

"All human beings are born equal in dignity and rights" Article 1 - Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Equal Opportunities Working Party at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna

Universities see themselves as spaces of diversity in which people of different genders and ages, with different social or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or world views and with different physical or mental abilities can work and study together in recognition and appreciation. But people's diverse characteristics have not always been and are not always equally valued and recognised, which has led to prejudice, unequal treatment, discrimination, belittlement and can still lead to discriminatory behaviour in our time.

In order to counteract discrimination at Austrian universities in a binding manner, the Equal Opportunities Working Party was established in 1990 through an amendment to the then University Organisation Act. Since 1991, BOKU has also had an Equal Opportunities Working Party (in German: AKGL BOKU), whose task is to counteract discrimination by university bodies due to gender, ethnicity, religion or belief, age, or sexual orientation.

The AKGL BOKU consists of 12 full members and a maximum of eight substitute members from the circle of BOKU members. They are delegated by the groups of university professors, mid-level staff, general university staff and students represented in the Senate. Members and substitute members of the AKGL BOKU are not to be hindered in exercising their powers and may not be disadvantaged in their professional development due to this activity. They are not bound by any instructions or orders in their function and are bound to secrecy. The activities of the members and substitute members are honorary but count towards working or service time. The term of office of the AKGL BOKU is three years.

The AKGL BOKU fulfils its tasks on an ad hoc basis in the form of mediation, counselling and awareness-raising work for the members and bodies of the university. The AKGL BOKU

accompanies procedures in appointment, habilitation, tenure track (as defined in § 99 para. 5 UG) and personnel admission regarding possible discrimination, which also includes checking advertisement texts for discriminatory formulations and the use of gender-inclusive language, as well as reviewing application lists and participating in interviews.

Furthermore, the AKGL BOKU checks the gender-equitable composition of collegial bodies, participates in meetings of the University Council, the Senate, the Qualification Board and the Evaluation Advisory Board. If the 50% women's quota is not met, the AKGL BOKU can assert the incorrect composition of a collegial body or the deficiency of an election proposal for the senate election by means of an objection to the Arbitration Board.

The AKGL BOKU has the right to lodge a complaint with the BOKU Arbitration Board if, in its opinion, the decision of a university body constitutes discrimination on the grounds of gender or on the grounds of ethnicity, religion or belief, age or sexual orientation, or a violation of the requirement to promote women or of the Women's Promotion and Equality Plan.

In particular, the AKGL BOKU also has the right to propose to the Rectorate the Women's Advancement Plan and the Equal Opportunities Plan for BOKU as well as their amendments. The AKGL is also the contact point for cases of (sexual) harassment and mobbing.

Over the years, AKGL BOKU has organised many events as well as counselling, training, and coaching programmes. For example, the professor coaching programme "Women Science Circle" was implemented to specifically support female professors in their committee work and career development in a male-dominated environment.

As a measure of anti-discrimination, AKGL BOKU conducted a survey among BOKU members on their experiences of discrimination. Procedures and processes relevant to self-administration were optimised with regard to gender- and diversity-specific quality assurance, and coaching was offered to BOKU members who had been affected by concrete discrimination and/or sexual harassment.

Since 2008, the AKGL BOKU has annually awarded the Inge Dirmhirn Sponsorship Prize for gender-specific master's (diploma) theses and dissertations and since 2014 also for gender and diversity-specific bachelor's theses. Since 2011, there is also an additional scholarship financed by a private donation to be awarded for a thesis in the field of gender and diversity that has yet to be written. Finally, in 2018, the AKGL Travel Grant plus+ was launched to

support the participation of BOKU female master and doctoral students in international scientific events or trainings.

To raise awareness for the diversity of people at BOKU and to strengthen the intercultural competence of BOKU members, the video short film "intercultural snapshots@boku" Part 1 was created in 2016 and the short film "intercultural snapshots@boku" Part 2 was made in 2018. In the films, all BOKU members, especially BOKU students, are motivated to approach each other with respect and to equally accept, appreciate and learn from each other in their differences. The films, which are suitable for use as teaching aids in courses and in BOKU education events, are available on the video platform YouTube.

With the aim of promoting networking among female BOKU members, especially on a social and sporting level, AKGL BOKU started a running team that competed in the Austrian Women's Run every year between 2005 and 2019 and achieved numerous top placings.

For the successful implementation of the tasks of AKGL BOKU, regular exchange and mutual information with other institutions in the field of gender and diversity are of particular importance. Internally, BOKU created the "BOKU Team Diversity" in 2021, consisting of the AKGL BOKU and the Coordination Office for Gender Equality, Diversity and Disability, which is a crucial networking instrument. Externally, AKGL BOKU is firmly networked with the "Working Group for Equal Treatment and Equality at Austrian Universities, ARGE GLUNA" and the office management of the Equal Opportunities Working Parties of other universities.