Concept for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

Ensuring a gender fair and family friendly environment with equal opportunities for all employees and adequate working conditions for young families is one of the key concerns of SAFE. From its start SAFE developed a number of affirmative measures to promote equal opportunities for women and men and support families. The mission of SAFE is to create awareness for equal opportunities, empower individuals to combine family and career, counter gender stereotypes and accommodate where possible to individual life plans.

To date, there is a clear underrepresentation of women in research, especially in leading senior positions. SAFE is striving to counteract by continuously increasing the share of women among its research staff. The guiding principle of selecting the most qualified candidate for a position remains unaffected by this.

1. Measures to Achieve Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

a) Cascade Model

SAFE follows the common goal of the "Research-Oriented Standards on Gender Equality" of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft to significantly increase the proportion of women at all academic career levels (full professors, junior/assistant professors, postdoctoral and doctoral researchers) by implementing a “cascade” model which sets targets for the proportion of women at each career level based on the proportion of women at the next more junior level. If the share of women at a specific academic career level is below that at the next lower academic level, then SAFE targets to balance out the difference by increasing the proportion of women for the higher career level by at least 5 percent per year, provided that there are open positions to fulfill this target. This model will allow to “cascade up” over time the proportion of women from the junior to the senior levels. Both the SAFE Executive and the SAFE Scientific Board will be informed once a year about all relevant figures and the progress made in achieving this objective.

b) Coordinator Equal Opportunities

SAFE has implemented the position of a Coordinator for Equal Opportunities who is elected by the SAFE women’s network (see 1d) and appointed by the Executive Board. The Coordinator is a member of the Scientific Board where she advocates the idea of equal opportunities for women and men in strategic or operational business. She functions as first contact for female employees who are in need of support or have questions on matters related to equal opportunities.
c) Staff Recruitment Procedures

SAFE adheres to the rules for staff recruitment as stipulated in the German Gender Equality Act (Allgemeines Gleichstellungsgesetz) and can build on the extensive expertise of Goethe University in creating a gender-sensitive culture. The recruitment procedure ensures that female candidates get fair chances based on their achievements in an unbiased way. To achieve this, the following measures are implemented:

- In areas where women are under-represented, female applications are given preferential consideration if qualifications are equivalent.
- In areas where women are under-represented, an equal share of women shall be invited to job interviews (provided that enough female candidates are available who meet the requirements for the position).
- SAFE management introduces transparent staff selection criteria for research positions that take into account differences in the employment biographies of women and men in order to assure a fair treatment of all candidates.

In addition to this, members of the SAFE Scientific Board will be offered a special training (“anti-bias training”) for creating awareness about implicit biases and recruiting staff on a gender-fair basis.

d) Women’s Network

A women-to-women mentoring network within SAFE plays a crucial role in guiding new female employees in their career advancement. All female employees of SAFE are invited to regular meetings to discuss topics related to equal opportunities and to actively exchange views on strengthening this network.

e) Mentoring Program “Pro Professur”

SAFE is participating in cooperation with Goethe University in the mentoring program “Pro Professur” for young women in academia. Young professionals are supported in their career development. Over a period of 18 months, the program comprises the systematic promotion of skills for a successful application for a full professorship by special coaching and training. So far, this program is only offered in German.

f) Personnel Development

In cooperation with GRADE (Goethe Graduate Academy) and the Equal Opportunities Office of Goethe University SAFE offers its female staff to attend specific training and education programs in order to acquire the necessary skills for planning their career, for networking and communication, and for other research-related competences and leadership skills.
2. Measures for a Family Friendly Environment

a) Staff Recruitment Procedures

As a standard procedure all applications (by women and men) are screened to establish whether child care and/or the care for relatives has prolonged the qualification phase. Parental leave and/or leave for family care are considered when evaluating the publication record so that the respective applicants are not disadvantaged.

If the job description does not require otherwise, a choice between a full-time or part-time position is offered.

b) Extension of Research Assistant Contracts and Stipends

In accordance with the Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz (WissZeitVG) fixed-term contracts of research personnel can be prolonged by up to two years when the employee takes parental leave or leave for family care during the time of the contract.

SAFE scholarships can be prolonged for a period of up to twelve months if the scholar has chosen to take parental leave or leave for family care.

c) Childcare

SAFE cooperates closely with Goethe University’s Family Service Unit in order to support young families in finding the right daycare provider. SAFE maintains several contacts to private childcare facilities. More information on the general childcare provisions in Frankfurt can be found here.

An agreement with pme Familienservice GmbH ensures that childcare can be provided in emergency situations and during vacation periods. Staff members can make use of such emergency childcare free of charge for children up to 12 years of age.

For cases where child care is needed on short term notice or for a short period of time, a specially equipped “parent-child room” can be used. The room is designed for children but also equipped as workplace.

SAFE also provides childcare to participants of SAFE conferences thanks to a cooperation with the AWO parent service. Additional childcare costs due to travel for SAFE activities are covered for all SAFE employees.

d) Part-time Work & Telework

SAFE offers flexible working arrangements that allow for various part-time schemes. Whenever the work schedule allows, meetings and seminars are scheduled such that part-time staff members are able to attend during their working hours.

Staff members who wish to telework are allowed to do so if their teleworking does not compromise the interaction and communication with other staff members.
e) Absence to perform family responsibilities

Measures are in place to improve the reintegration of staff after a parental leave or a leave for other family reasons. Before resuming work (usually three months before the planned return), the employee will be contacted to discuss individual reintegration measures (such as training). Training measures that affect all staff members will also be offered to employees on leave.

f) Dual Career

SAFE provides special assistance to spouses and partners of new employees (professors and postdocs) with the help of the Dual Career Office at Goethe University. The Dual Career Office supports spouses and partners in their search for employment by giving them advice and using the dual career network with other universities and other non-university partners.

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