

Kyoto University

Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality

(AY 2022–2027)

1. Formulation of the Action Plan

The actualization of gender equality is essential for a creative and prosperous society in which diverse perspectives are mutually respected. Universities are responsible for the cultivation of the next generation, and are therefore anticipated to play a key role in efforts to promote gender equality. In a society with a declining population, the proactive fostering of female researchers is a priority issue in securing talented human capital and revitalizing universities.

To ensure the continuation of its development as a research university at the vanguard of creative knowledge generation founded on a philosophy of academic freedom, it is vital that Kyoto University fosters and secures talented female researchers in accordance with its principles of gender equality.

The university's fundamental principles and policy for gender equality were established in March 2006, and the university action plans for the promotion of gender equality were formulated in 2009 and 2015.

Although the ratio of female faculty members at Kyoto University has been increasing, it is still low compared to other universities. The ratios of female researchers at different levels of study and research (from doctoral students to professors) decrease as the level becomes more advanced. The ratio of female assistant professors in particular has shown a significant decrease, which indicates that there are hurdles for women in advancing their research careers. If this situation continues, the university's stance on the promotion of gender equality will begin to be questioned.

The ratios of female students in many of the university's faculties and graduate schools also remain low. Although academic departments have been making efforts to increase their numbers of female students, their efforts have not resulted in an increase in the ratio of female students. This is particularly noticeable with regards to faculties and graduate schools in science and engineering fields. It is essential to increase the number of female students enrolled in doctoral programs in science and engineering fields in order to secure female faculty members in those fields in the future, and to promote science and technology innovation in Japan. More effective efforts are therefore required.

In recent years, as career options for female students have increased, the position of universities has been shifting from that of the "selector of employees" to being "selected by employees." In such circumstances, it is necessary for the university to accelerate its efforts to foster and secure talented female researchers, and increase its number of female students in diverse fields.

Based on a recognition of the above, the university has formulated its Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality at Kyoto University (AY 2022–2027). Through the implementation of the action plan, all students, faculty, and staff members will make efforts to further promote gender equality at the university.

2. Numerical Targets

Until now, Kyoto University has not set numerical targets for the ratios of female faculty members. However, in order to encourage the efforts of the university's management and departments, numerical targets shall be set for the university and for each individual department, and action plans shall be formulated to achieve the targets.

(1) Increase the ratio of female faculty members at the university (including program-specific faculty members) to 20% by AY 2027

The university has set its target for the ratio of female faculty members (including program-specific faculty members) to be raised to 20% by AY 2027.

(2) Increase the ratio of female members of the university Board of Executive Directors to 25% by AY 2027

The university has set a target to increase the ratio of female members of the university Board of Executive Directors to 25% by AY 2027.

3. Issues to Be Addressed by Kyoto University

An increase in the number of female students will lead to an increase in the number of female faculty members in the future. Furthermore, an increase in the number of female faculty members who serve as role models will lead to an increase in the number of female students who seek to become researchers. In this way, the ratios of female students and faculty members at different stages influence each other.

To foster and secure talented female researchers, the university must take appropriate measures at each stage in the education and careers of faculty members, graduate students, and undergraduate students. In addition, it is necessary for all faculty and staff members, particularly faculty members involved in recruitment, to understand the existence of “unconscious bias,” and it is indispensable for the university to enhance the internal organizations responsible for implementing these measures.

Based on the above, the university shall promote gender equality through the measures described in items (1) to (4) below.

(1) Measures to increase the number of female faculty members

A. Measures to promote the recruitment and promotion of female faculty members

The ratios of female researchers at different levels of study and career, from doctoral students to professors, become lower as the level gets higher. In particular, the ratio of female assistant professors is much lower than the ratio of female doctoral students, which indicates that there are hurdles for women in advancing their research careers. It is therefore necessary to analyze what hurdles exist in the recruitment and promotion of female faculty members, and take measures quickly to eliminate them to the extent possible.

The ongoing provision of incentives for efforts to recruit and promote female faculty members is anticipated to have an immediate effect in addressing the issues of gender imbalance, and in expanding the efficacy of departmental action plans, etc. Encouraging the proactive recruitment and promotion of female faculty members through the provision of incentives is not only effective in securing talented female researchers, but may also lead to an increase in the number of female researchers in the future, since the female faculty members employed will serve as role models and mentors for female students. In order to ensure equal opportunities by eliminating the influence of unconscious bias on the application and screening processes for recruitment and promotion, the university will review the current system and provide incentives for at least a certain period, until the ratio of female faculty members has been raised to a certain level.

(a) Elimination of the influence of unconscious bias on faculty members involved in the screening processes for recruitment or promotion

(b) Require due consideration to be given to periods of leave for maternity, childcare, etc., during the screening processes for the recruitment and promotion of faculty members

(c) Incentives for recruitment or promotion

- ① Consider the establishment of a system that allows employment quota transfer
- ② Consider the establishment of a system to encourage recruitment of female faculty members that includes measures such as the reallocation of employment quotas and employment expenses, etc.
- ③ Consider measures to increase the ratio of female researchers employed through the Hakubi Project

B. Improvement of support and environment to enable a healthy balance between education/research activities and childcare, etc.

To prevent talented researchers from discontinuing their research or leaving for another university due to life events, it is necessary to improve support programs, work environment, and facilities that enable a healthy balance between education/research activities and childbirth/childcare and family care. As such measures to support

researchers caring for children or family members are also beneficial for young male and female researchers who will become the next generation of researchers at the university, the university shall urgently implement such measures, including the provision of accurate information.

As the Financial Support Program for the Employment of Research Assistants and Lab Assistants is important in enabling researchers in certain fields who are engaged in childcare or family care to continue their research, the university shall enhance the program to the greatest extent possible.

Regarding the improvement of childcare support facilities, the university shall consider feasible support measures in consideration of the needs of students, faculty, and staff, and the capacity of childcare facilities in the vicinity of the campuses.

(a) Continuation of research

- ① Enhancement of the Financial Support Program for the Employment of Research Assistants and Lab Assistants

(b) Work environment

- ① Establish an environment that allows faculty members engaged in childcare or family care to work from home
- ② Reduce committee work, etc., for faculty members who are raising children of third-grade elementary school age or younger
- ③ Review meeting rules so that faculty members engaged in childcare or family care can participate

(c) Provision of information

- ① Provide information about the university's childcare support programs and other useful information for maintaining a healthy balance between education/research activities and childcare/family care to all students, faculty, and staff, as well as researchers who are interested in applying for open faculty positions at the university
- ② Establish a consultation service to provide information about appropriate support programs for childcare, family care, and career development based on the needs of individual researchers

(d) Facilities

- ① Consider the establishment of childcare facilities on campus for students, faculty, and staff
- ② Provide rooms for breastfeeding in buildings used by students, faculty, and staff

C. Increase education and research opportunities that contribute to the promotion of

gender equality

To increase the ratios of female faculty members and students at the university, it is necessary to increase education and research opportunities from the perspective of gender equality. Such opportunities must be provided not only to female faculty members, but also widely to faculty members in general, regardless of gender. Faculty members and departments shall be encouraged to cooperate with each other to efficiently and effectively accelerate such efforts.

- ① Consider the implementation of programs to support education/research projects that may contribute to gendered innovations, etc.

(2) Measures to increase the ratio of female students

Increasing the ratio of female students at the university is important not only to improve the gender balance, but also to foster potential future female faculty members. To encourage female students to proceed to higher education, the university shall implement measures to remove hurdles for female students in pursuing career paths in different academic fields, and to convey the appeal of research to them. In particular, faculties and graduate schools in which the current ratio of female students is significantly low, and graduate schools in which the ratio of female students who advance to master's or doctoral programs is declining, shall proactively enhance efforts to increase their numbers of female applicants.

- ① Consider the implementation of programs to support research projects (academic research/policy proposal) centered on female students
- ② Hold events to convey the appeal of research to female students to encourage them to enroll in graduate schools, particularly at graduate schools in which the ratio of female students who advance to master's or doctoral programs is declining.
- ③ Develop and promote education methods, create content, and hold events for junior and senior high school students to convey the appeal of different research fields, particularly fields of low interest among female junior and senior high school students
- ④ Utilize the special admission system.
- ⑤ Implement open campus programs in which female high school students can easily participate
- ⑥ Increase opportunities at open campuses, etc., to communicate with the parents and teachers in charge of career guidance of female high school students
- ⑦ Proactively disseminate information about female faculty members and alumnae who are active in different fields, and about the increasing need by companies and other organizations to recruit female students

(3) Develop a shared understanding of the significance of gender equality promotion

It is necessary to develop a shared understanding that increasing the ratio of women is an

essential goal for maintaining and improving the university's research capabilities, and for continuing to create new values through infusing diverse perspectives into its education and research.

With the aim of fostering human capital who can become leaders or play important roles in various fields of society, the university shall acknowledge the existence of unconscious bias, develop human resources who can promote gender equality, and implement measures to achieve these goals.

- ① Develop a shared understanding of the significance of gender equality promotion throughout the university, and provide training to make the university's efforts known.
- ② Increase the number of courses that deal with gender equality and gendered innovations.

(4) Enhancement of university organizations and systems relevant to the promotion of gender equality

To implement the measures outlined above, it is essential to strengthen the relevant university organizations and system. To this end, the university's organizations and administrative system shall be adjusted and enhanced as soon as possible under the leadership of the executive vice-president for gender equality. This initiative shall be implemented in cooperation with the university's departments and other organizations.

- ① Establish a university organization for strategic planning
- ② Enhance the university's administrative structure for the promotion of gender equality and strengthen the system to implement measures with the cooperation of all relevant departments in the central administration
- ③ Enhance departmental organizations and systems to promote gender equality.