



**INSTITUTE OF
MACROMOLECULAR
CHEMISTRY**
CZECH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Gender Equality Plan

January 2026–December 2027

1. Preamble

The contemporary society as well as the environment of science and research are undergoing dynamic development that places increasing emphasis on openness, responsible governance of institutions and the full use of human potential. Our institution therefore strives to create a working environment that enables the development of the abilities of all employees regardless of sex, gender identity, age, nationality, ethnic origin, race, religion, health condition, sexual orientation, family situation or other personal characteristics. We believe that promoting equal opportunities and respect for diversity brings significant added value not only for individuals but also for the quality of scientific work, institutional culture and the long-term development of the organisation.

We adhere to the principles formulated in current European policies and strategic documents focused on gender equality, responsible human-resources management in research and the development of an open and respectful working environment. These principles emphasise the importance of equal treatment, fair working conditions and equal pay for work of equal value. At the same time, we consider it essential to actively prevent any forms of inappropriate or disrespectful behaviour in the workplace, including discrimination, psychological pressure, bullying or sexual harassment, and to create an environment based on mutual respect, professionalism and trust.

We build on these principles in the further development of the institutional equality policy. The new Gender Equality Plan represents a continuation and extension of activities implemented in the previous period when the first Gender Equality Plan was introduced at the institution. It is also part of a broader process of strengthening the quality of human-resources management in research and follows steps implemented in preparation for obtaining the HR Excellence in Research Award. Within this plan we therefore set further goals and measures that will gradually develop existing activities and contribute to the systematic strengthening of equality, transparency and a respectful institutional culture.

Tomáš Etrych, PhD, DSc, Director

2 January 2026

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. Etrych', is positioned to the right of the printed name and date.

2. Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry CAS

The Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry of the Czech Academy of Sciences (IMC) is an internationally recognised research and educational institution in the field of synthetic polymer research. We focus on macromolecular chemistry, organic chemistry, macromolecular physical chemistry and macromolecular physics, including related interdisciplinary disciplines. We are interested in the relationships between the structure, properties and functions of macromolecular systems and in the controlled formation of supramolecular structures.

3. Background of the GEP

3.1 Analysis of staff structure and remuneration

In the current monitored period, women represent the majority of employees in non-research positions. In this group women account for 71% of employees while men account for 29%. In research positions the representation of women and men is almost balanced – women account for 49% and men for 51% of staff. Compared with the previous monitored period, there has been a slight increase in the representation of women in research positions and the overall gender distribution in this category can be considered relatively balanced.

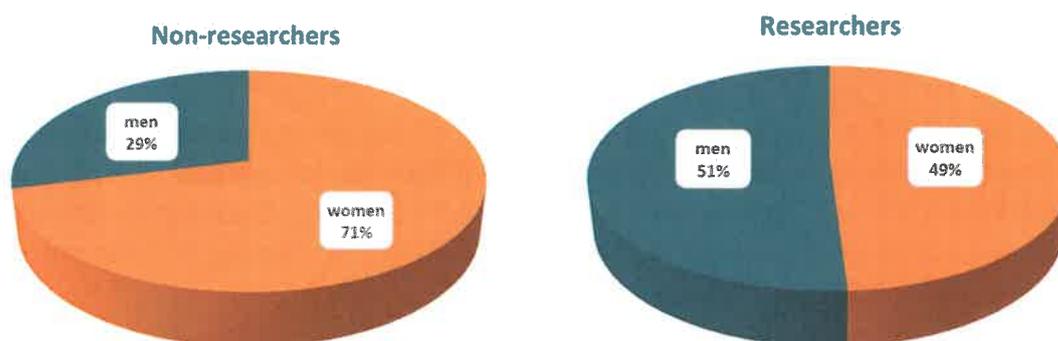


Figure 1: Number of employees at the Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry, data as of January 2026.

A more detailed analysis of individual career stages of research staff shows that women are well represented particularly in the early stages of scientific careers. In the category of research and development specialists there are 14 women and 7 men, among PhD students 19 women and 13 men. In the category of other university-educated employees of research departments there are 33 women and 20 men. In higher scientific positions the representation gradually equalises or men slightly prevail – for example in the category of research scientists there are 25 women and 26 men. In the highest category of senior research scientists the representation of women is significantly lower (6 women and 25 men). Overall, there are 45 women in the group of research scientists, of whom 5 hold leadership positions, while 14 of the 62 men hold leadership positions.

Analysis of the average earnings of women and men in individual salary grades shows that differences in remuneration are relatively small in most cases. In most categories they range approximately between 2–5%. In two categories (postdoctoral researchers and research assistants) the average earnings of women are even higher than those of men. A more significant difference is visible only in the highest salary grade of senior research scientists where average earnings of men are higher. However, this difference is primarily related to the higher representation of men in leadership and decision-making positions.

Overall, it can be stated that the identified differences in average earnings between women and men are not significant in most job categories and generally do not exceed approximately 5%. These differences should therefore be interpreted mainly in the context of the career structure of positions and the different representation of women and men in leadership roles. This type of difference corresponds to what European analytical frameworks describe as the structural gender pay gap, i.e. a difference resulting from the distribution of employees across career stages and management positions rather than from direct discrimination in remuneration for the same job position.

The institution will continue to monitor and evaluate the situation regarding the representation of women and men in individual career stages as well as remuneration in order to identify possible inequalities in time and adopt appropriate measures.

3.2 Evaluation of the employee survey in relation to the Gender Equality Plan

In September 2024 a survey among employees of the institution was carried out as part of the preparatory phase for implementing the principles of the HR Excellence in Research Award. The questionnaire also included questions focusing on the working environment, equal treatment, experience with unethical behaviour and the perception of gender equality in the workplace.

A total of 167 responses were obtained. Of the respondents, 89 were women, 76 were men and 2 respondents indicated another gender identity. The largest age group consisted of employees aged 31–45 (80 respondents), followed by 46–60 (56 respondents), 30 years and under (23 respondents) and 61 years and over (8 respondents). Eight respondents did not state their age.

Most responses came from employees of research departments (128 respondents), while 39 responses were provided by staff in technical, administrative or support positions. In terms of job position, respondents included employees across all career stages of the scientific track – from doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers to senior research scientists – as well as technical and administrative support staff.

3.2.1 Working conditions and work–life balance

In terms of workload, most respondents work full time (143 persons), while 24 employees work part time. The most common reason for reduced workload is family or childcare responsibilities (11 respondents), followed by ongoing studies

(6 respondents), simultaneous employment with more employers (3 respondents), health reasons (2 respondents) and other reasons (2 respondents).

The possibility to use part-time contracts and flexible working hours represents an important tool for supporting work–life balance. Flexible working hours with mandatory presence between 9:00 and 14:00 are applied in the workplace, allowing employees to better adapt their working regime to individual needs including family care.

The positive perception of flexible working conditions is also confirmed by the survey results. The majority of respondents agreed that working conditions allow them to combine personal and professional life (69% of responses), and similarly more than half stated that it is possible at the workplace to combine family care with career development.

3.2.2 Perception of the working environment and equal treatment

The results show that most respondents feel they are equal and important members of the working team – 57% agreed with this statement. Approximately a quarter chose a neutral response and a smaller proportion expressed disagreement. The answers also reveal a certain difference between women and men, with women more frequently choosing neutral or disagreeing responses.

The vast majority of respondents also believe that there is no discrimination in recruitment based on gender, age or ethnic origin – 72% agreed with this statement.

Respondents also largely consider the diversity of research staff beneficial for research quality. More than half agreed that diversity among researchers brings new and valuable perspectives to scientific work

3.2.3 Experience with unethical behaviour

The survey also focused on employees' experience with unethical behaviour in the workplace. Approximately one quarter of respondents reported encountering unethical conduct in the scientific work of colleagues that did not directly concern them personally, while more than half rejected such experience. A smaller share reported personal experience with unethical conduct that affected them directly.

3.2.4 Perception of discrimination

The questionnaire also examined experience with different forms of discrimination in the workplace. In all monitored categories (gender, age, nationality, language, religion, disability, sexual orientation, political opinions or social status) the majority of responses disagreed with the statement that respondents had encountered such discrimination.

In cases where a small percentage of respondents confirmed such experience, discrimination based on job position or gender was mentioned most often. Responses also indicate that women more often than men reported experience or suspicion of discriminatory behaviour or selected neutral responses.

3.2.5 Evaluation of working conditions and remuneration

When asked whether financial remuneration corresponds to expertise and job responsibilities, approximately half of respondents answered positively or rather positively, while some expressed a neutral position and a smaller group expressed dissatisfaction.

Respondents who stated that they do not have enough time for research activities most frequently pointed in open answers to the administrative burden associated with research work. Questions concerning work–life balance were not mentioned as a significant issue in these responses.

3.2.6 Summary

Overall, the results of the survey show a predominantly positive perception of the working environment, equal treatment and flexible working conditions. At the same time, several suggestions appeared concerning administrative burden, communication in working relationships or awareness of the possibilities for addressing inappropriate behaviour.

These findings provide an important basis for the further development of institutional measures in the area of working environment, equal opportunities and support for an open and respectful organisational culture.

4. Legislative and institutional framework of equal treatment

The principle of equal treatment and the prohibition of discrimination are embedded in the legal system of the Czech Republic and form the basic framework on which the internal rules of the institution are based. The key legal regulation in this area is Act No. 198/2009 Coll. on equal treatment and legal means of protection against discrimination (the Anti-Discrimination Act), which defines the prohibition of discrimination, among others, on the grounds of gender, age, ethnic origin, religion, disability or sexual orientation. Another essential legal regulation is Act No. 262/2006 Coll., the Labour Code, which regulates equal treatment in employment relations including working conditions, remuneration, career progression and the reconciliation of work and family life.

Internal regulations of the institution are based on the valid legal framework of the Czech Republic and respect the principles of equal treatment laid down in these legal standards. For example, the internal work regulations state that the institute creates working conditions for women, pregnant women, mothers, employees caring for children and minors in accordance with Sections 238–247 of the Labour Code. These provisions mainly concern employee protection at work, adjustment of working conditions and the reconciliation of work and family life.

Some aspects of working conditions that may contribute to equal opportunities and the reconciliation of work and personal life are further regulated in the collective agreement concluded between the institution and the trade union organisation.

The Gender Equality Plan therefore represents a tool that allows these general principles to be systematically developed and strengthened within the institutional policy of human-resources management. Its main aim is to create a clear framework for supporting equal opportunities, a transparent working environment and a respectful institutional culture.

5. Identified areas for further development and recommendations for the next period

The analysis of the current situation based on institutional data, evaluation of the employee survey and review of internal regulations provided an important basis for defining further steps in promoting equal opportunities and gender equality in the workplace.

Based on these findings, several areas can be identified where further development of institutional measures is appropriate. These include systematic monitoring of personnel data and remuneration structures, support for transparent and non-discriminatory procedures in recruitment and appointment to leadership positions, further development of measures supporting work–life balance and strengthening an open and respectful working culture.

An important part of these activities will also be the continuation of steps related to the implementation of the principles of responsible human-resources management in research and the process of obtaining the HR Excellence in Research Award. This process includes, among other things, emphasis on transparent recruitment procedures, equal treatment of candidates and employees, raising awareness of diversity and equal-opportunity topics, systematic training of managers in human-resources management and the creation of clear mechanisms for dealing with complaints or incidents in the workplace.

These areas will be followed by a set of specific measures and activities listed in this document that will be gradually implemented in the coming period. These steps are intended to contribute to the further development of an open, transparent and respectful working environment that supports equal opportunities, professional development of employees and the long-term quality of the institution's research activities.

6. Responsibility

The Director of the Institute – responsible for the management of the institute, makes managerial decisions and issues internal regulations. The Director undertakes to actively promote gender equality and implement the Gender Equality Plan. The Director allocates financial resources necessary for the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan.

The Equal Opportunities Working Group – builds on the preparatory working group established during the process of obtaining the HR Excellence in Research Award. If the award is granted, a new working group will be established while maintaining the

basic professional representation of its members. The working group participates in implementing the measures set out in the Gender Equality Plan, monitors their fulfilment and evaluates their effectiveness. Employees at management level who are part of the HRS4R steering group will supervise the consistency of the proposed measures with the long-term strategy of the institute.

7. Measures

The table below contains an overview of short-term and long-term goals/measures. For each measure the deadline, responsibility for implementation and corresponding indicators are specified.

Goal / Measure	Deadline	Responsibility	Indicator
Regular monitoring of staff structure and remuneration – annual analysis of the representation of women and men in career stages and leadership positions and analysis of pay differences	annually	HR Department	Annual report on gender statistics; pay-gap evaluation
Transparent and non-discriminatory recruitment in accordance with OTM-R principles – monitoring recruitment processes, gender-balanced selection committees, implementation of an electronic recruitment monitoring tool and training for committee members	4Q 2026, then ongoing	HR Department	Electronic recruitment monitoring tool; number of trained committee members; evaluation of recruitment processes
Strengthening institutional culture of respect and prevention of inappropriate behaviour – preparation of a workplace code of ethics, creation of a transparent complaint system and ensuring employee awareness	2Q 2027	Legal Department, HR Department	Adopted code of ethics; functioning complaint system; information materials for employees

Training of employees and managers in equality, diversity and HR management – training focused on gender equality, prevention of inappropriate behaviour, team management, mentoring and professional development	ongoing	Director's Office	Number of trainings carried out; number of trained employees
Support for work–life balance – maintaining and developing flexible forms of work, supporting part-time employment and monitoring the needs of employees returning from parental leave	ongoing; survey Q2 2027	HR Department, Director's Office	Survey among employees after parental leave; number of flexible contracts used
Support for equal access to leadership positions – transparent recruitment procedures for leadership roles and monitoring representation of women and men in decision-making positions	ongoing	Director's Office	Statistics on representation of women and men in leadership positions
Support for diversity and an open working environment – organisation of internal meetings, team-building activities and events supporting mutual respect in the workplace	ongoing	Director's Office	Number of events organised; employee participation
Regular collection of employee feedback – periodic surveys focused on working environment, equal opportunities and institutional culture	every 2 years	HR Department	Survey results; GEP update
Revision of internal IMC documents and promotion of gender-sensitive language – review of selected internal documents and communication materials with regard to gender-sensitive wording	1Q 2027	Legal Department, Director's Office	Updated documents; methodological guideline for gender-sensitive language; publication on the intranet

This Gender Equality Plan meets the minimum requirements set by the European Commission for research organisations participating in EU programmes.