

BOKU University, Gregor-Mendel-Str. 33, 1180 Vienna  
Equal Opportunities Working Party (AKGL)

"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.

## **Wordrap - What does AKGL BOKU wish for the future of BOKU in the next 5, 10 or 50 years?**

A strict approach to discrimination with awareness-raising work and the use of gender-sensitive and non-discriminatory language, multilingual information events, surveys among BOKU members on the topic of "discrimination", contact points/procedures for dealing with complaints of discrimination;

Improving career opportunities for women, e.g. by closing the "leaky pipeline" and increasing the proportion of women in management positions, increasing the proportion of female students in those studies in which the proportion of women is still low, increasing the motivation of girls and young women to study STEM subjects;

Career and mobility support programmes and coaching for scientists and professional trainings;

Connecting interested female students to scientific work early on, leave/time for their own research;

A consistently gender-equal composition of collegial bodies with the creation of a recognition and incentive system to make it easier for BOKU members to increase their commitment to committee work;

The development and expansion of competences and resources in the field of diversity management and the implementation of the already developed diversity strategy;

The expansion of (internal and external) cooperation and synergies in order to strengthen gender and diversity competence in structures and processes;

Information and training events to strengthen the gender and diversity competence of BOKU staff;

Gender- and diversity-sensitive appointment procedures;

Gender and diversity competence as a requirement profile for commissions/committees;

The expansion of gender- and diversity-specific teaching with anchoring of the gender and diversity dimension in the curricula, with gender- and diversity-based advanced didactic training and with gender- and diversity-specific guest professorships;

The integration of gender and diversity dimensions in research projects, more events on feminist theory, research of women, gender as well as diversity and the targeted promotion of gender and diversity-specific research projects;

Promoting gender- and diversity-sensitive networks;

The consideration of real gender diversity in all BOKU areas, the implementation of the "non-binary university";

Promote reconciliation of work/caring responsibilities (childcare, care), no meetings in the late afternoon and evening hours;

That in 50 years at the latest, plans for the advancement of women and gender equality will no longer be necessary, as equal treatment and non-discriminatory action will be implemented and lived in all areas of BOKU;

## 31 years AKGL BOKU

1991:

First constitution of the AKGL BOKU on 25 June based on § 106 a UOG 1975 and resolution of the University Council of 12 December 1990.

The AKGL BOKU has four members: 1 member each from the group of professors, mid-level staff, general university staff and students.

There are still no fixed regulations on how the AKGL BOKU is to be involved in staff recruitment procedures.

First, the areas in which commissions the AKGL BOKU should become active (above all personnel, appointment commissions) are defined.

The aim is to include a corresponding passage in the text of the call for applications regarding the priority admission of women with the same qualifications.

Appointment procedures check for applications from women

1992:

First meeting of all members of the Equal Opportunities Working Parties at Austrian universities at the Ministry of Science and Research

1994:

The number of AKGL BOKU members are doubled to 8 members (2 professors, 2 mid-level staff, 2 general university staff, 2 students) by decision of the University Council

1995:

It is determined that the documents on personnel admissions will be sent to the AKGL BOKU at its request if there are no applications from women.

Publication of an information sheet for vacancies as defined in the Women's Advancement Plan (sending the text of the advertisement to female graduates in the relevant field of study, to institutes with the same or related fields of work at European universities, publication in Austrian daily newspapers, specialist journals, AMS).

The AKGL BOKU gets its own showcase in the Mendelhaus (staircase leading down to the courtyard).

1996:

Increase of the AKGL BOKU to 12 members

1997:

On the occasion of the 125th anniversary of BOKU, the event "1st Feminist Salon" takes place at BOKU, organised by the Institute of Landscape Planning and the ÖH-BOKU Women's Department (with a review "Women at BOKU" and presentation of the ÖH-BOKU Women's Department and the AKGL BOKU).

1999:

Amendment to the Federal Equal Treatment Act (publication requirement for all functions and higher-level jobs that are not already subject to a tender procedure)

2000:

Establishment of a separate permanent post for the AKGL BOKU office

2001:

The first AKGL BOKU homepage is set up

Members of the AKGL BOKU can participate in the working sessions of the appointment committees

The AKGL BOKU prepares a guideline for advertising and filling vacant positions at BOKU.

The AKGL BOKU organises the discussion event "Profession - Child".

2002:

It is announced that the BM:BWK has issued a circular to the ministries with guidelines on gender-sensitive language and has instructed the ministries to review and amend all their documents and homepages in this regard.

First needs assessment "Childcare facilities and compatibility of family/study/profession at BOKU".

2003:

Founding of the working group "ARGE Universitätsfrauen", now ARGE GLUNA, as an association of all Austrian Equal Opportunities Working Parties

2004:

First nomination of members for the BOKU Arbitration Board by the AKGL BOKU

Amendment to the Federal Equal Treatment Act (protection against discrimination is extended to the new discrimination grounds of ethnicity, religion or belief, age, and sexual orientation).

2005:

First-time participation of a BOKU team in the Austrian Women's Run, organised by AKGL BOKU

2006:

ARGE GLUNA networking meeting on 4/5 May at BOKU, organised by AKGL BOKU

Resolution of the BOKU Women's Promotion Plan

2007:

Second needs assessment "Childcare facilities and compatibility of family/study/profession at BOKU

2008:

First call for applications for the Inge Dirmhirn Award for gender-specific master's (diploma) theses and dissertations

Information lecture "Burn-out and stress prevention". organised by AKGL BOKU

Amendment of the Federal Equal Treatment Act (introduction of the requirement of linguistic equal treatment)

2009:

First "BOKU Health Day" with an information stand of AKGL BOKU (together with the Coordination Office for Equality and Gender Studies) on the topics of equal treatment and promotion of women, women's health

Amendment to the Universities Act 2002 (introduction of the 40% women's quota for university collegial bodies)

2010:

"Open Day" of the AKGL BOKU and the BOKU Arbitration Board

2011:

First-time award of the Inge Dirmhirn Scholarship to promote a gender-specific master's thesis

2014:

The Dirmhirn Promotion Prize and the Dirmhirn Scholarship are also awarded for diversity-specific work

The "Club Scientifica Network Meeting", organised by AKGL BOKU, takes place at BOKU

The ARGE GLUNA networking meeting takes place in autumn at BOKU, organised by AKGL BOKU.

The AKGL BOKU holds an exchange of talks on gender mainstreaming and equality with representatives of the "Innovative University of Eurasia Kazakhstan".

2015:

Creation of the film "intercultural snapshots @ boku".

Amendment to the Universities Act 2002 (50% women's quota for university collegial bodies, preparation of an equal opportunities plan in addition to the women's advancement plan, anchoring the compatibility of studies/profession with childcare and obligations towards relatives in need of care as a guiding principle).



The AKGL BOKU workshop "Professional communication in the university context with special consideration of gender and diversity topics and issues" is held.

Panel discussion on the presentation of the film "intercultural snapshots @boku".

2016:

Planning and launch of the AKGL BOKU coaching programme "Women Science Circle", which aims to effectively support female professors in their tasks in committees and in their career development

Third needs assessment "Childcare facilities and compatibility of family/study/work at BOKU".

Celebration of event "25 years of AKGL BOKU"

2017:

Networking of AKGL BOKU on the topic of gender equality with the Civilian Equal Opportunities Officer of the University of the Federal Armed Forces Munich and with a representative of the department "Diversity & Inclusion, Family Services" at the Institute of Science and Technology Austria

Completion of the second film "intercultural snapshots @ boku".

Information Event "Discrimination in Higher Education: Inform - Recognise - Act"

AKGL BOKU Training Workshop "Power in the Context of Higher Education"

2018:

First Call for Applications "AKGL BOKU Travel Grant for BOKU Master and Doctoral Students".

Official presentation part 2 of the short film "intercultural snapshots @ boku" at an event

Information event "Discrimination in Higher Education: Inform - Recognise - Act" at the BOKU campuses Muthgasse and Tulln

AKGL BOKU Training Workshop "Appointment Procedures - Rights and Tasks of the AKGL".

Networking Meeting of the Offices of the Equal Opportunities Working Parties at Austrian Universities at BOKU

2019:

Anniversary "100 Years of Women's Studies at BOKU"

Follow-up workshop "Introduction Mentoring" of the "Women Science Circle" programme

Launch of the "Women's Mentoring in Forestry" programme

Preparation of a draft BOKU Diversity Strategy by an internal BOKU working group

AKGL Training Workshop "Non-binary University - Third Gender in Higher Education"

2020:

Start of the coaching programme "Professorinnen-Fit" for female scientists in mid-level positions

AKGL BOKU. Survey among BOKU students on the topic of "Discrimination and Sexual Harassment".

Resolution of the BOKU Equality Plan

Merging of the staff unit for the care of persons with special needs and the coordination unit for equality and gender studies to form the new "Coordination Unit for Equality, Diversity and Disability"

AKGL BOKU training workshops "Tasks and rights of the AKGL in the appointment procedure" and "Active instead of surrendered - positioning strategies for members of the Equal Opportunities Working Party".

2021:

Anniversary "30 years AKGL BOKU", foundation of "BOKU Team Diversity"

Final workshop and follow-up in the "Professorinnen-Fit" coaching programme

2022:

Follow-up workshop "Leadership in Balance: Delegation and Responsibility" for the participants of the "Women Science Circle" coaching programme