
Gender Equality Plan

Centre for Theoretical Physics of the Polish Academy of Sciences

Actions for the years 2022–2025

Current status, objectives and means of their achievement based
on the analyses carried out in 2016, 2021 and 2022

Contents

General Information on the Gender Equality Plan	3
Information concerning data and the team preparing the Gender Equality Plan in CFT PAN.	4
Introduction	5
Description of the institute in the context of the Gender Equality Plan	5
Analysis of the current situation	6
Employment structure.....	6
Analysis based on the 2021/2022 survey	8
Consultations and discussion with staff in permanent positions	10
Diagnosis and existing solutions	11
Objectives and related activities.....	13
Objective 1: Reducing gender disproportion in employment	14
Objective 2: Increasing the work-life balance.....	15
Objective 3: Combatting mobbing and discrimination cases	16
Summing up and final conclusions	17

General Information on the Gender Equality Plan

The European Commission is committed to promoting gender equality in research and innovation. Taking into account the existing inequality, the European Commission developed a Gender Equality Strategy. The result of the strategy is:

- introducing a requirement for entities applying for Horizon 2020 funding to have a **Gender Equality Plan (hereinafter referred to as the Plan)**,
- setting rigid priorities in the composition of decision-making groups responsible for financing and,
- honouring scientific projects that pay particular attention to enhancing the role of women.

The European Commission has indicated the following requirements for the Plan:

1. The Plan should be a public document signed by top management and circulated within the institution. It should demonstrate a commitment to gender equality, specify clear goals and detailed actions and measures used to achieve them.
2. The Plan should foresee resources earmarked for designing, implementing and monitoring the GEP.
3. Including arrangements on collecting and monitoring data, i.e. the Plan must be evidence-based and based on underlying data with division into genders collected across all categories of employees. The data should form a basis for the goals, indicators and ongoing progress assessment.
4. The plan should foresee supporting through training and building a potential: The actions may include developing gender competence and combatting unconscious gender bias among the staff, leaders and decision-makers, creating working groups devoted to specific topics and raising awareness through workshops and communication activities.

Apart from the obligatory requirements related to the process, it is recommended to take the following five topic areas into account:

1. Work-life balance and organisational culture.
2. Balance of gender in leadership and decision-making.
3. Gender equality in recruitment and career development.
4. Taking gender into account in research plans and teaching.
5. Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment.

Useful links:

- Information on the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)
<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/what-gender-equality-plan-gep>
- European Commission Reports, pages 'Publication Office of the European Union'
<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/what-gender-equality-plan-gep>

Information concerning data and the team preparing the Gender Equality Plan in CFT PAN

This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) at the Centre for Theoretical Physics of the Polish Academy of Sciences (CFT PAN) has been developed on the basis of consultations and surveys carried out in the years 2015-2022. The statistical data were based on the system of the Integrated Information Network on Science and Higher Education, reports sent to the President of the Polish Academy of Sciences and activity reports adopted yearly by the Scientific Board of CFT PAN. Many of the analyses were related to the institute's preparation for applying for 'HR Award'.

The plan has been prepared based on the analyses by:

1. Deputy Director for Academic Affairs Krzysztof Pawłowski
2. Deputy Director for General Affairs Magdalena Kacprzak
3. President of the Scientific Board of the Centre for Theoretical Physics of the Polish Academy of Sciences: Lech Mankiewicz
4. Representatives of independent researchers: Remigiusz Augusiak, Wojciech Hellwing
5. Representative of doctoral students in the Scientific Board Oskar Słowik
6. Representative of doctoral student's self-government: Owidiusz Makuta
7. Representative of doctoral students at the Doctoral School Warsaw-4-PhD: Tomasz Rybotycki

Introduction

Description of the institute in the context of the Gender Equality Plan

The Centre for Theoretical Physics of the Polish Academy of Sciences (CFT PAN) was set up on 1 May 1980 at the initiative of prof. dr. hab. Iwo Białynicki-Birula, a member of the Polish Academy of Sciences, later a long-standing director of the institute. The Centre for Theoretical Physics is one of the smallest and at the same time one of the most dynamic research facilities of PAN.

The institute brings together researchers from various fields related to theoretical physics, astrophysics, and life sciences: the classical and quantum field theory, quantum optics, foundations of quantum mechanics and quantum information theory, physics of new states of matter, cosmology and astronomy. At present, as a result of hiring young leaders and regular winning of grants, the number of research and administrative staff has increased significantly.

What is crucial in the context of the Gender Equality Plan is the size and operating model of the institute.

CFT PAN is a unit with 42 academics and 21 doctoral students employed as of 31 December 2021, supported by four administration employees (two people in the accounting department, one in the projects department and one in the office). Additionally, three people responsible for institute administration (Deputy Director for General Affairs, the Head of the Office and a secretary) were absent due to maternity and parental leaves.

In practice, the researchers are divided into research groups, whose leaders solicit funding and coordinate research. The institute does not offer employments for indefinite time at the level of an assistant professor or assistant. The positions are filled only on a temporary basis, most often as part of carrying out research projects, possibly as an interim phase before being promoted to a group leader. The group leaders are usually persons who have been approved by independent researchers and institute management. The candidates together with the institute must obtain external funding for their research. For instance, among these employed in permanent positions recently there are two people who have decided to pursue the Marie Skłodowska-Curie scholarship at CFT PAN (Remigiusz Augusiak and Wojciech Hellwing).

The above-mentioned model is proving to be scientifically effective. The unit is becoming an elite unit. The leaders come from among effective researchers who carry out successful research, solicit financing together with the institute and hire proficient contractors for the performance of grants. This translates into very good scientific results, including world-class publications (in recent years, results have been published in such periodicals as: Nature, Science and Nature Communications).

However, the above-mentioned model, which depends on grant schemes, leads to a strong competition across all types of posts. This poses significant problems related to gender equality and work-family balance (for both women and men).

Analysis of the current situation

Employment structure

Employment structure in 2021

Since December 2019, the institute has been managed by two men and one woman, comprising:

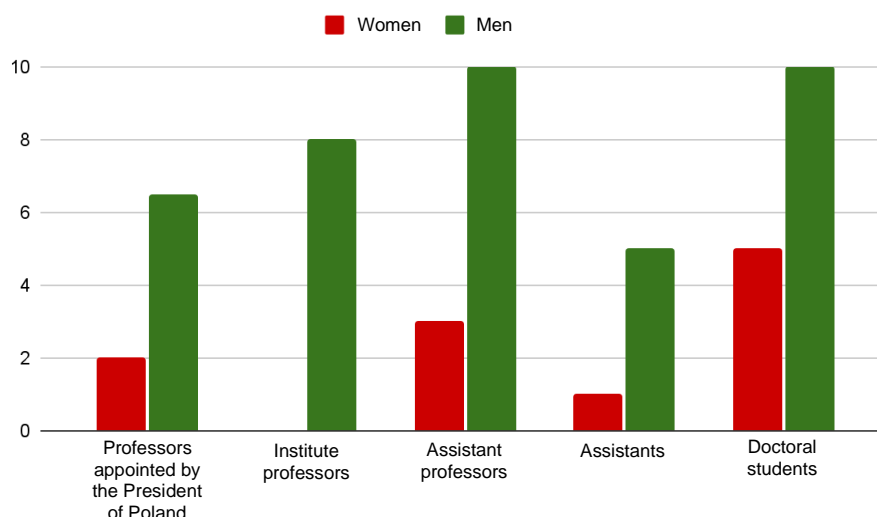
1. Director: Adam Sawicki.
2. Deputy Director for General Affairs Magdalena Kacprzak.
3. Deputy Director for Academic Affairs Krzysztof Pawłowski.

Many decisions require the approval of the CFT PAN Scientific Board. As of 31 December 2021, the Scientific Board included 33 members, of whom only five were women.

The administration includes six people, all of whom are women. On 31 December 2021, one of them was on the maternity leave and one on the parental leave.

The employment structure of researchers by gender (data from the Integrated Network of Information on Science and Higher Education accessible in the POLON system):

Employment structure as of 31 December 2021



Summing up,¹ women account for 21% of the 50.5 employees

¹The decimal 0.5 results from taking full time equivalents into account.

Employment structure in 2016

In order to plan the activities, in addition to the existing situation, it is worth assessing how the institute is changing. For instance, in 2016 there were 32 researchers working at CFT PAN: 7 women and 25 men.

2016	W	M
Professors	2	8
Assistant professors	1	8
Assistants	4	9

As the 2016 and 2021 breakdowns show, the number of researchers is increasing, but the number of women is holding steady at around 20%. In recent years, their number has been increasing among doctoral students and assistant professors. This provides an opportunity for the number of women in professorial positions to gradually increase. On the other hand, theoretical physics, by analogy with the fields of computer science and abstract mathematics, tends to attract more men than women. It is a frequent situation that there are no women at the theoretical physics specialisation at universities, which translates into the number and quality of female candidates for work at CFT PAN.

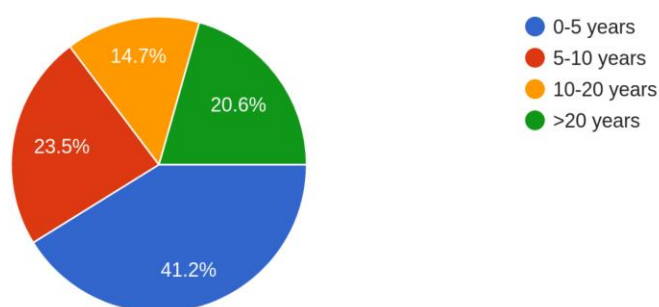
Analysis based on the 2021/2022 survey

45 researchers from CFT PAN, including 17 women (18%) and 28 men (82%), took part in the survey prepared and implemented at the turn of 2021 and 2022. The discussion of the survey was illustrated with pie charts presenting the replies to specific questions.

Researchers at different stages of their careers took part in the survey:

3. Period of research activity (starting from the first published paper)

34 responses

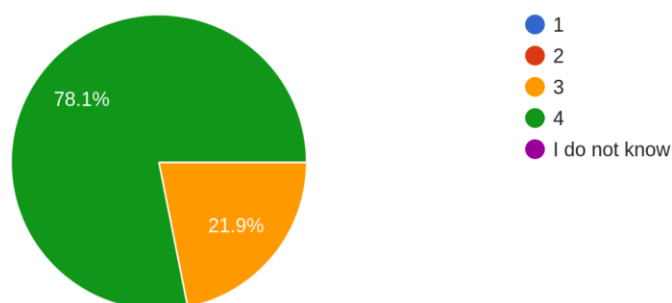


It can be observed that the largest percentage of respondents are young researchers.

The respondents did not identify any significant problems related to discrimination:

26 .How would you evaluate non-discrimination at CFT? (on scale from 1 to 4, where 1 is lowest quality level, 4 is the highest quality level). You can also type your comments in the field "Other ..."

32 responses

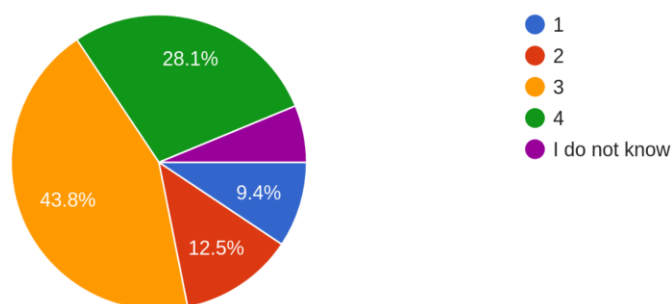


It should be noted that the question was general and could concern both gender-based discrimination as well as the discrimination based on views and ethnicity.

Question 31 dealt directly with gender equality at CFT PAN. The following responses were obtained:

31. How would you evaluate gender balance at CFT? (on scale from 1 to 4, where 1 is lowest quality level, 4 is the highest quality level). You can also type your comments in the field "Other ..."

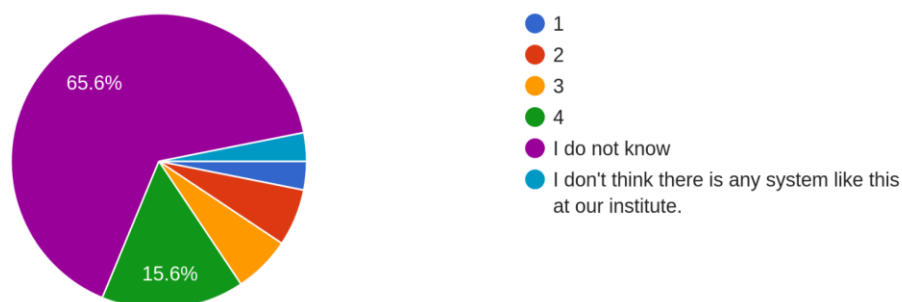
32 responses



Additionally, the employees indicated that they have no knowledge of a system of reporting complaints and violations at CFT PAN.

41. How would you evaluate complaints/appeals process at CFT? (on scale from 1 to 4, where 1 is lowest quality level, 4 is the highest quality level)...u can also type your comments in the field "Other"...

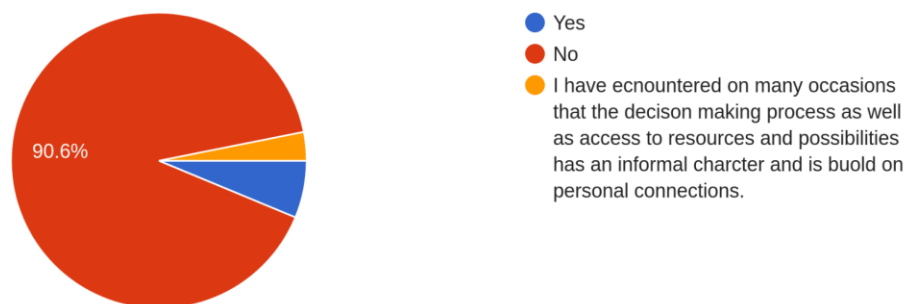
32 responses



The survey contained a restatement of the discrimination question, worded in a different form. This was supposed to verify the accuracy of the responses. The second question yielded the following response:

45. Have you experienced discrimination at CFT?

32 responses



Consultations and discussion with staff in permanent positions

The directors organize meetings with independent research staff and are in regular contact with them. Plans related to working conditions were frequently raised in the discussions.

A lot of employees complain about lack of work-family balance, i.e. academic work comes at the expense of the family. This concerns both women and men. Practicing science at the highest level involves a lot of competition and often requires devoting yourself to it.

Practically all researchers point to an overload of responsibilities, in particular administrative ones. These include, among others, a number of duties related to the operation of doctoral schools in Poland, procedures for awarding degrees, preparing reports, agreements, evaluating staff and doctoral students, getting diplomas recognised, participation in conferences, organizing study trips and conferences.

Diagnosis and existing solutions

Problems with discrimination and mobbing

The analysis shows that there are no significant problems with gender-based discrimination at CFT PAN. However, respondents pointed to behaviour bearing the characteristics of mobbing.

Ways of reporting violations

The survey showed that the researchers at CFT PAN are not aware of the procedures for reporting violations.

An important tool for preventing discrimination and cases of mobbing is the existence of functions performed by respected and objective individuals who can receive and react to information on violations. There are two bodies of this type at CFT PAN:

1. the Disciplinary Committee headed by prof. dr hab. Kazimierz Rzażewski
2. Violations Coordinator The function is currently performed by prof. dr hab. Bożena Czerny, using the e-mail: naruszenia@cft.edu.pl.

However, the doctoral students and staff are not aware of the existence of these bodies, nor of the rules of their operation.

Employment by gender

The number of women employed at scientific positions at CFT PAN is maintained at the level of 20%. The number of female researchers in top positions constitutes only 10%. Statistical data and the survey clearly show the imbalance. On the other hand, this reflects the global situation concerning theoretical physics. The greatest disproportion can be found among administrative staff – there are no males among the administrative staff at CFT PAN (in the Accounting Department, Office, HR Department or Projects Department).

Salaries and procurement of financing for the institute

Basic salaries at CFT PAN are set and related to a given position. Additional remunerations arise from compensations for coordinating a research grant scheduled in the grant application, teaching, additional functions, statutory remuneration for reviewers and supervisors. The institute practically does not award bonuses for researchers, with the exception of the grant 'Premia na Horyzoncie'. The majority of the additional remunerations are allowances provided for in the grant, so they depend on the financing procurement efficiency. In this aspect, the researchers are doing very well, i.e. they have a high ratio of grants awarded with regard to the applications. The most prestigious projects at CFT PAN are currently ERC-Synergy (as a consortium member), TEAM-NET (as a leader) and QuantEra (as a leader), of which ERC-Synergy is being implemented by prof. Bożena Czerny.

Work-family balance

Most researchers point to the absence of the balance. This most often requires a high level of scientific commitment from the researchers. A big system-related problem identified by Doctoral Schools coordinators is a lack of paid maternity leave for female doctoral students. With regard to this aspect, doctoral students, i.e. third-degree students, have been made equal

in the higher education system with university students of the first- and second-degree students. Meanwhile, the majority of researchers in Poland are starting a family during their doctoral studies.

Problems arising from ill-considered attempts at gender equality

A common solution is an attempt to suddenly increase the number of women in important committees. Attempting to place female researchers in multiple committees without taking into consideration the current gender ratio in employment may lead to considerable workload for women related to the additional administrative tasks.

Objectives and related activities

The above diagnosis points to areas where the Institute could improve. The management of CFT PAN are planning to undertake actions cautiously, so as not to be counterproductive. To this end, women employed at CFT PAN are going to be invited, but not forced to:

- a) suggest necessary actions aimed at the implementation of the European Union Equality Strategy,
- b) participate in Committees, particularly the recruitment committees.

The main objectives and planned actions aimed at facilitating their implementation are listed below.

Objective 1: Reducing gender disproportion in employment

The gender ratio at CFT PAN is not maintained. At senior scientific positions, women account for only 10%. In contrast, there are no men in the administrative departments. The gender disproportion among researchers partially result from the number of female students at the theoretical physics specialisation.

Decreasing the gender disproportion is a long-term goal. Ill-considered solutions, such as forcing female employees to participate in all committees or discriminating against men in recruitment, should be avoided. The following actions are being planned at CFT PAN.

Action 1. Monitoring the situation

A report on employment and recruitment by gender will be prepared at Doctoral Schools yearly. The report will be attached to this plan, as a form of an update, and to the scientific activity report for subsequent years.

Action 2. Increasing the chances of women in recruitment to Doctoral Schools

Each recruitment to the Doctoral Schools shall be carried out in two stages. Typically, the Recruitment Committee encourages supervisors to promote the best male and female applicant to the II stage of the recruitment process, i.e. interviews. The whole procedure is carried out in accordance with the schools' regulations which allows to award 30% of the points arbitrarily by the supervisor. At CFT PAN, the committee will encourage supervisors to use their points to promote female candidates at the first stage of the recruitment. In this way, the chances of female candidates to advance to the second stage increase. The second stage assessment is independent of the recruitment, so, all in all, according to the schools' regulations, the best male or female candidate will be selected.

Action 3. Attempt to increase the number of women in the Scientific Board

Elections to the scientific board are carried out by vote. The next election will be in 2022. The institute aims to construct a shortlist, in which women will account for at least 25%.

Action 4. Promoting the results of female researchers at CFT PAN

For the implementation of the long-term goal, women should be encouraged to choose theoretical physics at the earlier stages, before they decide which university to go to. The Institute intends to undertake actions to promote research of the female researchers working at CFT PAN. A PR company will be hired for the purpose.

Action 5. Attempt to hire men in the administrative departments

The biggest gender disproportion is noticeable in the administrative departments of CFT PAN. There is no male employee among the 6 people in the administrative departments. CFT PAN intends to increase the number of people in the administrative departments by expanding the Projects Department. Similarly to the recruitment to the Doctoral Schools, at least one male candidate will be invited for the interviews. However, the final choice will be made solely based on the qualifications, irrespective of the candidate's gender.

Objective 2: Increasing the work-life balance

The work-life balance is necessary for proper functioning of an individual. The aspect is often disregarded in scientific work. The aim of CFT PAN is being a friendly unit, with good atmosphere. For this, it is essential to create conditions for proper development.

Action 1: Employing more people in administrative departments in order to relieve researchers from some of the non-academic workload.

The expansion of the Projects Department is being planned. This will relieve all the research staff of administrative workload.

Action 2: Co-funding of holiday

CFT PAN will continue the so called 'Wczasy pod gruszą' scheme i.e. co-financing holiday in accordance with the Regulations of the Company Social Benefits Fund. The benefit will be awarded for days off and holiday leave lasting at least 14 days in a row, encouraging all the staff to take a holiday.

Action 3: Flexible working hours and remote work.

Researchers sign contracts for unlimited working hours, interpreted in the Polish law as a flexible approach to working schedule. Employees, at their own request, can decide on their work schedule, obviously in compliance with the applicable legal standards.

Action 4: Monitoring

The annual survey will be supplemented with questions related to the work-life balance. There will be a meeting with the staff at least once a year to address this issue. The employees will be asked to suggest improvements.

Objective 3: Combatting mobbing and discrimination cases

The respondents have not mentioned any problems related to gender-related discrimination at CFT PAN. However, especially the open ended questions revealed some problems, at several levels, that could be some manifestations of a passive-aggressive behaviour or mobbing in a broad sense. The respondents pointed out that they did not know any pathways they could follow to get help.

Action 1. Monitoring

The survey will be carried out each year. The questions will be made more simple. Its anonymization will be the responsibility of all members of the Working Group (which includes representatives chosen by the doctoral students).

Action 2. A training on mobbing and the principles of healthy communication

The training will take place at least once every four years. The main aim is making the group leaders and the management of CFT PAN sensitive to mobbing.

Action 3 Preparing and disseminating clear and transparent whistleblowing procedures

The CFT has a Disciplinary Committee and a Violations Coordinator (introduced in accordance with the PAN Act of 30 April 2011). The bodies and ways of reporting violations are subject to formal documents, such as: the Statutes of CFT PAN, the PAN Act or Regulations related to whistleblowers ('Regulations on Whistleblowing and Protecting Whistleblowers'). However, the documents are not easy to read. The employees are unaware of the existence of some of them. Thus, the procedures should be simplified and disseminated.

Summing up and final conclusions

It will be the responsibility of the Directors of CFT PAN to implement this Plan, and they will allocate appropriate funds for the purpose. The listed activities will require time and engaging the administrative and research staff. What is more, CFT PAN will finance the organisation of training and promotion of scientific results.

This Plan will be developed and updated on a regular basis. The results of the surveys and reports from subsequent years will be included as appendices to the Plan.