

Nivel Gender Equality Plan

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Nivel (the Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research) endorses the importance of gender equality in research, development and innovation. Nivel is committed towards gender equality, diversity and inclusivity within our research institute and in the wider ecosystem it is part of. Nivel positions itself on the crossroads between the scientific community, policymakers and the healthcare field (providers, insurance companies and patient organisations). Our mission statement is 'Research for better care'. Nivel strives to be an inclusive research institute, a place where everyone may develop themselves to their full potential and feel welcome, safe, respected, supported and valued.

In this plan we present an overview of our measures and activities addressing gender equality. With these efforts, which form part of our wider Diversity & Inclusivity policy, Nivel aims to further contribute to gender equality in the research sector. Since 2021, Nivel has established a working group Diversity & Inclusivity with a steering role to implement further improvements that support the organisation's gender equality, diversity and inclusivity.

Horizon Europe

The Nivel Gender Equality Plan meets the requirements of Horizon Europe, the European Union's research and innovation programme. Participants in this programme need to commit to gender equality in research and innovation. It is part of the European Commission Gender Equality Strategy for 2020-2025, which sets out the Commission's broader commitment to equality across all EU policies. In addition, the EU has a well-established regulatory framework on gender equality, including binding directives, which applies widely across the labour market including the research sector.

Because many structural barriers to gender equality in research and innovation persist, specific action is needed to overcome gender gaps, through promoting and endorsing career-development of both female and male researchers, supporting an appropriate work-life balance, countering gender stereotypes, and stimulating gender-aware culture change. The European Commission addresses these barriers through the main funding instrument Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe, the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) within the European Research Area, in collaboration with member countries and research organisations.

Gender ratios at Nivel

- The proportion of women in the Nivel workforce has always been high. In 2021 the male-female ratio was 27:73 (2020: 28:72).
- The distribution of men and women in management positions in 2021 was 41:59.

Policy and dedicated resources

Gender equality is part of the wider Nivel Diversity & Inclusivity policy. Nivel uses a broad definition of diversity: all aspects in which employees differ from one another. This includes characteristics such as gender, age and origin (ethnicity and cultural background) as well as other personal characteristics such as illness or disability, specific needs, competencies, work styles, sexual preferences and character traits. Every employee has their own unique combination of these characteristics.

Nivel endorses diversity and inclusivity (and thus gender equality) and makes resources available for this purpose. The goal of the Nivel policy is to further increase the inclusivity of the organisation in the coming years, and as a result realise a more diverse workforce. In particular, Nivel will undertake specific actions to remove any conscious or unconscious barriers to applying for jobs for employees

with a diverse background and to make all potential employees feel welcome. Also, Nivel has dedicated HR capacity to support and implement its Gender Equality Plan as part of its broader human resources policy. This includes, amongst others, supporting equal opportunities for men and women when entering the organisation (e.g. equal salary and working conditions, equal training opportunities) and equal internal career opportunities.

Nivel has a working group Diversity & Inclusivity with a steering role to implement further improvements that support the organisation's diversity and inclusivity. The working group has members with dedicated gender expertise and meets once every three months. The four members represent Nivel's management, internal policies, human resources and communications. The working group develops and discusses policy proposals to promote gender equality, diversity and inclusivity that the Management Board finally decides about. The Diversity & Inclusivity policy focuses on HRM measures, internal and external communication and organisational culture.

Data collection and monitoring

Nivel collects and monitors sex/gender disaggregated indicators including the numbers of employees and FTEs, recruitment and selection figures, average employment duration, inflow and outflow, absenteeism, and career development interviews. Based on these indicators, Nivel annually reports on gender in relation to age, salary and, for example, management positions. The data form the basis for developing policies and strategies to address gender gaps. This supports the aim of Nivel to have a gender balance in leadership and decision-making.

Nivel will continue to monitor sex/gender disaggregated data on personnel to assess the effects of its actions and policies. This is in line with the overall monitoring of the effects of its policy measures within the Nivel Human Resources Policy Framework and its strategic ambitions towards a more inclusive academic culture.

Training and capacity building

Nivel offers various internal training courses for male and female employees in the various stages of their career. Furthermore specific training activities are organised to promote a diverse and inclusive organisational climate and that build capacity regarding gender equality, diversity and inclusivity:

- Regularly, internal training and education activities are organised for all employees on topics regarding diversity and inclusivity. These topics vary and include amongst others cooperating with people with diverse backgrounds, identifying and addressing prejudice and countering gender stereotypes. All managers are offered a training course on how to manage diversity in a team. Furthermore training is available on inclusive recruitment and selection of new employees for a more inclusive organisation.
- Nivel offers opportunities for coaching and intervision meetings for employees' personal development.
- For early career researchers Nivel has established activities such as 'learning on the job' under the mentorship of more experienced peers. The Nivel Talent Development Programme (TOP) has been developed to support junior researchers in their personal development, to highlight training opportunities and to help prepare them for their further careers.
- The Nivel POST programme is a development programme targeting all postdoc researchers from the moment they have obtained their PhD, but are not yet senior researchers.

Work-life balance and organisational culture

Nivel considers a good work-life balance of its employees very important. Nivel offers its staff a maternity and childbirth leave, adoption and foster care leave, short-term and long-term care leave, parental leave, and birth leave for partners according to the Dutch Work and Care Act. Also, Nivel has implemented measures for improving work-life balance such as a hybrid work model which allows staff to combine working from the office with working remotely (often from home). Nivel offers support for organizing hybrid meetings, and individual appointments that may alternatively take place by telephone, video call or in person. Employees can work flexible hours, thus creating more opportunities for effective balancing work and life. Nivel also provides trainings aimed at a better work-life balance.

Integration of the gender dimension into research

Nivel integrates the gender dimension into all its research in a variety of ways. Gender is a structural factor that is registered in the Nivel databases, monitors and survey panels. Our studies on health care use, quality of care, patient experiences and needs, patient safety and other topics in public health and health services research include gender as a background variable and results and conclusions are generally disaggregated for men and women. Nivel Healthcare Professionals Registries, for example, aims to monitor on a continuous basis the number, composition and regional supply of healthcare professionals. Monitoring also includes the gender composition of the health workforce. In intervention research, gender-specific effects are studied. Gender aspects and differences are the special focus of some studies, e.g. in the domains of healthcare communication, treatment burden, medication adherence and the development of gender-sensitive health care.

Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment

Several measures protect the physical and mental integrity of Nivel employees to the greatest extent possible, in order to prevent sexual harassment, discrimination, racism, bullying, aggression and any other form of harassment. Nivel has a formal internal procedure which should be followed in case of suspicion of breaches of research Integrity and in case of harassment and other forms of undesirable behaviour. Employees can report incidents to their supervisors. They also have the opportunity to report it to someone in a higher position and/or they can inform the management. All employees receive this information at the start of their contract, and the topics research integrity and social safety are regularly addressed in formal and informal meetings.

Nivel employees also have the possibility to turn to a confidential advisor. Nivel has a dedicated internal confidential advisor. Nivel also collaborates with the Trimbos Institute in this respect, where two (one female and one male) external confidential advisors are available to discuss experiences with undesirable behaviour. If the measures do not have the desired effect or the employee is not satisfied with the process, he or she can submit a formal complaint. Information about formal complaints that have been declared founded will be kept for at least five years.

Read more (in Dutch)

- [Diversiteit en inclusie – beleidsvoornemens 2022](#)
- [Regeling wetenschappelijke integriteit, ongewenste omgangsvormen en misstanden](#)