

Gender Equality Plan 2022-2025

Instituto de Medicina Molecular João Lobo Antunes



Institutional Commitment

The Instituto de Medicina Molecular João Lobo Antunes promotes creativity, ambition and freedom as its core values. An integral part of these values is a lasting commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, which we aim to further strengthen by directing appropriate resources and providing dedicated training to our community.

The aim of the iMM Gender Equality Plan 2022-2025 is to promote equal participation of women, men, transgender and non-binary employees, identifying and eliminating any stereotype or barrier that impedes anyone from developing their best selves in the professional life at the iMM. A set of goals and comprehensive measures was defined for each of five thematic areas:

1. gender equality in recruitment and career progression;
2. gender balance in leadership and decision-making;
3. prevention of gender-based and sexual harassment;
4. integration of the gender dimension into research content;
5. work-life balance;
6. organisational communication and culture.

The iMM Direction has full responsibility for the implementation of the commitments set out in the iMM Gender Equality Plan and is counting on the active involvement of all iMM employees in making sustainable changes towards equality at all levels.

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Contents

Institutional Commitment.....	2
Overview	4
Assessing the state-of-play at IMM	6
iMM Community profile	6
Past initiatives	7
Areas of Action	11
Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Progression.....	11
Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making	12
Prevention of Gender-based and Sexual Harassment.....	12
Integration of the Gender Dimension into Research Content	13
Work-life balance	14
Organisational Communication and Culture	15

Overview

Implementing the culture of balanced participation and equal opportunities is essential for iMM. We are complying with the general legal provisions promoting equal treatment and equal opportunities for women and men in Portugal (*Código de Trabalho*¹), and we are further aligned with the *Estratégia Nacional para a Igualdade e a Não Discriminação - Portugal + Igual*² and the UN Sustainable Development Agenda 2030³.

Although the employment of men and women in knowledge-intensive activities is quite balanced in Portugal, and with a high proportion of women particularly in Health and Welfare, a deeper analysis often reveals disparities at the leadership level, wage gaps, and a need to strengthen the frameworks towards better work-life balance (She Figures 2021, European Commission⁴).

In addition, the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities globally, and research performing institutions were not an exception. We therefore wish to make a sustainable structural changes as to counteract and mitigate such external factors and unconscious biases.

The actual design and discussion of the iMM Gender Equality Plan 2022-2025 (hereinafter iMM GEP) derives from the diagnostic assessment of the current situation at iMM, and subsequent definition of specific objectives, actions and appropriate resources. It is also our response to the priorities set for the European Research Area (ERA) as concerns gender equality and gender mainstreaming and the strengthened provisions introduced in Horizon Europe, and meets four mandatory process-related requirements:

1) **iMM GEP is a public document** approved by the iMM Board of Directors and made available in English on the iMM website and intranet where it can be accessed by all employees. It is included in the mandatory induction sessions of new employees when organizational aspects of the institution, quality management and safety regulations are presented. In addition, it will be presented at the institutional events, such as iMM retreat or Town Hall Meetings. The progress towards the defined goals of the iMM GEP will be reported annually in the dedicated section of the institutional annual report, also publicly available in the iMM website, and the plan will be updated every two years.

2) **Dedicated human and financial resources** are considered to implement the iMM GEP and support an ongoing process of sustainable organisational change. Responsibilities are defined for each set of actions, having the Gender Equality Commission as a strategic, supervising and monitoring body. The Gender Equality Commission is composed of two Group Leaders, Human Resources Responsible, Training Hub Executive Manager, Gender Equality Officer, one representative of the Senior Staff Scientists, of the Post-doctoral community, of the PhD students' community, and of the Research and Administrative Facilities. In addition, the recently nominated Anti-Bullying Committee gathers four external experts and provides advice on how to prevent and alleviate such situations.

The implementation phase will be the result of a cooperation effort among the Gender Equality Commission, Human Resources Department, Training Hub, Communication and external consultants, and it will be financed with internal iMM budget. One staff member of the Human Resources Department will be nominated a Gender Equality Officer and will dedicate a part of

¹ [Lei n.º 7/2009](#)

² [Comissão para a Cidadania e a Igualdade de Género \(CIG\)](#)

³ [UN SDG - Goal 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls](#)

⁴ [She Figures Report 2021](#)

their time to data collection, analysis, and reporting, stirring the Gender Equality Commission meetings and will serve as the first point of contact for employees in matters of gender equality.

3) **Sex-disaggregated data describing the iMM community will be continuously collected and monitored**, mainly by the Human Resources Department and other administrative facilities, and will include non-binary options in the future. iMM will strongly rely on the insights obtained during the implementation of the European Charter of Researchers and The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, under the scope of the ERA Chair project EXCELLtoINNOV (GA 667824), which will soon be completed by obtaining the HR Excellence in Research logo. In addition, questions related to gender equality are integral part of the anonymous survey offered to all employees within the scope of the above-mentioned HRS4R Label related action plan, and these will represent a valuable source of data and suggestions for revision.

4) **Regular specialised training** on gender equality, unconscious gender biases and the integration of the gender dimension into research content will be provided for the identified target groups or the iMM community, depending on the scope. We will actively seek for “train-the-trainer” opportunities as to build own expertise and guarantee sustainability of the measures.

Assessing the state-of-play at iMM

iMM Community profile

iMM community gathers in total 708 people directly employed or affiliated to iMM, of which 235 men (33.2%) and 473 women (66.8%).⁵

The similar ratio is present among the research staff at iMM, with 68% of women, and it is quite consistent among Staff Scientists, Post-doctoral researchers, and PhD students, and even the Board of Directors (Table 1). A vast majority of lab technicians and lab managers are women (80.9%). The Research and Administrative Facilities appear balanced at the leadership level, while women are over-represented at the operational level. Interestingly, 72.3% of foreign iMM members are women – indicating slightly higher mobility of women, and 65.3% of the employees having left iMM in the last 3 years (2018-2020) are also women. Strikingly, nine research groups are largely composed by women, with over 80% of team members. This general trend of over-representation of women is somewhat inverted when it comes to the Group Leaders level, as 9 out of 34 research groups are led by women (26.5%). This appears to be in line with the national average level for Grade A women researchers (27.15%).⁶

Table 1. Gender structure of the iMM community.

Category	Men	Women	% Women
Board of Directors	1	2	66.7
Heads of Research Facilities	3	5	57.1
Heads of Administrative Facilities	2	2	50.0
Research Facilities Commissionaires	4	1	20.0
Group Leaders	25	9	26.5
Staff Scientist	11	23	67.6
Postdoctoral Researchers	42	85	66.9
PhD Students	39	88	69.3
Lab managers/technicians	21	89	80.9
Research facilities technicians	10	25	71.4
Administrative Area Managers	1	5	83.3
Administrative staff	4	17	81.0

Several other trends have been observed in a range of research-related activities and outputs. Namely, regarding the iMM publications record during 2020, it is noted that 60% of publications had women as the first author, while only 35% as the last/corresponding author (note: the analysis includes authors from other institutions). In addition, the share of submitted competitive project proposals having women as a Principal Investigator was 58.3% in 2019, dropped to 53% in 2020 – probably due to the COVID-19 pandemics and increased family responsibilities that affected women to a larger extent^{7,8}. Interestingly, in 2021 this trend was inverted, as 67% of submitted proposals had women as Principal Investigators. Among the ERC grantees, 6 are men and 3 are women, while among the Marie-Curie Skłodowska Individual Fellows the numbers are inverted – 3 men and 6 women (data 2014 -2020) and all EMBO Postdoctoral Fellows are women, thus greatly reflecting the overall iMM gender structure at the moment. In addition, in 2016 it was noted that male postdoctoral researchers sign up to give

⁵ Data as of December 31, 2020. Data on other genders had not been collected at this time.

⁶ [She Figures Report 2021](#)

⁷ [Pandemic measures disproportionately harm women's careers](https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-021-00854-x) <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-021-00854-x>

⁸ [The Unequal Effect of the Covid-19 Pandemic On Portuguese Women Academics](#), SPEAR project

oral presentations during iMM Post-doc day to a much higher extent than female ones, who opt for poster presentations instead.

The present iMM GEP aims to tackle the existing imbalance at various levels, and to promote institutional changes towards equality, diversity and inclusion as embedded institutional values.

Past initiatives

In the past 5 years, iMM has been undertaking various initiatives to increase awareness about gender equality and to promote diversity, as outlined below per thematic area. The present iMM GEP will allow us to capitalize on these initial efforts and to establish the structured framework and procedures towards specific goals.

1. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

iMM internal framework for professional progression is based on four core principles:

- Career development structure ensuring scientific freedom and progression and retention based solely on merit, evaluation results and alignment with scientific strategy of iMM;
- Transparent and fair procedures for recruitment and progression;
- Continuous professional development;
- Promotion of research culture as an ubiquitous aspect of iMM's strategy.

At the recruitment level, the iMM ensures compliance with the principles of non-discrimination and equality and provides that no candidate can be privileged, benefited, harmed or deprived of any right or exempted from any duty due, in particular, to ancestry, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, economic status, education, social origin or condition, genetic heritage, reduced working capacity, disability, chronic disease, nationality, ethnic origin or race, place of origin, language, religion, political or ideological convictions and union association membership. This policy is explicitly stated in job adverts and respected during the recruitment process and performance evaluation.

Progression and retention is dictated by merit, rigorous, transparent and fair evaluation, and convergence between the individual's ambitions and the institutional strategy. The present iMM GEP will allow further strengthening of the existing career framework, ensuring its transparency and better dissemination within the community.

2. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

iMM is a bright example of women leadership, as two out of three members of the Board of Directors are women. However, at the Group Leader level only 26.5% are women. This is also reflected among the five Research Facility Commissionaires - the Group Leaders with the oversight and advisory role over the assigned facility - only one is a women. iMM is making efforts to counteract this trend in new recruitments, while maintaining scientific excellence as the main criterion. On the other hand, there is a solid gender balance among the heads of research and administrative facilities, almost reaching gender parity.

The main institutional advisory boards are mostly gender-balanced, namely the Scientific Advisory Board and the Industrial Advisory Board (3 men and 2 women, and 2 men and 3 women, respectively), while the Societal Advisory Board is slightly skewed towards men (5 men and 3 women) and the Anti-Bullying Committee towards women (1 men and 3 women).

3. Prevention of gender-based and sexual harassment

iMM condemns any type of harassment and has a duty to protect the employees from it at the workplace.

In January 2018, the iMM Code of Good Conduct for Equality, Non-discrimination, and Prohibition of Harassment at Work was adopted (Annex I). During 2021, the iMM Anti-bullying Policy was drafted and approved with the aim to maintain healthy labour relations among the iMM members, informing them on the organizational support and procedures preventive and effective actions (Annex II).

iMM Board of Directors has gathered four external members of the Anti-bullying committee in January 2021, namely:

- Ana Nunes de Almeida, Instituto de Ciências Sociais, University of Lisbon
- Joana Palha, Instituto de Investigação em Ciências da Vida e Saúde, University of Minho
- Margherita Perillo, Department of Molecular and Cell Biology and Biochemistry, Brown University, USA
- Daniel Sampaio, Faculdade de Medicina da Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal

They were mandated to perform an initial screening survey and propose measures to prevent bullying, harassment or any kind of discrimination and conduct an investigation of any reported harassment, mobbing or discrimination occurrences. They are the first contact for people affected by bullying, via a dedicated email contact that is provided in the iMM intranet.

The present iMM GEP will have as a specific objective to widely disseminate this policy among all the employees and increase awareness concerning harassment.

4. Integration of the gender dimension into research content

Thus far, no formal training had been organised for iMM researchers tackling the sex/gender dimension in research content, although these aspects are integral part of the courses on animal models and clinical studies.

In 2017, the Postdoctoral Association stirred the “Gender Balance in Science” debate which gathered eminent international researchers. The session “Inside the research: How gender bias affects the results” was chaired by the iMM Executive Director Maria M. Mota and counted on the interventions from Professor Reiko Kuroda, Laureate of the 2013 L’Oréal-UNESCO Award ‘For Women in Science’ Japan, Audrey Odom, Washington University in St. Louis, and Georgios Kararigas, Institute of Gender in Medicine, Charité, Germany.

The present iMM GEP aims at establishing a regular teaching module for PhD students that will be open for other interested community members.

5. Work-life balance

Well-being of iMM employees is a priority for iMM, as our core values - creativity, ambition and freedom - are depending on it. We are aware that certain life and career phases are more critical for work-life balance and we aim to support our employees to overcome the difficulties they may encounter.

This is particularly true for parents with young children, and as such a paid parental leave is fully supported, with 4 months duration for mothers and 4 weeks for fathers, in accordance with the national legislation. Mothers can request additional 3 months with 25% salary benefit, and after returning to work, they can request flexible working hours during the first year, or during the time while the mother is breastfeeding. iMM has established a protocol with the nearby day-care facility managed by the University of Lisbon that prioritize children of iMM employees upon admission. Flexible working schedule can be used by employees with caregiving responsibilities, as described in the national law, and at the moment 11 employees at iMM are with this regimen, 9 of which (81,8%) are women.

In addition, for the last 10 years, iMM has been providing financial support to employees holding fellowships during their maternity leave (i.e. iMM Family Support programme). This is due to the fact that research fellowships in Portugal contemplate a voluntary social security regimen which guarantees minimal coverage only. iMM has been complementing the pay of iMM fellows as to ensure no reduction in their regular income during maternity/paternity leave.

Among numerous community-building activities at iMM, three were particularly directed to families of iMM employees, namely theatre play for children and picnic for families, both stirred by the Postdoctoral Association, and the Little iMMers, promoted by the Communication team. These occasions are an opportunity for informal networking and support and experience exchange.

More recently, the informal iMM community-building “Get2gether” team has tackled the well-being subject with an anonymous survey, supported by the iMM Safety and Compliance team. This represents the first step towards more structured action plan that will be proposed based on the survey results. As for now, they are actively disseminating available resources, namely the mental health services and helplines provided by the Faculty of Medicine, University of Lisbon or the National Health System, and promoting internal networking based on common interest in diverse areas, such as gardening, photography, music, cooking etc. At the end of 2021, iMM offered a professional 12-week programme on Psychological Well-being to its employees, led by [Oficina de Psicologia](#), where the science-based tools for managing emotions, relationships, anxiety and productivity were presented.

Despite the general disruption, the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic has brought some positive changes at iMM, namely in wider adoption of flexible work schedules, teleworking and of digital tools. For example, conferences and meetings are regularly held online and seminars recordings are available, in that way facilitating the participation of researchers with caring responsibilities.

A range of new initiatives within this thematic area are set in the iMM GEP 2022-2025, that will contribute to the well-being of all iMM employees.

6. Organisational Communication and Culture

iMM has recently launched a communication campaign promoting diversity at iMM, accompanied by a beautiful illustration made by one of our researchers and artists Helena Pinheiro and an inspirational message from the Board of Directors:

One of the fundamental aspects of life is DIVERSITY.

Life in our institute is no different and as such DIVERSITY is reflected at many levels everywhere:

**our people - all of us - iMMers - different backgrounds, nationalities, gender, sexual orientation and so on;*

**our topics of interest - all the questions, made by each of us - that go from immunology to neurosciences, from chemical biology, biochemistry and molecular, cell and developmental biology to microbiology and host-pathogen interactions or cancer, and so on;*

**our favourite model of study - virus, bacteria, parasites, yeast, mice, zebrafish and humans;*

**our commitment to contribute for a sustainable environment - some never use the elevator, or don't eat meat, or make sure reduce the use of plastics... and so much more.*

We really value this diversity. Preserving it means to take care of the wellbeing of all the members of our institute. As such, we are committed to keep working to make iMM a place where everyone can thrive and feel included.

*Each iMMer is an essential piece of our community.
Together, we work to build an inclusive environment where everyone can accomplish their goals.
As evolutionary biology teaches us, diversity is the key to success.*



iMM has been actively promoting discussions about the role of women in science. In the above-mentioned “Gender Balance in Science” debate (2017), the session “Around Researcher: How gender drives career progression”, chaired by iMM President Maria Carmo-Fonseca, stirred a vivid discussion between the audience and the panellists - Maria Leptin, EMBO Director, Lucy Hoareau, Executive Secretary of the L’Oréal-UNESCO Prize for Women in Science, and Miguel Castanho, iMM Group Leader.

iMM researchers and higher management have recently participated in the panel discussion on “Diversity and Equality in Science”, organised by the COLife⁹, and followed by screening of the documentary “Picture a Scientist”¹⁰ (March 11, 2021). In the future, we will exchange best practises and organise joint training activities regarding equality within the COLife alliance.

Moreover, the iMM Executive Director Maria M. Mota is a strong advocate for science and equal opportunities in general, and willingly participates in debates on this topic across Portugal and with high-level international representatives, e.g. Round Table Discussion “Ambiti@n – Women in STEM” at the Women Political Leaders Global Forum in 2017, and “Equality between men and women during pandemic” at the Embassy of France in Lisbon in 2021.

Fifteen of our Group Leaders and Senior Researchers have participated so far in three editions of *Mulheres na Ciência*¹¹ (Women in Science) photography exhibition organised by Ciência Viva, the main national agency for scientific culture promotion. Several iMM young researchers are actively participating in the events organised by SoapBox Science, a public outreach platform for promoting women and non-binary scientists and the science they do.¹²

With the present iMM GEP, we aim to continue in this line to encourage discussions about gender equality and enrich our organisational culture.

⁹ [COLife](#) is an alliance of six life sciences institutes located in Lisbon and Oeiras (iMM, Champalimaud Foundation, IGC, IBET, ITQB and CEDOC) that aims to maximize the individual resources, by sharing infrastructures and know-how, in addition to fostering synergies and collaboration.

¹⁰ <https://www.pictureascientist.com/>

¹¹ <https://www.cienciaviva.pt/mulheresnaciencia/>

¹² <http://soapboxscience.org/soapbox-science-2020-lisbon/>

Areas of Action

Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Progression

Goal: Ensure equal opportunities through equal treatment of all employees with regard to work and career and promote the respective under-represented gender.

Measures:

1. The job advertisements will be gender-neutral and contain an indication that the work environment is international and gender-sensitive, that the professional career is taken into account on the principles of non-discrimination and equality, and that supportive measures for work-life balance exist.
2. All efforts will be made to ensure the gender-balanced recruitment jury, aiming at 40% target of the under-represented sex.
3. People responsible for the recruitment, promotion and mentoring will be trained on gender equality perspective and unconscious biases through seminars, web-based-training or short videos, such as “Recruitment bias in research institutes”, produced by Catalan Research Centres Institute (CERCA) and European Research Council (ERC).
4. Maternity or paternity leave will be taken in consideration at the time of the staff evaluation. For example, the Group Leaders and Senior Staff Scientists may be granted an additional year to their regular 3-year evaluation period, as it is an international practice now adopted by many research funders.
5. Gender balance in a research group will be considered as one of the criteria in the evaluation of the Group Leaders.
6. Support grants to scientist mothers (Senior/Post-doctoral level) will be implemented as to facilitate the reconciliation of scientific responsibilities and motherhood. One-year grant will be given annually in an internal competitive call, based on scientific excellence, motivation to pursue a scientific career, and the personal situation of the candidate.
7. Procedures will be adopted as to ensure a continuous data collection of the parameters describing the iMM community and a suitable annual reporting to the Gender Equality Committee, the iMM senior management and publicly, as part of the iMM annual report. A member of Human Resources team will be nominated for a Gender Equality Officer, who will be the main contact point for advice and responsible for data collection and analysis.

Responsibility for measures:

Gender Equality Commission (1-7), Human Resources Department (1-4, 7), external consultants (3).

Indicators: overall gender profile of iMM community, including of job applicants and shortlisted candidates; assessment of the gender pay gap and career progression gap; gender balance of the recruitment jury; number of people responsible for recruitment receiving training on gender equality and unconscious biases; perception of the community about the transparency and gender equality in the recruitment and career progression assessed using annual survey.

Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making

Goal: Increase the percentage of women in Group Leader positions from current 26.5% to 35% until 2025, and to 45% until 2029.

Measures:

1. Potential female candidates for leading positions (faculty and senior leadership positions) will be proactively identified by using female expert profile databases (e.g. [EMBO Communities](#), [Academia Net](#)), and scientific/personal networks. They will be contacted and encouraged to submit an application.
2. The Board of Directors will actively encourage female Group Leaders to participate in internal committees and take a role of a research/administrative facilities commissionaire. The board will take into account the proportion of female Group Leaders at iMM, as to avoid them being over-recruited to such committees.
3. The iMM will offer an opportunity to young female Group Leaders and promising senior scientists to attend the EMBO Laboratory Leadership for Group Leaders course or EMBO Self-leadership Workshop for women scientists (two courses per year initially planned, can be revised depending on interest).
4. The institution will facilitate a mentoring scheme for young female Group Leaders with a mentor of their choice and aligned with their career objectives, using the EMBL [LEAP \(Leadership and Excellence for Aspiring Postdocs\) Programme](#) as a model. This will be particularly promoted within the COLife alliance in Lisbon area.
5. The iMM Board of Directors will make effort to nominate iMM women scientists for prizes and databases on outstanding women scientists, such as Academia Net.

Responsibilities: iMM Board of Directors in cooperation with the Scientific Advisory Board and the Human Resources Department (1-2, 4-5), external consultants (3).

Indicators: percentage of women in Group Leader positions; number of leadership and self-awareness courses attended by female Group Leaders or senior scientists; percentage of women applying/securing competitive research funding; percentage of women publishing as senior/corresponding authors.

Prevention of Gender-based and Sexual Harassment

Goal: Guarantee prevention of sexual, gender-based or any other type of harassment.

Measures:

1. Wide dissemination of the iMM Code of Good Conduct for Equality, Non-Discrimination, and Prohibition of Harassment at Work and of the iMM Anti-Bullying Policy. These documents aim to inform and advise the employees about the procedures in place to support them on this matter. As such, their wide dissemination must be ensured, i.e. at the enrolment for new employees during induction sessions, and in the iMM intranet page.

2. The iMM Board of Directors and the Human Resources Responsible are fully endorsing the mission of the iMM Anti-Bullying Committee. Any investigation process result delivered by the iMM Anti-Bullying Committee will carefully considered with high urgency and appropriate disciplinary and/or legal measures will be taken.

3. Increase awareness among the iMM community members about harassment in the workplace by offering a set of short films, micro-courses and courses (e.g. [SkillBoosters](#)). Particular courses on how to manage conflicts in the workplace will be offered to all team leaders at iMM, in both research and administrative roles.

Responsibilities: iMM Board of Directors and the Human Resources Department (2-3), Human Resources Department (1-3), iMM Anti-Bullying Committee (2).

Indicators: number of reported incidents; number of implemented resolutions following incidents; number of people attended courses or accessed online content on harassment; number of team leaders attending courses on managing conflicts; perception of the iMM community about the transparency of the implemented policies and trust in the procedures, as assessed in the anonymous annual survey.

Integration of the Gender Dimension into Research Content

Goal: Raise awareness on the importance of the sex and gender dimension in research, and train researchers on how to include it, as to improve the scientific quality and societal relevance of the produced knowledge.

Measures:

1. Implement the teaching modules on gendered aspects of research in the iMM PhD programme and more advanced courses. The training content will be adapted to the research activities at iMM and researchers will learn how to include it in the formulating research questions, developing methodologies, gathering and analysing sex/gender disaggregated data, evaluating and reporting results.

2. Identify in-house experts who will have an advisory role for researchers on how to consider gender and sex in research content, e.g. experts in animal models and clinical studies design. Pre-Award team and Technology Transfer team, who also have an advisory role in research proposals design, will actively raise awareness and suggest inclusion of sex/gender dimension in defining concepts, project proposals and transferring them to markets into products and innovations. More advanced training on the sex and gender dimension in research will be provided for the in-house advisors.

3. Seek for best practice exchange with the institutions with long-standing tradition in implementing gender equality plans. We will benefit from the strong institutional relationships with the Cambridge University and the Francis Crick Institute (two eminent scientists from these institutions are also members of the iMM Scientific Advisory Board), both holding the Athena Swan Award. In addition, with the other life science institutes within the COLife alliance, we will stimulate the discussion of this topic in the joint events that gather students and postdoctoral researchers.

4. Seek for opportunities to influence the national funding agencies on the importance of including the sex/gender analysis in the research project evaluation.

Responsibility: Training Hub, Pre-Award and Technology Transfer Office (1-3), iMM Board of Directors (4).

Indicators: number of PhD students or other researchers attending training on gender dimension into research content.

Work-life balance

Goal: Create new work-life balance and co-responsibility measures and facilitate their uptake through better dissemination.

Measures:

1. Flexible working time arrangements and teleworking, whenever the functions allow, and guaranteeing an adequate staff evaluation taking this in consideration.
2. iMM will make efforts to extend fixed-term working contracts or grant agreements following the parental leave of researchers.
3. Ensure a dedicated lactation room that fulfils the privacy, comfort and hygiene standards, that is available on request and with a booking system.
3. In principle, meetings/events should be organised between 10:00-17:00. In case it is deemed necessary, on-site childcare will be provided.
4. iMM will make efforts to offer dual career options, when needed, and will rely on local networks (e.g. COLife) to identify suitable jobs for the partners of the new hires.
5. iMM will negotiate discounts with baby-sitting companies and nearby day-care centres, and consider offering tax-free vouchers for childcare/education costs.
6. Promote experience exchange and inform about online resources/tools/advice on reconciling scientific career and family, e.g. [Fair Hall Lab how-does-she-do-it](#).
7. Promote agreements with sports, cultural (bookstores, theatres, museums, language schools) and well-being centres (dental care), as to arrange special offers or discounts for iMM staff.
8. Organise a monthly lottery offering tickets/vouchers for cultural establishments or family activities (theatre, museums).
9. Establish communication channels to ensure that the staff is aware of the available work-life balance measures. An information sheet/brochure about childcare facilities, social benefits, dual career opportunities etc. should be made available upon enrolment at iMM.
10. iMM will start a supporting framework to aid in identifying and providing help to employees concerning their mental health. An internal awareness campaign will be launched with two main objectives: i) demystify discriminatory concepts often linked to mental health issues and ii) inform how to seek for help.

Alongside this, regular appointments with an occupational health professional will be available on site and specific training to a group of senior staff (researchers and administrative) will be provided. This trained group will have an important role both in providing direct support but also as internal assessors of the efficacy and progression of these initiatives at iMM.

Responsibility: iMM Board of Directors and Human Resources (1-2, 4-7), Group Leaders (3); iMM Board of Directors (3-4, 8, 10).

Indicators: number of people opting for flexible working regime or teleworking and their gender structure; perception of the iMM community about the iMM efforts in creating a better work-life balance assessed using the annual survey.

Organisational Communication and Culture

Goal: Make sustainable changes in the institutional culture regarding gender equality.

Measures:

1. Promote higher participation of women in the external seminars at iMM

In 2020, 44.6% of external speakers at iMM were women. iMM will make effort to increase this number and invite high-profile speakers identified through the EMBO or Academia Net databases, or personal contacts. These speakers are important role models for current and future female leaders.

2. Promote the use of gender-neutral and inclusive language in the institutional communication material.

3. Design engaging awareness campaigns about the role of women in science using iMM social media, on occasions such as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science (February 11), the International Women's Day (March 8). Female researchers will be particularly encouraged to visit primary and secondary schools and promote scientific culture.

4. Active dissemination of external events/initiatives on gender equality via internal communication material, i.e. institutional newsletter iMMagine.

5. Establish a feedback culture as to reflect on the internal processes and the work experience, and provide a basis for a continuous improvement. iMM will offer an exit interview form to employees leaving the institution.

Responsibility: Group Leaders (1), Communication (2-4), Human Resources (5).

Indicators: percentage of women giving external seminars to iMM community; percentage of women participating in public outreach and science promotion activities; former iMM employees' gender analysis and assessment of exit interviews.