

Simula Gender Equality Plan

Oslo, 14.03.2022

Simula relies on the competence and motivation of skilled employees in order to achieve its goals. Recruiting highly qualified researchers from around the world has led to Simula becoming an increasingly diverse workplace. A third of Simula's employees are women and over half of the employees come from countries other than Norway, representing approximately 40 different nationalities. This diversity provides a variety of perspectives and approaches, and contributes to a more dynamic and creative workplace.

Simula is registered as a limited company under 100% ownership of the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. Simula Research Laboratory is the parent company with five subsidiaries: Simula Innovation AS (SI), Simula Learning AS, Simula UiB AS, Simula Metropolitan Center for Digital Engineering AS (SimulaMet) and Simula Consulting.

Working towards gender equality and anti-discrimination is firmly anchored in Simula's management approach, and is pursued through Simula's strategies and guidelines. For more than a decade, Simula has worked purposefully to recruit and cultivate female research talent. The initial goal of increasing the proportion of women in research positions to 25% was achieved in 2013, and by 2028 Simula aims to have 40% of the work force filled by women. Simula's [culture document](#), which is published on the company website, clearly describes the company's core values and expectations for an inclusive working environment. In the following we will present our gender equality plan (GEP) in more detail.

On behalf of *Simula*, I hereby confirm our commitment to the continuous work of ensuring gender equality throughout our work at Simula.

Professor Aslak Tveito
Managing Director/CEO
Simula Research Laboratory

Dedicated resources

Simula works actively and deliberately with equality and anti-discrimination, which are essential components of Simula's efforts to ensure good working conditions in practice. Responsibility for this work is shared across several functions, including health and safety representatives, the working environment committee, human resources, managers at all levels, the company directors, group management and the boards of directors. These groups meet regularly to carry out this work. This organisational structure is supported by a full time Director of Organisational Development who has a formal background in managing diverse work forces, as well as several members of the human resources team that have a similar educational background and receive continuous training in this area.

While gender equality and inclusion have long been important at Simula, the focus and allocation of resources to this work was recently increased. As part of the Research Council of Norway's "BalanseHub" network, approximately 1 000 000 NOK per year is allocated to experimenting with new initiatives with the intention of developing inclusive working environments that are better able to attract and retain excellent women researchers. The human resources dedicated to the project include a combined 15% of the time of 4 members senior management in order to ensure successful implementation.

Data collection and monitoring: sex/gender disaggregated data on personnel and students and annual reporting based on indicators

In Norway, private companies with more than 50 employees are required by law to increase their efforts and report on working for equality and anti-discrimination. This obligation, which is called the activity and reporting obligations (Aktiviteten og redegjørelsesplikten), is laid down in [Section 26](#) of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act and requires annual reporting in two parts:

1. *the actual state of gender equality in the company*: gender-disaggregated counts of employees in the different job categories, as well as by employment status (temporary, part-time, parental leave).
2. *how the company works with equality and against discrimination*: descriptions of the relevant policies and practices in place, as well as future plans. In particular, the company is required to follow a 4-step model: 1. Examine the risk of discrimination and obstacles to equality, 2. Analyse causes, 3. Implement measures, and 4. Evaluate results.

Though Simula already had many routines in place to address gender equality and inclusion, these have now been formalised in the format required by Norwegian law. The results are published as part of the [Annual report](#), under the section "Gender equality, social responsibility and working environment". This provides a reliable source of gender-disaggregated data collection and monitoring throughout Simula, as well as updated descriptions of the initiatives in place to promote equality and inclusion from year to year.

Training: awareness raising/training on gender equality and unconscious gender biases for staff and decision-makers

Simula offers all students and staff access to a wide range of training workshops, guest lectures and training opportunities. Staff with decision making responsibilities participate in regular training workshops that contribute to inclusive working environments. In-house training on themes such as supervision of graduate students, managing people and projects, hiring best practises, and leadership training; each of these workshops includes discussions relating to

diversity and gender dimensions. Individual researchers can be provided with mentor groups where career advice can be obtained as an addition to the career development options offered through the Simula Academy, a professional development service for all students and staff at Simula. As part of the onboarding process, all new employees attend an individual human resources meeting where the Simula Culture is presented, and the emphasis on anti-discrimination in every form is highlighted. In addition, on-boarding group seminars are arranged where the Simula Culture is presented by senior management to emphasise this central importance of the institution.

As part of the BalanseHub network, Simula takes part in four full-day workshops per year that are focused on improving gender balance in academia. These workshops provide the opportunity for Simula to gain knowledge and inspiration about the best practises for achieving gender balance in Norwegian research institutions. They are also a venue for Simula to share its success and failures with the other participating institutions, and to learn from their experiences.

Simula's HiddenFigures project organises a number of activities with the overall aim of promoting inclusive working environments with improved ability to attract and retain excellent (women) researchers. Examples of these activities include distributed leadership training for all those who either have (or soon will have) direct personnel management responsibility, and the commissioning of a Diversity & Inclusion survey to identify elements in our systems and policies that are open to bias.

Additional thematic areas, addressed via concrete measures and targets

Work-life balance and organisational culture

Simula has several initiatives in place to facilitate a good work-life balance, including family life. With flexible working hours, employees are better able to combine a demanding career with activities and responsibilities outside work. Staff and students are able to work from home part of their work week as they see fit, a policy that was also in place pre-pandemic. In 2018 Simula introduced a 'baby bonus' scheme that gives new parents a one-time bonus of NOK 25 000, and those in recruitment positions (PhDs and postdocs) receive four months extended work contract. Simula also recently established a sponsorship programme whereby employees can apply for support for organised leisure activities outside work. Such measures demonstrate Simula's desire to be a good workplace for all employees, regardless of their life situation. The [Simula Culture](#) document formalises this aim and influences the company's approach to respective work-life balance.

Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

In recognition of the importance of representation at decision making levels, Simula is proud to have 50-50 gender balance in the boards of Simula and in the management group.

Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

Simula continuously works to attract, develop and retain talented researchers of diverse backgrounds. Simula's recruitment guidelines require qualified candidates of both sexes to be called in for an interview. The guidelines are regularly communicated to employees responsible for recruiting new researchers. For those recruited from abroad, Simula facilitates a quick and positive transition to the Norwegian workplace through administrative support, social activities and Norwegian language training, among other measures. Language training is also offered to the spouses/ partners of new employees relocating to Norway.

Professional development is a critical element of career progression, and is on offer for all Simula staff through Simula Academy. Relevant offers for transferable skills are offered to employee groups according to need and interest, such as leadership training, project and time management, digital security and design thinking. Employees with recruitment and

management responsibilities receive training in gender equality and unconscious gender biases. All employees are encouraged to identify gaps in their training and if necessary, attend external courses to ensure they have the skills they need to excel in their position. By focusing on flexibility in both the nature and timing of training, Simula aims to ensure that professional development training is individually tailored and inclusive.

Every year, Simula assesses scientific staff for promotion according to established criteria for each role. Those meeting the requirements are duly promoted. It is an important principle at Simula that all scientific staff are considered for promotion annually rather than relying on self-nomination of individuals, as this process reduces the potential for biases to influence career progression. In addition, Simula conducts an evaluation of salary conditions throughout the organisation every second year, which is reported to the board of directors and management group. The goal is twofold: to assess whether salary levels at Simula are competitive (external perspective) and if they reflect the individual responsibilities required and job category (internal perspective). Any employees found to have lower salaries than expected are increased. Insofar as possible, the salaries are disaggregated by gender, considering similar positions, work of equal value and individual assessments related to such variables as education, experience and individual contribution.

Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment

Simula aims to ensure a safe and secure working environment in accordance with the Group's principles on workplace culture. As such, Simula shows consideration for employees' individual needs and does not accept or tolerate any form of harassment, victimisation or discrimination based on religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, nationality, disability or political views. Simula has clear guidelines to prevent all forms of harassment, with a corresponding notification system in place. The guidelines for conflict resolution and notification encourage employees to take an active role in creating a working environment where conflict is handled in an open, honest and constructive way, and in efforts to prevent destructive forms of conflict from arising in the first place. All employees are responsible for safeguarding the Simula culture and contributing to an inclusive work environment. Employees also have a duty to make known any form of harassment they may encounter at work.