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Promoting Gender Equality at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The promotion of gender equality is a key goal at the Hebrew University, both for reasons of justice and fairness and to promote academic excellence. Many women study at the Hebrew University and achieve excellent results, but the proportion of women among the senior academic staff is currently only about 32% (in 2020-2021). The proportion of women decreases with the rise up the academic ladder and only around 22% of full professors are women. There are some departments at the university, especially in the STEM professions, in which the percentage of female faculty members is particularly low.

The University is making a great effort to increase the proportion of women among the senior academic staff. In recent years, the proportion of women among new faculty members has increased, but these efforts have not yet created gender equality. The University is leading a comprehensive, deep and long-term process to increase the proportion of women in the academic staff and to equalize the proportion of women among researchers at all levels.

During doctoral studies and before leaving for postdoctoral fellowships, the University carries out activities aimed at increasing the reservoir of female candidates for positions, including proactive application for relevant candidates, as well as actions to improve the selection process and correct difficulties in promoting women researchers at the academic level. Here are some examples:

Workshops on Unconscious Biases and barriers facing women. The workshops are held once every two years and are attended by members of faculty screening and promotion committees, members of general university promotion committees and members of committees that decide on scholarships and awards.

Gender Committee: The President of the University, in consultation with the Adviser on Gender Equality, appointed a Gender Committee, headed by the Adviser. The 11-member committee includes representatives from all the academic units at the University and is involved in formulating innovative programs for promoting and implementing gender fairness at the University; in collecting and analyzing data; and being in direct contact with the heads of the academic units to promote, execute and assimilate gender issues unique to that academic unit.

Actions for the Empowerment of Doctoral Students and to Encourage them to Pursue an Academic Career:

- In order to encourage researchers to pursue an academic career, the University conducts empowerment workshops for doctoral students that deal with advancement towards an academic career (including skills such as applying for a postdoctoral fellowship, writing research grants, presenting to an audience, etc). The first workshop of this kind, which is recognized as an academic course, is at the Faculty of Medicine and the university is working to assimilate this concept into additional faculties.

Actions for the Empowerment of Post-Doctoral Students and to Encourage them to Pursue an Academic Career:

- The University annually awards postgraduate scholarships for women. Scholarship recipients undertake to return to a position at the University if the University is interested



in them doing so. The scholarships are also given to women who do their postdoctoral fellowship both abroad and in Israel.

- A program called WISER (<https://wiser.org.il>) has been established which offers personal mentoring for female Israeli postdoctoral fellows abroad. The project is managed by female postdocs themselves in collaboration with senior female researchers from the universities in Israel. The mentors are allocated according to the research areas of postdoctoral fellows. The project is intended for postdocs and researchers from all academic institutions in the country and is funded by the Hebrew University.

Actions to Promote Female Researchers in the Academic Track:

- The University conducts management skills workshops for young researchers in the experimental sciences to help them in their first years at the university, run by an external organizational consultant. This year, for the first time, the university is offering similar workshops to researchers in the theoretical sciences.
- The University has introduced new regulations for researchers going on maternity and parental leave, which provide significant lightening of the teaching load and the possibility of financial support for research assistance and for travel of spouses to conferences.
- The "Taking the Stage - Researchers at the Front of Public Discourse" project is an innovative project of the Hebrew University. The purpose of the project is to increase the representation and exposure of the female academic staff of the Hebrew University as spokespersons and partners in public discourse. This is also another tool for raising research resources, mainly from industrial/commercial entities, and of course contributes to the transformation of Israeli society into a more egalitarian, diverse and just society. A broad database of expert female researchers has been established and professional coaches have started to prepare them for this role.

The full multi-year program for the advancement of women at the university can be found on the "Advancement of Women in Research" website on the Hebrew University website (currently only available in Hebrew): <https://womeninacademy.huji.ac.il/>

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