **inclusion and harassment-free policy** should be drafted and shared among the speakers and presenters beforehand and committing to it should be a prerequisite for participation.
- Ways should be provided for attendees to **report any incident**, for instance via an online form, email or in person. The online form drafted by the REACH Conference is available at:  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf\\_8AHSZJcdXIRagf5RaBDsbBWaiN9kfYgdby\\_dbbFAduWm4w/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf_8AHSZJcdXIRagf5RaBDsbBWaiN9kfYgdby_dbbFAduWm4w/viewform)

### 5.5 Digital communication

With the term “**digital**”, these guidelines refer to online channels, such as the official university website, the intranet, digital boards, social media channels and institutional applications (apps) directly managed by the academic and research institutions. Several reports at an international level show that citizens rely on the Internet and social media to search for any type of information (Wearesocial, 2020), profoundly changing media consumption patterns compared with a few years ago. In particular, social media are gaining importance not only as information channels but also as hybrid communicative environments where online publics interact with their peers but can also dialogue with public sector organizations, businesses, mass media, politicians, etc. (Canel & Luoma-aho, 2019).

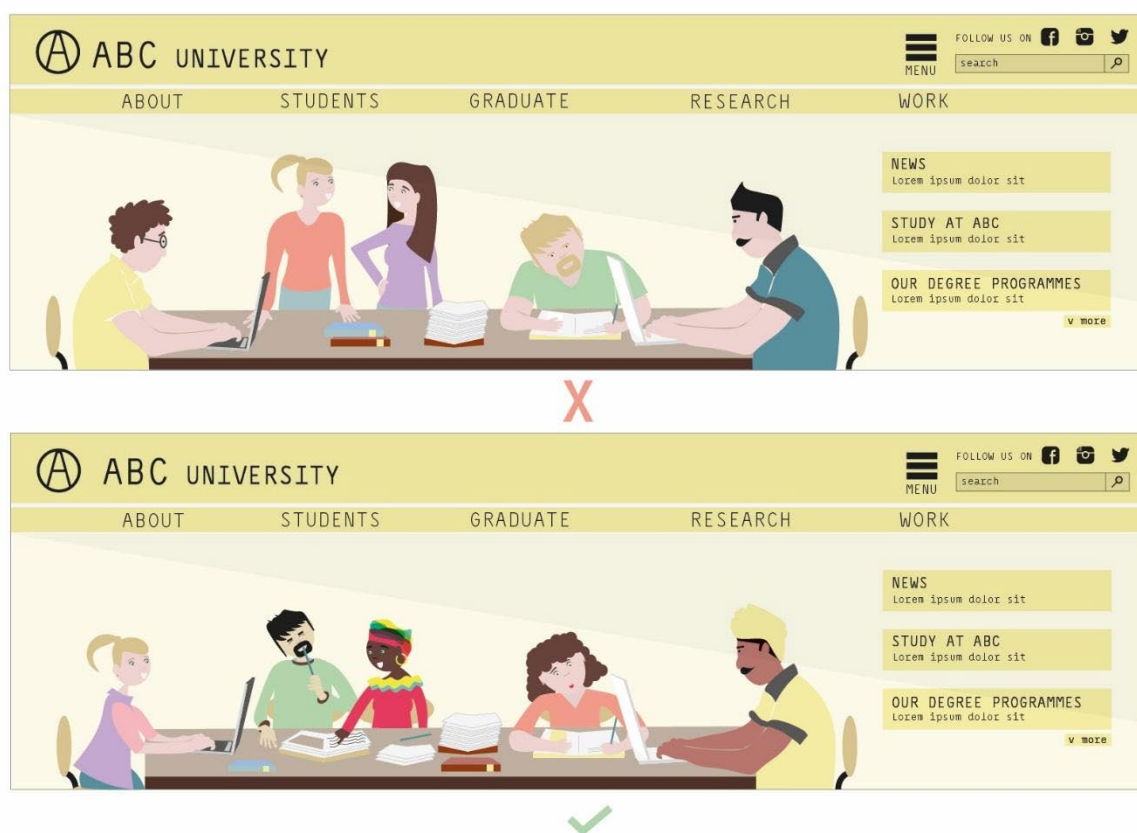
In this sense, social media represent strategic platforms for both RPOs and RFOs, not only in informing and dialoguing with students and employees, but also in raising the visibility of governing bodies, fostering public understanding of science and research and promoting public engagement initiatives [see Section 2].

Generally speaking, digital environments require a specific content approach and enable a variety of communication practices among different users, according to specific platforms’ affordances (Boyd, 2010) [see Section 1]. Texts for instance must be as readable as possible (e.g. adopting a non-bureaucratic language for website news), in certain cases they need to be very short (e.g. Twitter has a specific limit of 280 characters



per message) and carefully designed (e.g. including pictures, videos or links in an online communication campaign).

Visuals and graphics play a central role in all platforms, and icons and emoticons are widely used in digital communication. Online forms need to be completed easily and rapidly. The development of institutional applications for mobile devices imposes several constraints in terms of brevity and content selection. All the contents will be published and displayed on different platforms, and most of the time these messages will be shared by online users in their personal channels, sometimes manipulating original contents or inserting them outside the original context (Jenkins et al., 2013).



**Figure 11.** The roles and gestures of the people represented in a university website should communicate equality

Digital contents are usually planned by the communication offices of the research funding and performing institutions, in which digital communication specialists are in charge of managing websites and social media (e.g. “community managers” or “social media managers”). These offices can be separated from media relations offices [see Par. 5.5] or can be integrated in the same structure, depending on the specific organizational chart. At the same time, digital communication is not only managed by central communication offices, it is also delegated to other structures, such as departments,



colleges, labs, libraries, and administrative offices (for instance, when managing specific webpages or social media profiles). For this reason, it is important to share a communication sensitivity among the whole community, in order to identify opportunities and constraints that could affect the effectiveness of digital communication, and to ensure a gender-sensitivity approach in online platforms.

The paragraphs below offer advice and examples on how to overcome these constraints.

As detailed in the first paragraphs of Section n.5, the institutional communication of a research institution must ensure that every individual/member feels represented and welcome. This approach clearly refers also to the **digital channels**. In particular, the recommendations related to gender stereotypes, language and visuals should be applied to all digital environments, from websites to social media channels.

As regards the language to **adopt in digital communication**, a common strategy should be agreed and shared at institutional level (e.g. the university governing bodies or the administrative director of a ministry) or, when this is not possible, at the level of a single Department, College or Direction. It is important to test digital language practices at least for a few months, in order to adopt possible changes, based on different feedbacks, and to allow everyone in the structure to learn how to use and appropriate them.

### Availability of gender-related information

The website and the intranet (when available) are two of the places where students, researchers and administrative staff commonly search for useful information or use specific services. It is a good practice to set aside a webpage with easy-to-find, clear, complete and updated **information on** the services provided by the institution regarding **gender-related issues**, such as institutional policies for family support or the policy for the management of harassment cases.

As regards **visuals**, galleries of inclusive pictures and graphics may be prepared in advance and made available to all the people in charge of communication duties. In this way, when for instance working on the dissemination material of the annual report of a research funding agency, a variety of visual materials will be ready for use.

Furthermore, the experience of the WHIST project (2011) has shown that an updated **intranet** presentation with enhanced information regarding institutional support for young families (as well as for other social situations) has increased awareness on the topics of diversity and equal opportunities and has been greatly appreciated by the university community.



## Social media channels

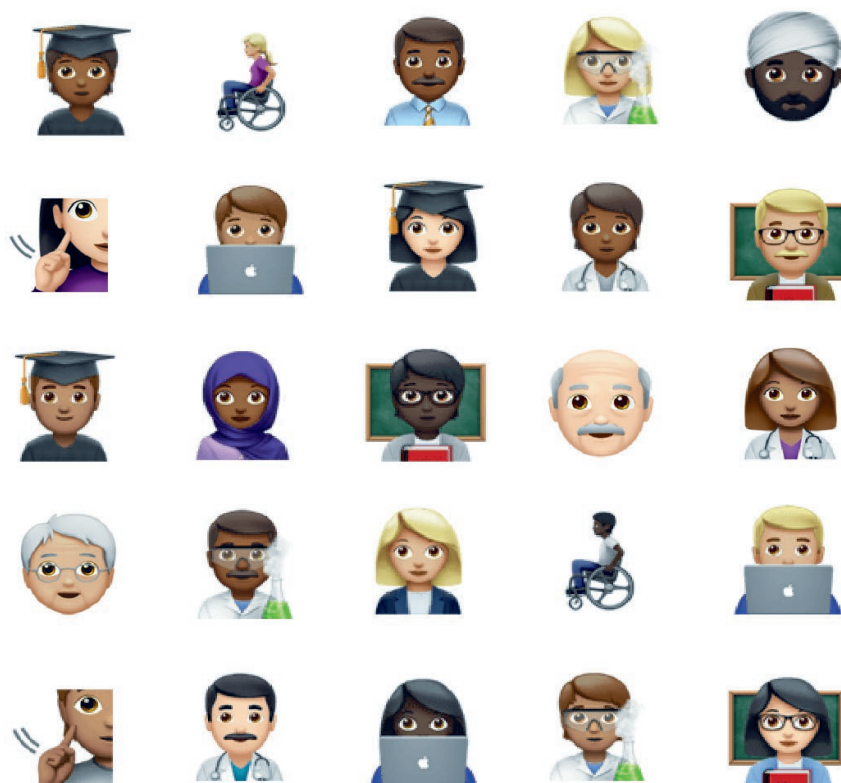
Social media channels play a central role in representing the image of an institution: gender-aware and inclusive selection of the **images** and graphics needs to be ensured in this regard. The written **language** should also follow criteria of sensitivity. With regard to gender-sensitive language, in particular Latin-based languages, it is an acceptable practice to use forms such as “Student@” or “Investigador@” to represent all genders in university social media channels.

In order to strategically manage social media channels, both research performing and funding organizations should adopt a **social media policy**. Social media policies are documents issued by an organization and addressed to its external and/or internal publics suggesting correct behavior when interacting on social media pages of the organization or on its behalf (Dodd & Stack, 2014; Dreher, 2014). They establish guidelines for access, use, management, and preservation of information (Jaeger, Bertot & Shilton, 2012). Thus, social media policies are part of the social media governance of the organization because they express, implicitly or explicitly, the official position of the organization. The aim of social media policy is to sustain desirable online communication behavior and avoid improper communication behavior, such as criticising people, being rude in writing, leaking sensitive information (e.g. publications or innovative research). This brings about legal, ethical and reputational risks for the organization, and should be integrated with specific gender sensitivity to avoid gender imbalance and negative gender stereotypes.

Thus, the organization’s **social media policy** should explicitly state that sexist and non-respectful communication behavior related to (gender) diversity is not acceptable and should be removed from official social media timelines. In this regard, social media managers or employees in charge of the **moderation** of comments and public discussions should be trained to identify and correctly manage sexist, racist and other problematic behaviour on social media.

In addition to specific attention to gender-sensitive language, social media managers should knowingly select inclusive images and visuals. This activity could be carried out not only in **publishing posts**, but in changing Facebook **page cover photos** in order to give visibility to people of varied gender, age, ethnicity, and university role.

**Emojis** (EIGE, 2019) are a much-appreciated way of conveying feelings and empathy in social media contents. On digital communication, emojis portray a vast range of people of different ethnicities, religion, abilities, ages and - of course - genders [see image 12]. It is important to carefully select emojis in order to convey inclusive messages in everyday communication and to make everyone feel visible, represented and welcome in university and research institution environments.



**Figure 12.** Inclusive emojis for social media contents

### Choosing the best platform

To select the best platform, communication offices should take into consideration the communicative needs, abilities and skills of different publics. This choice could also be crucial for increasing visibility and the appropriation of messages.

For instance, university communication offices should choose the most appropriate social media channels, like Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn, to promote positive messages among students and alumni. They could also use thematic websites (so-called “vortals”), apps or blogs for raising awareness about gender imbalances in scientific and technological careers.

Among the activities reported by the WHIST project, a good practice involving a technology research institute has shown that, in order to facilitate the appropriation of gender-related information, a collaborative platform structured as a wiki has been developed and opened to more than 2,000 employees, rather than using a traditional web forum.



## 5.6 Media relations

**In any research institution**, media relations are the practices that specific offices use to ensure transparency and visibility on media (press, radio, television) at the local, national and international levels, as well as in their relations with journalists and other digital players. Media have a crucial role in ensuring visibility to the **main achievements and initiatives** and to their members: researchers, students, decision makers.

For instance:

- high-profile research findings may deserve attention in the national and international press;
- a professor may be invited to intervene in a local newscast to explain the scientific aspects of a specific issue of public interest;
- the Rector of a University could be interviewed by a specialised newspaper to report on an innovative initiative in a specific field of research management;
- a group of researchers and students may be asked to describe their role during an important public engagement event during an interview on a local radio;
- a group of administrative employees could launch a fund-raising event for a university hospital during an epidemic;
- a national funding agency could present the results of an annual program to enhance the career advancement of female researchers.

The presence of academia in the media is strategic to reach out to both external and internal audiences [see fig. 1 and 2], and to preserve and nurture reputation. At the same time, media coverage may not be as expected for any research institutions, since it is driven by specific logics and editorial factors (Chadwick, 2013). In this context, the relations among research organizations (both performing and funding) and the media (printed media, TV, radio and digital press) are led by the journalists and professionals working in the **media relations offices**. These offices collect inputs and materials from different publics, including research groups, single researchers and professors, or decision makers. Their professional role is to connect the institution with the media environment, selecting which facts and events might become newsworthy according to the media agendas and the general communication context [see Section 2].

Additionally, university **media relation offices should also** support researchers and scientists to adopt a language that shall be clear and comprehensible by the public, in order to give visibility to science communication, but also having an impact according to the third mission of academia. Furthermore, these professionals need to work according to the different formats, timing and style of the chosen media (traditional and digital ones). All these dynamics have to be targeted according to a gender-sensitive approach by press and media relations offices.



**Figure 13.** An interview in a Lab

Ensuring gender equality in media relations offices includes two aspects:

- **a quantitative dimension**, to ensure an equal proportion of female and male representatives in press releases, newsletters and corporate magazines, and to select images that also include the less represented categories in institutional communication (different gender, ethnicities, religions, ages, abilities). In order to keep track of the representation of different individuals in the news, it is advisable to set up and compile a **register** [see Appendix 3 for a template] counting how many females and males have been reported in the press releases, and on the news section of the institution's website. Such a routine can be useful to gain awareness of the present situation and correct gender imbalances in order to improve it.
- **a qualitative point of view**, avoiding stereotypical and patronising expressions. The ultimate goal is to have diversity represented not as an exception in the informative daily representation, in any type of content. Initiatives dedicated to women in science communication still play an important role in putting the issue in the media agenda and making it visible, but a gender balance approach should



be performed and achieved by university media relations officers in everyday activities.

In this perspective, it is important to ensure gender awareness among researchers and media officers to provide the media with a balanced and bias-free representation of science and research, and to avoid any gender stereotypical representation of the research environment.

From the **faculty side**, researchers and professors have the responsibility, when describing their achievements and results, to **ensure visibility and give credit** to their teams and encourage female team members to represent the group. Female scientists are typically less visible in the media and their role has not been fully acknowledged, nor portrayed in a balanced way.

From the **media relation offices side**, to the extent that organisational charts make it possible, they should consist of employees of different gender, in order to balance different perspectives, sensibilities and views, as well as to avoid potential hidden bias in institutional representations.

Additionally, professionals should follow these practical advices in their daily working activities:

- **avoid an unbalanced representation** in selecting who will have visibility in press releases and media outlets; both male and female representatives must be given voice. In choosing quotes for press releases, institutional storytelling and other forms of communication, it is important to ensure that they do not always come from male representatives. This should be done **regardless of the topic**.
- The **tone and communicative register** of the messages should convey equal status and authority when representing male and female voices.
- In choosing **pictures and visuals** that accompany the releases, check that the position and attitude of the people represented do not reproduce gender stereotypes. For instance, the photographs of a research group (or any other working team) must depict people of different genders with an equal attitude.
- Adopt a **common approach in gender-sensitive language** and follow it, in particular finding a way to ensure visibility to female leaders in apical positions [for the grammatical gender languages, cfr 5.2; cfr 5.3 for further details].
- Avoid **stereotypical and patronising expressions** such as: “the ladies of labs”, “the angels of research” and stories in which young, talented female researchers give full credit of her achievements to her mentor, typically, a senior male professor [see also paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3];
- **Propose both** male and female researchers to journalists for interviews and presence in informative shows addressed to the general public.
- In writing institutional news or press releases, avoid mentioning **marital status and family care duties** only to women. For instance, do not specify that a female director has children.





## 5.7 Implementing the guidelines

As regards the **implementation** of these Guidelines, the authors share the statement expressed by Chautard and Hann (2019) in their Guide: *“This guide has been designed to be practical not preachy, and to encourage rather than prescribe”*.

*Deciding to begin with a first step towards the adoption of a gender-sensitive communication approach, even if limited to an aspect or to a part of an institution, would already be a meaningful achievement and an important contribution to the institutional change towards gender equality.*

The appropriation of concepts and practices inspired by gender-sensitive communication requires time and is not a linear process in university and research institutions. As described in Part A, communication in RPOs and RFOs involves specific offices but also multiple actors, requiring widespread communication sensitivity which should not be taken for granted.

The following **general advice** can be useful to support this process and to manage it properly.

- **Prioritize** actions on the basis of the expected impact or possibility of change. For instance, when reviewing administrative documents, choose the first to be revised and plan the revision of the remaining ones, drafting a budget if needed (PLOTINA, 2016).
- **Identify and involve gender expertise** in the research institution and consider hiring external consultants specialising in gender equality and inclusive communication, when possible.
- **Pre-test** communication initiatives: for instance, pre-testing a **communication campaign**, with a selection of publics within the university and research organisation, before the actual campaign begins, to check whether the proposed content properly addresses the culture and sensibilities of the target (WHIST, 2016).
- **Exploit existing internal communication channels**: these are usually easy to use and already adopted by the university community or by the staff of a research funding institution. Examples are the intranet or other electronic communication platforms allowing "horizontal" online discussions (WHIST, 2016).
- When working with **external suppliers** (graphic agencies, advertising companies, designers, photographers, copywriters, editors) it is important to have a briefing session with them in advance, in order to share with them the gender-sensitive communication guidelines adopted at the central level. Specific requirements (such as the compliance to the institutional guidelines)



could also be specified in the contract. The role of communicators and media relations officers is crucial in mediating with these external actors before and during the creative process in order to respect gender equality and foster inclusion.

The SUPERA partners can **translate** these Guidelines and **adapt** them to the local contexts of their institutions, using the **graphical template** available as Appendix 1 to disseminate the Guidelines in pilot projects among their organizations. The contents are available for any other institution as well, under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license (CC BY-SA 4.0).

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1. Graphical template for the Guidelines**

### **APPENDIX 2. List of the mapped projects**

### **APPENDIX 3. Register for the quantitative check of gender balance on the institutional channels**

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Supporting the Promotion of Equality  
in Research and Academia

## GRAPHICAL TEMPLATE FOR THE GUIDELINES

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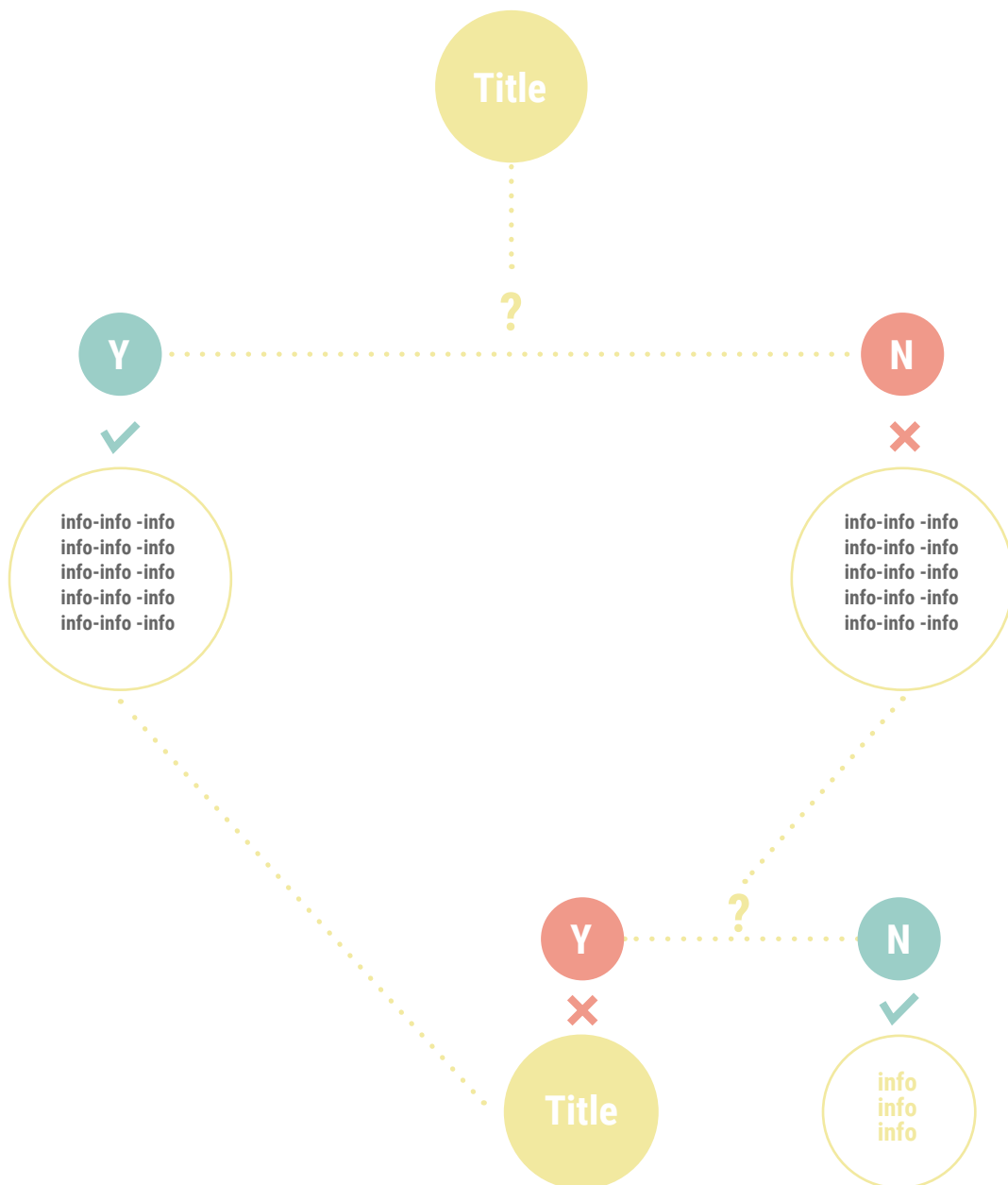


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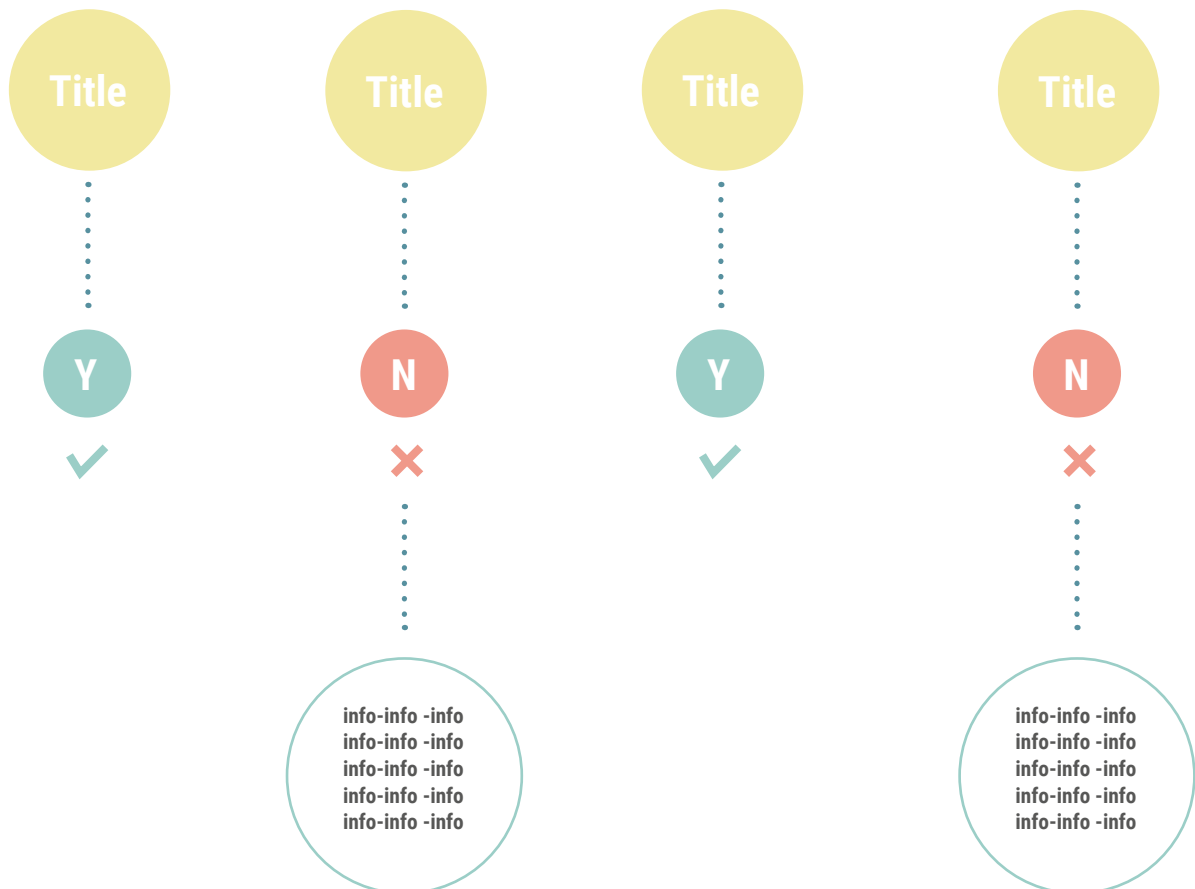
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# PARTNERS



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## APPENDIX 2. List of the mapped projects

### A) List of the gender-related EU-funded projects

NAME	ACRONYM	LINK	YEARS
Communities of PrACTice for Accelerating Gender Equality and Institutional Change in Research and Innovation across Europe	<b>ACT</b>	<a href="https://www.act-on-gender.eu/">https://www.act-on-gender.eu/</a>	<b>2018-2021</b>
Baltic Consortium on Promoting Gender Equality in Marine Research Organisations	<b>BALTIC GENDER</b>	<a href="https://www.baltic-gender.eu/">https://www.baltic-gender.eu/</a>	<b>2016-2020</b>
CHAlleNging Gender (In)Equality in science and research	<b>CHANGE</b>	<a href="https://www.change-h2020.eu/">https://www.change-h2020.eu/</a>	<b>2018-2022</b>
Evaluation Framework for Promoting Gender Equality in Research and Innovation	<b>EFFORTI</b>	<a href="https://www.efforti.eu/">https://www.efforti.eu/</a>	<b>2016-2019</b>
Effective Gender Equality in Research and the Academia	<b>EGERA</b>	<a href="https://www.egera.eu/">https://www.egera.eu/</a>	<b>2014-2017</b>
Gender Equality Plans for Information Sciences and Technology Research Institutions	<b>EQUAL-IST</b>	<a href="https://equal-ist.eu/">https://equal-ist.eu/</a>	<b>2016-2019</b>
Female Empowerment in Science and Technology Academia	<b>FESTA</b>	<a href="http://www.festa-europa.eu/">http://www.festa-europa.eu/</a>	<b>2012-2017</b>
Gendering the Academy and Research: combating Career Instability and Asymmetries	<b>GARCIA</b>	<a href="http://garciaproject.eu/">http://garciaproject.eu/</a>	<b>2014-2017</b>
Gender Equality Academy	<b>GE ACADEMY</b>	<a href="https://ge-academy.eu/">https://ge-academy.eu/</a>	<b>2019-2021</b>
Gender Equality Actions in Research Institutions to traNsform Gender ROLES	<b>GEARING-Roles</b>	<a href="https://gearingroles.eu/">https://gearingroles.eu/</a>	<b>2019-2022</b>
Gender Diversity Impact: Improving Research and Innovation through Gender Diversity	<b>GEDII</b>	<a href="https://www.gedii.eu/">https://www.gedii.eu/</a>	<b>2015-2018</b>
Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment	<b>GEECCO</b>	<a href="http://www.geecco-project.eu/home/">http://www.geecco-project.eu/home/</a>	<b>2017-2012</b>
Promoting Gender Equality in Research Institutions and Integration of the Gender Dimension in Research Contents	<b>GENDER-NET</b>	<a href="https://www.gender-net.eu/?lang=en">https://www.gender-net.eu/?lang=en</a>	<b>2013-2016</b>
Gender Equality in the ERA Community to innovate policy implementation	<b>GENDERACTION</b>	<a href="https://genderaction.eu/">https://genderaction.eu/</a>	<b>2017-2021</b>
Promoting Gender Equality in H2020 and the ERA	<b>GENDER-NET Plus</b>	<a href="http://gender-net-plus.eu/">http://gender-net-plus.eu/</a>	<b>2017-2022</b>
Agriculture and life sciences, including Research and Teaching	<b>Gender-SMART</b>	<a href="https://www.gendersmart.eu/">https://www.gendersmart.eu/</a>	<b>2019-2022</b>

<b>NAME</b>	<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>LINK</b>	<b>YEARS</b>
Transferring Implementing Monitoring Equality	<b>GENDERTIME</b>	<a href="https://gendertime.org/">https://gendertime.org/</a>	<b>2013-2016</b>
Gender Equality Network in the European Research Area	<b>GENERA</b>	<a href="https://genera-project.com/">https://genera-project.com/</a>	<b>2015-2018</b>
Transforming Organisational Culture for Gender Equality in Research and Innovation	<b>GENOVATE</b>	<a href="http://www.genovate.eu/">http://www.genovate.eu/</a>	<b>2013-2017</b>
GRant AllocatioN Disparities from a gender perspective	<b>GRANteD</b>	<a href="https://www.granted-project.eu/">https://www.granted-project.eu/</a>	<b>2019-2023</b>
Institutional Transformation for Effecting Gender Equality in Research	<b>INTEGER</b>	<a href="http://www.integer-tools-for-action.eu/en">http://www.integer-tools-for-action.eu/en</a>	<b>2011-2015</b>
Unifying innovative efforts of European research centres to achieve gender equality in academia	<b>LIBRA</b>	<a href="https://www.eu-libra.eu/">https://www.eu-libra.eu/</a>	<b>2015-2019</b>
Promoting gender balance and inclusion in research, innovation and training	<b>PLOTINA</b>	<a href="https://www.plotina.eu/">https://www.plotina.eu/</a>	<b>2016-2020</b>
Pilot experiences for improving gender equality in research organisations	<b>R&amp;I PEERS</b>	<a href="http://ripeers.eu/">http://ripeers.eu/</a>	<b>2018-2022</b>
Systemic Action for Gender Equality	<b>SAGE</b>	<a href="https://www.sage-growingequality.eu/">https://www.sage-growingequality.eu/</a>	<b>2016-2019</b>
Supporting and Implementing Plans for Gender Equality in Academia and Research	<b>SPEAR</b>	<a href="https://gender-spear.eu/">https://gender-spear.eu/</a>	<b>2019-2022</b>
Structural Transformation to Achieve Gender Equality in Science	<b>STAGES</b>	<a href="http://stages.csmcd.ro/">http://stages.csmcd.ro/</a>	<b>2012-2015</b>
Taking a Reflexive approach to Gender Equality for institutional Transformation	<b>TARGET</b>	<a href="http://www.gendertarget.eu/">http://www.gendertarget.eu/</a>	<b>2017-2021</b>
Transforming Institutions by Gendering contents and Gaining Equality in Research	<b>TRIGGER</b>	<a href="http://triggerproject.eu/documents/">http://triggerproject.eu/documents/</a>	<b>2014-2017</b>
Women's careers hitting the target: gender management in scientific and technological research	<b>WHIST</b>	<a href="http://www.retepariopportunita.it/defaultdesktopba64.html?page=3414">http://www.retepariopportunita.it/defaultdesktopba64.html?page=3414</a>	<b>2009-2011</b>
HYPATIA	<b>HYPATIA</b>	<a href="http://www.expecteverything.eu/hypatia/">http://www.expecteverything.eu/hypatia/</a>	<b>2015-2018</b>
Advancing gender equality in media industries	<b>AGEMI</b>	<a href="https://www.agemi-eu.org/">https://www.agemi-eu.org/</a>	<b>2017-2019</b>

**B) List of the guidelines on gender-sensitive communication issued by public international organizations and by universities**

YEAR	TITLE	ENTE	AUTHORS	LINK
2020	English Style Guide. A handbook for authors and translators in the European Commission	<b>European Commission</b>	European Commission's Directorate-General for Translation	<a href="https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/styleguide_english_dgt_en.pdf">https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/styleguide_english_dgt_en.pdf</a>
2019	Guidelines for Gender-Inclusive Language	<b>UNESCO Division for Gender Equality</b>	n/a	<a href="https://en.unesco.org/system/files/guidelines_for_pp_-_annex_3.pdf">https://en.unesco.org/system/files/guidelines_for_pp_-_annex_3.pdf</a>
2019	Bonnes pratiques pour éviter les stéréotypes Femmes/Hommes dans la communication, la communication visuelle, la communication événementielle et sur les réseaux sociaux	<b>Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche et de l'Innovation</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid145530/un-guide-de-bonnes-pratiques-pour-l-egalite-femmes-hommes-sur-les-reseaux-sociaux-et-dans-la-communication.html">https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid145530/un-guide-de-bonnes-pratiques-pour-l-egalite-femmes-hommes-sur-les-reseaux-sociaux-et-dans-la-communication.html</a>
2018	Gender responsive communication for development	<b>UNICEF Regional office for South Asia</b>	UNICEF ROSA Gender Section	<a href="https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/1786/file">https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/1786/file</a>
2018	Guide Note to Gender Sensitive Communication	<b>United Nations Development Programme Lebanon</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.lb.undp.org/content/lebanon/en/home/library/womens_empowerment/GenderSensitiveCommunicationGuidelines.html">https://www.lb.undp.org/content/lebanon/en/home/library/womens_empowerment/GenderSensitiveCommunicationGuidelines.html</a>
2018	Gender-neutral language in the European Parliament	<b>European Parliament</b>	n/a	<a href="https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.europarl.europa.eu%2Fcmsdata%2F151780%2FGNL_Guidelines_EN.pdf">https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.europarl.europa.eu%2Fcmsdata%2F151780%2FGNL_Guidelines_EN.pdf</a>
2018	Toolkit on Gender-sensitive Communication	<b>European Institute for Gender Equality</b>	n/a	<a href="https://eige.europa.eu/publications/toolkit-gender-sensitive-communication">https://eige.europa.eu/publications/toolkit-gender-sensitive-communication</a>
2018	Linee guida per l'uso del genere nel linguaggio amministrativo del MIUR	<b>Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.miur.gov.it/-/linee-guida-per-l-uso-del-genere-nel-linguaggio-amministrativo-del-miur">https://www.miur.gov.it/-/linee-guida-per-l-uso-del-genere-nel-linguaggio-amministrativo-del-miur</a>
2017	Guidelines for gender-sensitive reporting	<b>Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of foreign affairs</b>	Anita Ramšak	<a href="http://www.ekvilib.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/en_GUIDELINES_FOR_GENDER_SENSITIVE_REPORTING.pdf">http://www.ekvilib.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/en_GUIDELINES_FOR_GENDER_SENSITIVE_REPORTING.pdf</a>



YEAR	TITLE	ENTE	AUTHORS	LINK
2015	Gender and Communications Toolkit	<b>International Organization for Migration</b>	IOM Media and Communications Division / Gender Coordination Unit	<a href="https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/about-iom/gender/IOM-Gender-and-Communications-Toolkit-2015.pdf">https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/about-iom/gender/IOM-Gender-and-Communications-Toolkit-2015.pdf</a>
2014	Principles of Gender Sensitive Communication	<b>UNDP United Nations Development Programme</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.undp.org/content/dam/jamaica/docs/gender/JM-AUG-29-UNDP%20Gender%20Seal-Principles%20of%20gender-sensitive%20communications.pdf">https://www.undp.org/content/dam/jamaica/docs/gender/JM-AUG-29-UNDP%20Gender%20Seal-Principles%20of%20gender-sensitive%20communications.pdf</a>
2014	Gender-equal communication - Norm criticism and communication	<b>Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.samband.is/media/jafnrettismal/Gender-equal-communication-pdf.pdf">https://www.samband.is/media/jafnrettismal/Gender-equal-communication-pdf.pdf</a>
2011	L'égalité dans la communication publique	<b>Luxembourg, Ministry for Equal opportunities</b>	n/a	<a href="https://mega.public.lu/fr/publications/publications-ministere/2011/01-guide-com.html">https://mega.public.lu/fr/publications/publications-ministere/2011/01-guide-com.html</a>
2020	Gender-sensitive Language	<b>University of Cologne</b>	n/a	<a href="https://gb.uni-koeln.de/gender_sensitive_language/index_eng.html">https://gb.uni-koeln.de/gender_sensitive_language/index_eng.html</a>
2019	Gender-inclusive language	<b>University of Wien</b>	n/a	<a href="https://personalwesen.univie.ac.at/en/gender-equality-diversity/overview/gender-sensitive-language/">https://personalwesen.univie.ac.at/en/gender-equality-diversity/overview/gender-sensitive-language/</a>
n/a	Using Gender-Sensitive Language	<b>University of Basel</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.unibas.ch/en/University/Administration-Services/General-Secretariat/Diversity/Diversity-Management/Gender-Sensitive-Language.html">https://www.unibas.ch/en/University/Administration-Services/General-Secretariat/Diversity/Diversity-Management/Gender-Sensitive-Language.html</a>
n/a	Recommendations for Gender-neutral Language	<b>Ruhr University</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/chancengleich/serviceangebote/geschlechterneutrale-sprache/index_en.html">https://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/chancengleich/serviceangebote/geschlechterneutrale-sprache/index_en.html</a>
n/a	Guidelines for using gender-sensitive language in communication, research and administration	<b>Reutlingen University</b>	n/a	<a href="https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/reutlingen_university_guidelines_for_using_gender-sensitive_language.pdf">https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/reutlingen_university_guidelines_for_using_gender-sensitive_language.pdf</a>
2018	Gender Equity at Events	<b>Central European University</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.ceu.edu/equal-opportunity/info/gender-equity-events">https://www.ceu.edu/equal-opportunity/info/gender-equity-events</a>

YEAR	TITLE	ENTE	AUTHORS	LINK
2019	Developing inclusive conferences	<b>University of Oxford</b>	Alice Chautard, Claire Hann	<a href="https://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/about/equality-diversity/190522_Inclusive_Conference_Guide.pdf">https://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/about/equality-diversity/190522_Inclusive_Conference_Guide.pdf</a>
2018	Creating inclusive conferences for academics with caring responsibilities	<b>University of Warwick</b>	Emily Henderson	<a href="https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/impact/policybriefings/6_creating_inclusive_conferences_for_academics_with_caring_responsibilities.pdf">https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/impact/policybriefings/6_creating_inclusive_conferences_for_academics_with_caring_responsibilities.pdf</a>
n/a	Transgender guidance. Good practice in communication	<b>University of Oxford</b>	n/a	<a href="https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/good-practice-in-communication">https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/good-practice-in-communication</a>
2019	Gender Identity and Expression Guidelines	<b>National University of Ireland Maynooth</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/human-resources/equality/gender-identity-and-expression">https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/human-resources/equality/gender-identity-and-expression</a>
n/a	Guide des bonnes pratiques de communication égalité femme-homme	<b>Université de l'académie de Nancy-Metz-Lorraines</b>	n/a	<a href="http://www.univ-lorraine.fr/egalite-femmes-hommes">http://www.univ-lorraine.fr/egalite-femmes-hommes</a>
2019	Bonnes pratiques pour une communication non sexiste dans les réseaux sociaux	<b>Université du Havre</b>	n/a	<a href="http://communiquersanssexisme.insa-rouen.fr/">http://communiquersanssexisme.insa-rouen.fr/</a>
n/a	L'égalité des genres à l'ULB. Une communication inclusive à l'ULB	<b>Université Libre de Bruxelles</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.ulb.be/fr/diversites/egalite-des-genres">https://www.ulb.be/fr/diversites/egalite-des-genres</a>
n/a	Good Practice in Inclusive Language	<b>University of Malta</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.um.edu.mt/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/425229/goodpracticeinclusivelanguage.pdf">https://www.um.edu.mt/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/425229/goodpracticeinclusivelanguage.pdf</a>
2018	Prontuario per l'uso del genere nel linguaggio amministrativo	<b>Università degli Studi di Ferrara</b>	n/a	<a href="http://www.unife.it/it/ateneo/comunicazione/unife-e-il-linguaggio-di-genere/linguaggio-di-genere-a-unife">http://www.unife.it/it/ateneo/comunicazione/unife-e-il-linguaggio-di-genere/linguaggio-di-genere-a-unife</a>
2017	Generi e linguaggi	<b>Università degli studi di Padova</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.unipd.it/node/48451">https://www.unipd.it/node/48451</a>
2015	Un approccio di genere al linguaggio amministrativo	<b>Università degli Studi di Torino</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.unito.it/ateneo/organizzazione/organismi-di-ateneo/comitato-unico-di-garanzia/progetti-e-attivita">https://www.unito.it/ateneo/organizzazione/organismi-di-ateneo/comitato-unico-di-garanzia/progetti-e-attivita</a>
2015	Linee guida per un corretto uso del genere nel linguaggio amministrativo	<b>Università degli Studi di Salerno</b>	n/a	n/a

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2011	Manuale di stile. Scrivi bene e parla chiaro	<b>Università degli Studi di Palermo</b>	Riccardo Riggi	<a href="https://www.unipa.it/Manuale-di-stile-dellUniversit-degli-Studi-di-Palermo.-Scrivi-bene-e-parla-chiaro/">https://www.unipa.it/Manuale-di-stile-dellUniversit-degli-Studi-di-Palermo.-Scrivi-bene-e-parla-chiaro/</a>
n/a	Per un uso del linguaggio rispettoso delle differenze	<b>Università degli studi di Trento</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.unitn.it/ateneo/55739/linguaggio-rispettoso-delle-differenze">https://www.unitn.it/ateneo/55739/linguaggio-rispettoso-delle-differenze</a>
n/a	Linee guida per il linguaggio di genere	<b>Ca' Foscari</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.unive.it/pag/19281/">https://www.unive.it/pag/19281/</a>
n/a	Linee guida per valorizzare le differenze di genere nella comunicazione	<b>Università della Svizzera italiana</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.desk.usi.ch/it/linee-guida-valorizzare-le-differenze-di-genere-nella-comunicazione-usi">https://www.desk.usi.ch/it/linee-guida-valorizzare-le-differenze-di-genere-nella-comunicazione-usi</a>
2017	Organising a Conference? How to Make it Gender/Diversity Balanced	<b>Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zürich</b>	n/a	<a href="https://ethz.ch/services/en/employment-and-work/working-environment/equal-opportunities.html">https://ethz.ch/services/en/employment-and-work/working-environment/equal-opportunities.html</a>
2019	Guía para un uso no sexista de la lengua en la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid	<b>Universidad Autónoma de Madrid</b>	Cristina Albert Muñoz	<a href="https://www.icmm.csic.es/img/Guia-para-un-uso-no-sexista-de-la-lengua-en-la-UAM.pdf">https://www.icmm.csic.es/img/Guia-para-un-uso-no-sexista-de-la-lengua-en-la-UAM.pdf</a>
2018	Guía UC de Comunicación en Igualdad	<b>Universidad de Cantabria</b>	n/a	<a href="https://web.unican.es/unidades/igualdad/SiteAssets/igualdad/comunicacion-en-igualdad/guia%20comunicacion%20igualdad%20%28web%29.pdf">https://web.unican.es/unidades/igualdad/SiteAssets/igualdad/comunicacion-en-igualdad/guia%20comunicacion%20igualdad%20%28web%29.pdf</a>
2018	Guía para un uso no sexista del lenguaje	<b>Universidad Politécnica de Cartagena</b>	n/a	<a href="https://biblioteca.fundaciononce.es/publicaciones/colecciones-propias/programa-operativo/guia-para-un-uso-no-sexista-del-lenguaje">https://biblioteca.fundaciononce.es/publicaciones/colecciones-propias/programa-operativo/guia-para-un-uso-no-sexista-del-lenguaje</a>
2017	Guía para un uso de lenguaje no sexista en la Universidad de La Rioja	<b>Universidad Politécnica de la Rioja</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.unirioja.es/igualdad/archivos/Guia_uso_lenguaje_no_sexista.pdf">https://www.unirioja.es/igualdad/archivos/Guia_uso_lenguaje_no_sexista.pdf</a>
2016	Manual de lenguaje no sexista en la Universidad	<b>Universidad Politécnica de Madrid</b>	n/a	<a href="http://www.upm.es/UPM/Politicasslgualdad/LenguajeNoSexista">http://www.upm.es/UPM/Politicasslgualdad/LenguajeNoSexista</a>
2014	Recomendaciones para construir igualdad con las palabras	<b>Universidad Pablo Olavide</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.upo.es/upsc/igualdad/lenguaje-inclusivo/">https://www.upo.es/upsc/igualdad/lenguaje-inclusivo/</a>

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2012	Guía de uso para un lenguaje igualitario (castellano)	<b>Universidad de Valencia</b>	Mercedes Quilis Merín, Marta Albelda Marco, Maria Josep Cuenca	<a href="https://www.uv.es/igualtat/GUIA/GUIA_CAS.pdf">https://www.uv.es/igualtat/GUIA/GUIA_CAS.pdf</a>
2012	Guía para un uso igualitario y no sexista del lenguaje y de la imagen en la Universidad de Jaén	<b>Universidad de Jaén</b>	Susana Guerrero Salazar	<a href="https://www.ujaen.es/servicios/igualdad/sites/servicio_igualdad/files/uploads/Guia_lenguaje_no_sexista.pdf">https://www.ujaen.es/servicios/igualdad/sites/servicio_igualdad/files/uploads/Guia_lenguaje_no_sexista.pdf</a>
2011	Guía para el uso no sexista del lenguaje en la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona	<b>Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona</b>	Heura Marçal, Fiona Kelso y Mercè Nogués	<a href="https://www.uab.cat/web/l-observatori/violencia-por-razon-de-genero-1345697312390.html">https://www.uab.cat/web/l-observatori/violencia-por-razon-de-genero-1345697312390.html</a>
2011	Guía para un discurso igualitario en la Universidad de Alicante	<b>Universidad de Alicante</b>	Carmen Marimón Llorca y Isabel Santamaría Pérez	<a href="https://ieg.ua.es/es/documentos/normativasobreigualdad/guia-para-un-discurso-igualitario-en-la-ua.pdf">https://ieg.ua.es/es/documentos/normativasobreigualdad/guia-para-un-discurso-igualitario-en-la-ua.pdf</a>
2010	Guía de la UdG para un uso igualitario del lenguaje	<b>Universitat de Girona</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.udg.edu/ca/Portals/52/OContent_Docs/UdG_llengua_guia_us_igualitari_llenguatge-1.pdf">https://www.udg.edu/ca/Portals/52/OContent_Docs/UdG_llengua_guia_us_igualitari_llenguatge-1.pdf</a>
n/a	Guía básica para la comunicación no sexista en la UD	<b>Universidad de Deusto</b>	n/a	n/a
n/a	Buenas prácticas en el tratamiento del lenguaje en igualdad; Buenas prácticas en el tratamiento de imágenes en igualdad	<b>Universidad Carlos III</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.uc3m.es/ss/Satellite/Igualdad/es/TextoDosColumnas/1371221505993/Buenas_practicas">https://www.uc3m.es/ss/Satellite/Igualdad/es/TextoDosColumnas/1371221505993/Buenas_practicas</a>
n/a	Lenguaje y comunicación no sexistas	<b>Universidad de Lleida</b>	n/a	<a href="http://www.uco.es/igualdad/images/documentos/guia-lenguaje-no-sexista-universidad-de-lleida.pdf">http://www.uco.es/igualdad/images/documentos/guia-lenguaje-no-sexista-universidad-de-lleida.pdf</a>
n/a	Guía orientativa para el uso igualitario del lenguaje y de la imagen de la UMA	<b>Universidad de Málaga</b>	Susana Guerrero Salazar	<a href="https://www.uma.es/unidad-de-igualdad/info/102773/guia-lenguaje-no-sexista/">https://www.uma.es/unidad-de-igualdad/info/102773/guia-lenguaje-no-sexista/</a>
n/a	Guía de uso no sexista del vocabulario español	<b>Universidad de Murcia</b>	n/a	<a href="https://www.um.es/documents/2187255/2190475/guia-leng-no-sexista.pdf/d7257202-d588-4f11-8d1b-3ac13fd1f5be">https://www.um.es/documents/2187255/2190475/guia-leng-no-sexista.pdf/d7257202-d588-4f11-8d1b-3ac13fd1f5be</a>

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n/a	Propuestas para un uso no sexista del lenguaje administrativo	<b>Universidad del País Vasco/Euskal Herriko Uniberstsitea</b>	n/a	<a href="http://tiny.cc/8vi8lz">http://tiny.cc/8vi8lz</a>
n/a	Lenguaje de Igualdad	<b>Universidad de las Palmas de Gran Canaria</b>	n/a	<a href="http://igualdad.ulpgc.es/lenguajeigualdad">http://igualdad.ulpgc.es/lenguajeigualdad</a>
n/a	Criterios de linguaxe non sexista	<b>Universidade de Santiago de Compostela</b>	Manuel Bermúdez Blanco, Alba Cid Fernández	<a href="https://www.usc.es/export9/sites/webinstitucional/gl/servizos/oix/descargas/linguaxe_non_sexista_publicado_WEB_USC.pdf">https://www.usc.es/export9/sites/webinstitucional/gl/servizos/oix/descargas/linguaxe_non_sexista_publicado_WEB_USC.pdf</a>
n/a	Reglas de uso del lenguaje no sexista	<b>Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia</b>	n/a	<a href="http://portal.uned.es/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/UNED_MAIN/LAUNIVERSIDAD/VICERRECTORADOS/GERENCIA/OFICINA_IGUALDAD/CONCEPTOS%20BASICOS/GUIA_LENGUAJE.PDF">http://portal.uned.es/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/UNED_MAIN/LAUNIVERSIDAD/VICERRECTORADOS/GERENCIA/OFICINA_IGUALDAD/CONCEPTOS%20BASICOS/GUIA_LENGUAJE.PDF</a>
n/a	Lenguaje Inclusivo	<b>Universidad de Zaragoza</b>	n/a	<a href="https://observatorioigualdad.unizar.es/lenguaje-inclusivo">https://observatorioigualdad.unizar.es/lenguaje-inclusivo</a>

