

# **GENDER EQUALITY PLAN (GEP)** **of the Institute of High Pressure Physics** **Polish Academy of Sciences** **(validity period: 2026-2027)**

## **1. INTRODUCTION AND MISSION OF THE EQUALITY PLAN**

According to the statute, the core activity of the Institute of High Pressure Physics of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IHPP PAS) is conducting scientific research in the field of high-pressure physics applied to semiconductors, superconductors, ceramics, metals, and biological materials. The Institute also conducts experimental production of high-technology products such as monocrystalline GaN substrates, nanocrystalline hydroxyapatite for veterinary and medical purposes, and high-pressure scientific equipment.

The Equality Plan for IHPP PAS is a strategic instrument aimed at systematically improving the quality of work and the development of the Institute with full respect for the principles of equality, inclusiveness, and diversity. This document is the foundation for building a modern scientific environment, enabling all female and male employees, as well as female and male PhD students, unhindered professional and personal development - regardless of social status, background, worldview, religion, degree of disability, sexual orientation, or gender.

The main goal of the Equality Plan for the Institute of High Pressure Physics of the Polish Academy of Sciences (hereinafter referred to as the Equality Plan or the Plan) is to actively promote a culture of respect that recognizes diversity as a great value. We believe that an environment free from prejudice allows for the full utilization of intellectual potential, which directly translates into personal well-being, a sense of security, empowerment, and the autonomy of researchers. Such a defined organizational culture is a necessary condition for maintaining the high quality of scientific research conducted.

This document has been developed based on a reliable diagnosis of the actual state of affairs in 2026 and the specific needs of IHPP PAS. Its creation took into account:

- Guidelines of the European Commission regarding Gender Equality Plans (GEP) as a prerequisite for Horizon Europe program beneficiaries;
- Recommendations of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education regarding anti-discrimination policies in scientific units;
- A comparative analysis of similar documents in force in leading European and Polish research units.

The Equality Plan is a declaration of the Institute's Management to undertake targeted, measurable actions to eliminate structural and worldview barriers, ensuring fair access to resources, promotions, and decision-making processes for all individuals forming our Institute.

## **2. METHODOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT AND DIAGNOSIS OF THE CURRENT STATE**

The development of the Equality Plan was preceded by a comprehensive research and analytical process, conducted at the end of 2025 and the beginning of 2026. The aim of the diagnosis was to identify areas where inequalities may occur and to understand the specific needs of the IHPP PAS community.

### 2.1. Data collection methodology

In order to obtain a full picture of the situation, the following research methods were used:

- Quantitative data analysis (HR): Anonymized data was obtained from the HR department and the doctoral studies secretariat regarding employment structure, promotions, remuneration, and participation in decision-making bodies broken down by gender, which were compared with data from previous years.
- Analysis of internal documents: A review of work regulations, anti-mobbing procedures, and recruitment principles in terms of inclusivity and the presence of feminine forms.

## 2.2. Key findings

The following summaries are the starting point for the goals set in the Plan. They reflect the state of employment and education at the Institute as of March 31, 2026.

	<b>Number of women</b>	<b>Number of men</b>	<b>% Women</b>	<b>% Men</b>
All employees	68	171	28.45%	71.55%
Non-academic employees	45	91	33.09%	66.91%
Academic employees	23	80	22.33%	77.67%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>28.45%</b>	<b>71.55%</b>

<b>Group</b>	<b>Number of women</b>	<b>Number of men</b>	<b>% Women</b>	<b>% Men</b>
Doctoral School / PhD Students	5	13	27.78%	72.22%
Assistant Professors	10	27	27.03%	72.97%
Assistants	7	27	20.59%	79.41%
Institute Professors	5	15	25.00%	75.00%
Titular Professors	1	12	7.69%	92.31%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>22.95%</b>	<b>77.05%</b>

<b>Function / Body</b>	<b>Number of women</b>	<b>Number of men</b>	<b>% Women</b>	<b>% Men</b>
Management (Director and Deputies)	2	4	33.33%	66.67%
Scientific Council (members)	10	33	23.26%	76.74%
Heads of Laboratories	2	11	15.38%	84.62%
Recruitment and Promotion Committees (total)	3	14	17.65%	82.35%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>21.52%</b>	<b>78.48%</b>

**Analysis of the employment structure at IHPP PAS in 2023–2026: Conclusions and Action Strategy. Trends and phenomena (based on systematic monitoring).** Due to the introduction of continuous monitoring of equality indicators at IHPP PAS, it was possible to reliably identify the dynamics of changes in the Institute's structures. An analysis of data from 2023-2026 allows the formulation of the following conclusions:

- The "Leaky Pipeline" phenomenon: The institution effectively supports the development of women up to the level of Assistant Professor and Institute Professor (an increase from 13% in 2023 to 25% in this group), however, the highest career level (Titular Professor) remains almost completely dominated by men (below 8% of women).
- Regression in the "Junior Research" group: Monitoring revealed a concerning, systematic decline in the number of women in assistant positions - from 13 people (25%) in 2023 to 7 people (20.5%) in 2026. The cause of the decline is academic promotions, however, the simultaneously observed decrease indicates the need to examine the barriers to entry and retention of young female researchers in the Institute's structures.
- Leadership crisis at the operational level: Despite the improvement of statistics in the Management itself (increase from 25% in 2023 to 33% in 2026), a decrease in the number of women in managerial positions was noted. This suggests difficulties in balancing research work with management functions at the middle level.

### 2.3. Key conclusions

Based on the above data and interviews with Employees, the following challenges were identified:

- A gradual decrease in the share of women along with promotion to higher academic levels (the so-called "leaky pipeline") visible in Table 2, where the share of titular professors is significantly lower than the average at lower stages of the academic career.
- A distinctly higher percentage of women in the Institute's Management (33%) compared to all employees (28.45%), but significantly lower at the level of laboratory heads (15.38%), data in Table 1 and Table 3.

- The need to support people returning from parental leaves.
- The necessity to formalize procedures preventing unconscious bias during recruitment.

### **3. STRATEGIC GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS (2026–2027)**

Based on the conducted diagnosis, the Institute sets five main operational goals to be implemented in the upcoming two-year cycle:

#### **GOAL 1: Meritocracy of promotions to managerial positions and committee memberships**

**Action 1.1.** The Institute's priority is to assign managerial positions and memberships in bodies based on substantive premises, taking into account skills, knowledge, competencies, and predispositions, while simultaneously introducing a standard of diversified gender composition in recruitment and promotion committees. Justification: Ensuring that both genders are represented on every committee helps eliminate unconscious bias and provides a more substantive assessment of talents, which is crucial for reversing negative recruitment trends. Furthermore, standards for the inclusive evaluation of scientific achievements must be implemented, which in promotion processes and nominations to management bodies will take into account the impact of career breaks. Evaluation criteria will be made more flexible with a proportionality indicator, taking into account periods of childcare, care for dependent persons, and breaks related to health recovery, ensuring equal opportunities in access to leadership roles.

**GOAL 2: Support for young parents and reconciling work with private life (Work-Life Balance)** The Institute considers it a priority to facilitate a coexistence of an academic career with childcare and care for dependent persons.

**Action 2.1: Remote work and flexibility.** Full use of the Remote Work Regulations and provisions of the Labor Code to enable parents to flexibly manage their working time.

**Action 2.2: Support for returns.** Applying rules regarding employment extensions related to parenthood and developing a "Return Package" (e.g., a flexible schedule in the first six months after maternity/paternity leave).

**Action 2.3: Core hours.** Scheduling key meetings, Scientific Council sessions, and seminars between 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM to enable the participation of people burdened with caregiving responsibilities.

**Action 2.4: Social support.** Continuation of co-financing from the social fund for the recreation of employees and their children (summer camps, trips).

### **GOAL 3: Analysis of reasons for resignation (Turnover monitoring)**

To understand the reasons for the decline in the number of young female researchers, the Institute expands its monitoring system to include qualitative analysis.

**Action 3.1:** Introduction of structured exit interviews with academic staff leaving the Institute, with particular emphasis on the group of assistants and PhD students. Identifying key factors influencing decisions to resign from a career at IHPP PAS (e.g., lack of employment stability, barriers in reconciling professional and private roles, lack of a clear career path) and developing retention actions based on this

### **GOAL 4: Continuous evaluation of progress and education**

**Action 4.1:** Continuation of annual monitoring of the gender structure and compositions of decision-making bodies. Regular reporting of monitoring results to the Management, which will allow for rapid correction of HR policy and assessment of the effectiveness of implemented equality measures.

**Action 4.2: Education and training.** Periodic training for the Institute's community on counteracting discrimination and recognizing unconscious bias.

**Action 4.3: Promotion of diversity.** Making efforts to increase women's interest in academic positions and managerial roles by emphasizing the lack of teaching loads.

### **GOAL 5: Safety and Counteracting Discrimination**

**Action 5.1: Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment.** Continuous support for the Plenipotentiary in overseeing respect for the values of equal opportunities and gathering information on potential incidents.

**Action 5.2: Anti-mobbing procedures.** Enforcing the "Regulations on counteracting mobbing and discrimination" and ensuring a clear path for reporting abuses.

#### **4. IMPLEMENTATION AND RESOURCES**

IHPP PAS allocates appropriate financial resources and human resources (part of the FTEs of selected employees) to tasks related to the implementation of the Plan. The body supporting the Management is the Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment.

#### **5. SUMMARY AND GUARANTEE OF MERITOCRACY**

Building a modern and fair work environment requires constant verification of adopted assumptions. At IHPP PAS, gender equality monitoring has become an integral management tool, enabling ongoing assessment of the employment structure and identification of developmental barriers. A comparative analysis of data for the years 2023–2026 sheds light on the real dynamics of promotions and nominations, taking into account the unique biographical context of employees, including breaks related to care or health. Based on this, the following diagnosis was formulated:

The share of women in the total number of employees at the Institute remains at the level of approx. 28%, including in academic and training positions at approx. 22%, which, given the specificity of technical and physical sciences, is a fairly typical value and constitutes a basis for further action. A decrease in the number of female assistants was identified (from 25% in 2023 to 20.5% in 2026) as well as a persistent "glass ceiling" at the level of titular professorship (below 8% of women). Monitoring has shown the effectiveness of promotions at the level of Institute Professor (an increase from 13% to 25% of women), which proves the high scientific potential of female staff.

The Institute shows a high dynamic of changes (especially at the Management level), however, monitoring data warns against the erosion of the base (a decrease in the number of female assistants). To maintain the innovativeness of IHPP PAS, it is necessary to ensure transparent and diversified recruitment processes. Introducing care for the composition of committees and the continuation of data monitoring are the foundations that will allow building the prestige of the Institute as a place friendly to talent, regardless of gender.

It should be emphasized that the fields of high-pressure physics and materials engineering, in which the Institute of High Pressure Physics PAS specializes, are historically dominated by men. Achieving full percentage parity in the participation of women and men at the level of a scientific unit is currently an objective challenge, conditioned by external factors.

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Increasing the representation of women in exact and technical sciences (STEM) requires a systemic change that must begin at the stage of primary and secondary education by actively supporting girls and encouraging them to explore physics and mathematics. Key decisions about choosing a career path are made at a higher level than the structures of a single institute, therefore a real change in the gender proportion among candidates for physics and polytechnic studies requires broad social and educational actions. The Institute's role in this process focuses on creating a friendly environment for those women who have already decided on a scientific career, and on promoting research attitudes that can inspire future generations of female and male researchers.

Scientific excellence and research ethics remain the overriding value when making personnel decisions at IHPP PAS. All actions described in this Plan aim to ensure fair and transparent rules in which promotions and positions held are determined solely by the competencies and predispositions of the staff. The Equality Plan serves to eliminate structural barriers so that the potential of each employee can be assessed objectively and free from prejudice. All actions described in this Plan aim to ensure fair and transparent rules in which:

- Employment, professional promotions, and filling managerial positions are determined exclusively by the competencies, scientific achievements, and predispositions of the staff.
- The Equality Plan serves to eliminate structural barriers and unconscious biases that could disrupt the objective assessment of these competencies.
- Team diversity is treated as a catalyst for creativity, while maintaining full respect for the knowledge and professionalism of every employee and PhD student.

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