OXFORD RESEARCH 2021/11

Equality and diversity in the Spanish higher education institutes

Case study for KOTAMO-project

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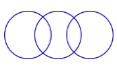

The venn-diagram is a stylistic representation of Oxford Research efforts to competences combine in research, strategy and communication, in providing knowledge for a better society.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

The Higher education structure of Spain is divided into two categories: universities and polytechnic universities. The former has a more theoretical focus, while the latter has a more practical orientation. Spain has a total of 76 universities, 45 public and 31 private ones. The difference is that tuition fees are regulated at public universities, while the fees are both higher and unregulated at private universities[1].

The governance of the HEI structure is executed by the Spanish Government and the Ministry of Universities. Additionally, the Ministry of Science and Innovation is responsible of scientific and technical research, technological development, and innovation. Spain has various private and public research funding bodies. The Spanish National Research Council is the largest public research funder of Spain.

In 2018-2019, 125 471 university professors and researchers were active in the Spanish HEI system. They were accompanied by 26 408 people defined as research staff and technical research support staff.

The public university spending was calculated to be 9.5 million EUR in 2018-2019[2].

Gender equality in HEI's

Several laws promote gender equality in Spain. The organic law for Effective Equality between Women and Men from 2007 stated that gender equality is one of the basic principles for public action, and that all institutions with more than 250 employees must adopt and implement gender equality plans.

Law 4/2007 on Universities (LOMLOU) presented mandatory creations of Equality Units in all universities, as well as the mandatory production of periodic reports on the applications of the principle of gender equality, Gender Equality Plans (GEP). It also promotes the balance of representation of women and men (60%/ 40%) on all boards for elections, promotion, and peer evaluation[3].

The Science, Technology and Innovation Law (LCTI 14/2011) extended the mandate to adopt GEPs from universities to public research organisations. These Laws are followed by public policy; the "Spanish Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy (EECTI) 2021-2027" and the "State Scientific, Technical and Innovation Research Plan (PEICTI) 2021-2023". A gender perspective is one of the four basic principles the EECTI 2021-

[1] Erudera, 2022. Spain Higher Education System — Erudera
[2] Ministry of Universities, 2021. Estadística de personal de las universidades (EPU) | Catálogo de datos | Estadísticas - Ministerio de Universidades (es)
[3] Genderportal, 2007. https://www.genderportal.eu/resources/ley-organica-42007-de-universidades-lomlou-42007

2027 are using when implementation public research, development and innovation policy. Gender equality is also included in the key areas of strategy, on the attraction, retention, and development of talent (no. 7) and on science for society (no. 14). The PEICTI 2021-2023 includes the gender perspective as a basic principle. The EECTI and PEICTI policies focus on two areas: (1) visibility and dissemination (assemblage of statistical data, visibility of women to promote science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers among girls); and (2) transformation and promotion (measures and resources to abolish gender inequalities, promote progress on gender equality, and harmonize the gender dimension into science and innovation)[4].

On the ministerial level, the Ministry of Universities and the Ministry of Science and Innovation both has special groups formed to increase gender equality in HEI, and there is an interministerial body called the Women, Science and Innovation Observatory (established in 2019) that aims with a broad remit to increase gender equality in the Spanish Science, Technology and Innovation System. This Observatory is further investigated as a case in this report.

Today, women make up the majority of students at Spanish universities and represent 46,6% of researchers and 41,8% of academic staff (2017/ 2018). The higher up on the academic ladder, the lower the percentage of women. There are however differences between public and private universities: women make up 41,3% of academic staff in public universities, but 44,4% in private universities. There is a lower percentage of women among research and teaching staff in all academic fields in both private and public universities: engineering and Architecture hold the lowest percentage of women, only 23,4%, whereas women make up 48,5% of the field of Arts and Humanities. Lastly, women only made up 12,5% of the decision-making bodies in academia (2019), below the EU28 average of 25,9% [5].

Generally, the situation with under representation of women in HEI in Spain is in line with the situation in the EU. However, Spain has a somewhat higher percentage of women in research as 32.8% of researchers in the EU were women in 2018 (compared to 41,3% in Spain). Women in EU held 26.2% of grade A (full professorship or equivalent) academic positions in 2018, which also is in line with the situation in Spain. Women made up 31.1% of the members of scientific boards in 2019, and between 2015 and 2019, only 1.8 % of all publications addressed a sex or gender dimension of a topic in the EU[6].

[4] European Institute for Gender Equality, 2022 Spain | European Institute for Gender Equality (europa.eu)
[5] Equal4Europe, 2020, p 2. https://equal4europe.eu/spanish-context-about-gender-equality-in-the-labour-market-and-academia/
[6] Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, 2020, p 8. https://gender-spear.eu/assets/content/Horizon%20Europe%20Guidance%20on%20GEP_en.pdf

1.1.1 Diversity and equality in HEI's

In Spain, some steps have been taken towards institutionalisation of policies on diversity in universities. The principle of non-discrimination and equal opportunities for Spanish universities is established in Royal Legislative Decree 1/2013 of 29 November 2013. This means that institutions should establish positive actions and services. This regulation aims specifically to physical disability and gender equality. Actions aimed to better the situation for people with physical disability are to give accessibility to buildings and public areas as well as making curricula more inclusive.

A study from 2021 shows that although many Spanish universities have implemented certain measures to increase diversity, it is mainly macropolitical and legislative actions at state level that facilitate diversity measures in Spanish universities[7].

2. Cases

This section introduces the reader to two measures taken to promote equality in the Spanish higher education system.

2.1 The Women, Science and Innovation Observatory (OMCI)

Background: In January 2019, the Spanish government approved the creation of the Women, Science and Innovation Observatory (in Spanish Observatorio Mujeres, Ciencia e Innovación) (OMCI) with the aim of increasing gender equality in the Spanish Science, Technology and Innovation System. Spain has, as stated in the introduction part of the report, intensified their efforts to contribute to a gender equal HEI structure. One example is that the legal mandate to mainstream gender equality in Spain's universities has led to the establishment of gender equality units and the adoption of gender equality policy plans and protocols against sexual harassment. However, the Ministry for Science and Innovation thought that more had to be done to increase gender equality in HEI's. There was still an uneven development of equality units, and a poor level of economic funds that were granted, as well as lack of common gender equality indicators to compare the progress. Also, sexual harassment is a widespread and public problem in Spain, and more efforts were thought to be needed to combat the problem[8].The idea to introduce the

[7] Alvarez-Castillo, Jose-Luis *Exploring the status of diversity in policies and practices of Spanish universities. An asymmetric dual model*, 2021, page 8.
[8] Lombardo, Emanuela and Bustelo, Maria. *Sexual and sexist harassment in Spanish universities: policy implementation and resistances against gender equality measures*. 2021.

OMCI came from the Ministry for Science and Innovation. The OMCI is now a permanent interministerial body of the Spanish government. They are located in Madrid[9].

Objective: the aim of the Observatory is to promote gender equality in science, technology and innovation (through) in two ways: firstly, OMCI promotes gender balance in all fields and at all levels of research. Secondly, OMCI promotes transversal integration of the gender perspective in science, technology and innovation[10].

Organisation: OMCI consists of three parts: an expert group, a commission, and a plenary.

- The expert group consists of 120 representatives from the civil society and research organisations. The tasks of the expert group are to provide insights and ideas for OMCI. The experts are divided into 11 groups managing different topics relevant for the OMCI. Each group has a diversity with representatives from different sectors, regions, ages, and sexes. If an idea, project, or measure is obtained in the expert groups, it will be sent for the commission for discussion.
- The commission consist of 15 representatives from the government administration and a few representatives from the third sector. They meet three four times a year and support and monitor the expert groups as well as prepare suggestions to the plenary.
- The plenary is the decision-making organ of OMCI. It constitutes of representatives from ten ministries: Defence; Education and Vocational Training; Presidency, Relations with the Courts and Democratic Memory; Labour and Social Economy; Inclusion, Social Security and Migration; Territorial Policy and Public Function; Economic Affairs and Digital Transformation; Health; Equality, and Universities; and the most relevant agents in the fields of science, technology, and innovation as well as equality. The plenary meets two times a year.[11].

2.2.1 Target group

The target group of the OMCI is women in science, technology, and innovation. However, different measures introduced from the OMCI aim to increase gender equality in different ways and with various target groups, such as research organisations or women in academia[12].

[9] Interview with representative from the Women, Science and Innovation Observatory (OMCI), 15 February 2022.
[10] The Women, Science and Innovation Observatory, 2022, Observatorio Mujeres, Ciencia e Innovación
[11] Interview with representative from the Women, Science and Innovation Observatory (OMCI), 15 February 2022.
[12] Interview with representative from the Women, Science and Innovation Observatory (OMCI), 15 February 2022.

2.2.2 Actors involved

The actors involved are (as the experts, the commission, and the plenary) research organizations, civil society organizations and ministerial departments. Furthermore, women the in academia are also involved since they are consulted about their needs regarding career paths and gender equality. The main initiator of the case was the Spanish Ministry for Science and Innovation. The funding is public[13].

2.1.1 Measures included

The OMCI both has a monitoring and evaluation function as well as reporting and proposal function.

The monitoring and evaluation function consist of:

- Collecting and analysing available information on equality between women and men in the scientific, technological and research fields, as well as in the universities.
- Collect, analyse, evaluate and disseminate information on the situation of women in the above fields.
- Periodic and systematic monitoring of the level of execution and gender impact of the measures and actions of the Ministry of Science and Innovation and its bodies and entities, as well as of all the agents of the Spanish Science, Technology and Innovation System, in relevant areas related to gender equality in R&D&I, including: balanced presence; preventing and tackling sexual harassment and harassment based on sex at work; reducing the impact of unconscious bias in evaluation; integrating gender equality criteria in calls for public funding; integrating the gender dimension in science, technology and innovation projects and programmes.
- Conduct mapping of the Equality Plans of the Public Research Bodies and the results of their annual monitoring.
- To ensure compliance with the provisions of the applicable regulations, strategies and plans.
- To promote studies and technical diagnostic reports about women scientists, technologists and researchers in Spain.
- Conduct mapping of the actions carried out by the equality units of the universities, insofar as these actions refer to the field of research and/or technology.

[13] Interview with representative from the Women, Science and Innovation Observatory (OMCI), 15 February 2022.

OMCI's report and proposal functions consist of:

- To report on all matters that are submitted to its criteria in matters of equality.
- To formulate recommendations and proposals aimed at improving indicators and information systems related to women in these areas.
- To formulate recommendations and proposals aimed at improving the situation and visibility of women researchers, technologists and innovators and to eradicate the gender inequalities detected in the Spanish Science, Technology and Innovation System.
- To propose the adoption of measures and the implementation of actions by the agents of the Spanish Science, Technology and Innovation System, in order to advance towards a balanced presence of women and men in all areas and at all levels, especially in decision-making.
- Promote recommendations and measures to integrate the gender perspective in sectoral research, development and innovation policies - including strategies and plans - and in projects and programmes.
- Propose scientific dissemination actions to make the careers of current and former women scientists visible as points of reference and to foster scientific vocations in girls and adolescents, especially in STEM areas.
- To promote actions to foster science, technology and innovation free of gender bias.

OMCI also carries out any other functions that contribute to the fulfilment of its objectives, as well as those entrusted to it by the Ministry of Science and Innovation in this area.

Some recent examples of measures OMCI has planned are a mentorship programme (still at planning stage) and a law. The award/ certificate will be given to universities that have shown outstanding effort in increasing gender equality. A university that has been given the award will be required to apply for the award/ certificate again every fourth year, to prove worthy. Secondly, a mentorship programme with a gender approach is being planned. This mentorship programme is designed to support career paths for women in the Spanish science, technology and innovation system as gender, work-life balance and other issues relating to gender equality is often not considered in the context. Thirdly, OMCI has also been involved in updating the law that will make it compulsory for all actors in research to implement measures for gender equality. The law will e.g., make it compulsory for Research Funding Organisations (RFOs) to have gender equality plans, protocols for sexual harassments and to limit gender bias. The OMCI will develop guides, training, and additional support for implementation.

2.1.2 Results and impact

The OMCI is a permanent interministerial body of the Spanish government. The representative of the OMCI states that the impacts are yet to be awaited from the measures introduced by the OMCI. No full evaluations are conducted of the measures taken yet. However, the representative of the OMCI stresses that putting gender equality so highly on the political agenda is key to achieve real change[14].

2.1.3 Lessons learned

The barriers have been finding resources and personnel for building an organisational structure. The representative from the OMCI states that their main lessons learned is that a solid structure and organisation, as well as a supporting administration, is key to succeed. They are still missing a technical secretariat at the OMCI. A representative means that a secretariat is needed to further plan and implement change. The representative likewise says that the structure of the OMCI with representatives from the civil society, research organisations and governmental departments is important as to both achieve change that connects to the society and create room for innovation in gender equality measures[15].

2.2 Gender Coefficient in the Full Professor Programme

Background: The Gender Coefficient in the Full Professor Programme was developed in 2016 at the *Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya* (UPC), a public research and higher education institution in engineering, architecture, science and technology. Like many other universities focusing on similar fields, the UPC has a low percentage of women among students (less than 30% of BSc and MSc students) and academic positions. The share of women is lowest among professors – in 2016, only 8.6% of the professorships were held by women.

The UPC had earlier introduced a measure that gave women that earned the same final score in the selection process of becoming a professor an advantage. This meant that if a female and male candidate ended on the same final score, the female candidate would earn the professorship. The UPC also tried to introduce a measure that gave a minimum

[14] Interview with representative from the Women, Science and Innovation Observatory (OMCI), 15 February 2022.

[15] Interview with representative from the Women, Science and Innovation Observatory (OMCI), 15 February 2022.

of 5% of the professorial positions to women. These measures were insufficient which led to introduction of the Gender Coefficient[16].

Objective: In order to increase the number of women among professors, UPC introduced a new measure with the aim to overcome the structural obstacles creating hinders for gender equality in 2016. The measure adds a gender coefficient to women candidates final scores when applying to a professorial position. The expected outcome is increased number of women in professorial positions[17].

2.2.1 Target group

The target group of the Gender Coefficient in Full Programme measure was female research- and teaching staff. The case was initiated at institutional level, within the UPC[18].

2.2.2 Actors involved

The proposal was initiated by the vice rector for academic staff, but other actors include the staff representation and the Governing Council of UPC (the body where regulations and policies are approved). The UPC funds the project[19].

2.2.3 Measures included

The Gender Coefficient in Full Programme was introduced by the UPC in 2016. The vice-rector led the process of introducing the Gender Coefficient and then it was agreed with the academic staff representation and approved by the governing council of UPC. It is planned to be used continuously in the selection of professors. The measure is applied to full professorship only.

The Gender Coefficient was included as a part of the regulations of the promotion plan for professors. The process includes the evaluation of candidates by both quantitative criteria, , e.g., counting number of papers and quantity of teaching, as well as qualitative criteria , e.g., the academic and research staff evaluation committee evaluates the CVs based on a pre agreed criteria.

The final score of women is then multiplied by theby the gender coefficient that has been agreed upon. . In 2017, the gender coefficient which was used was 1,15, in 2018 it was 1.21, following with 1.25 in 2021. The coefficient is modified before each new professorial candidate process to make sure that it’s coefficient’s effectiveness.

[16] Interview with representative from Universitat Politècnica De Catalunya (UPC), 15 February 2022.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Interview with representative from Universitat Politècnica De Catalunya (UPC), 15 February 2022.

The measure is carried out with the aim is to increase the share of women that become professors. More specifically, the aim is increasing the percentage of women in the highest professorial positions so that percentages are even and match the percentages of women in other academic categories at UPC.[20].

2.2.4 Results and impact

The results of the Gender Coefficient in Full Professorship programme are significant. Today, 15% of the full professors are women, compared to 5% 10 years ago.

Since the introduction of the measure, 50 people have been granted full professorship and with the coefficient 20 of these are women and 30 are men. Without the measure being applied six women and 44 men would have been granted full professorship.

The measure also promotes a stronger presence of women in decision-making positions by having more women in the higher career categories. It also affects the organizational culture and creates acceptance for structural measures to promote gender equality. The measure will be continuously used. The long-term effects of the Gender Coefficient in Full Professorship programme are more women in science and increasing gender equality among research- and teaching staff[21].

2.2.5 Lessons learned

Some of the barriers have been resistance from men in the academic community. This has been met with the argument that this measure is required as structural barriers are strong for women.

The main lesson learned is that the measure is both necessary and effective as a so-called emergency measure: if universities wish to close the gap between men and women in academic careers, measures of this capacity are needed. According to the representative, it might not be needed anymore in a few years, but today it is an effective way to facilitate change. [22]

The second lesson learned is that the introduction of the measure was enabled by the fact that the idea came from a high management level. A representative from the UPC stresses that this facilitated the introduction of the measure, as members of staff had earlier suggested a quota, that 50% of the professorships would be given to women, but this suggestion was not considered by the management of UPC. The Gender Coefficient in

[20] Interview with representative from Universitat Politècnica De Catalunya (UPC), 15 February 2022.
[21] Interview with representative from Universitat Politècnica De Catalunya (UPC), 15 February 2022.
[22] Ibid.

full Professorship Programme had to come from a high management level and there had to be an institutional commitment to succeed[23].

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[23] Ibid.

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Interviews:

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