

Gender Equality Plan 2014 - 2016

Department of Physics and Astronomy
Uppsala University



General goals

The department aims at equal representation of gender within the department at all levels. Therefore, a serious challenge facing the department is to achieve greater gender equality in higher academic positions (lecturer and professor) within the department. To this end, work and initiatives particularly aim at a departmental policy and work environment which does not hinder or discriminate against female students and researchers, and encourages them to pursue scientific careers.

Plan and Organisation

This plan outlines the ongoing and planned gender equality work at the department and in each case who is responsible for that work. Note that throughout this plan, by “responsible” it is meant that this person or group is responsible for ensuring that the work is *done*, but *not* necessarily that the work is *done by that person or group themselves*. It is also worth clarifying that PhD students are “staff” in this report, and “students” means undergraduate students, unless PhD students is specifically written.

This plan falls within the broader context of the university and faculty equal opportunities plans and serves as an addendum to these. Copies of these plans can be obtained electronically via the links at the web page below, or paper copies on request from the department ombudsman, Melanie Mucke.

Gender equality work is overseen by the department’s gender equality group, which is chosen to represent the majority of interest groups.

A web page for the group is at:

<http://www.physics.uu.se/en/page/department-gender-equality-group>

which contains information about the gender equality group, and links to the university and faculty equal opportunities units homepages and the respective plans. It also contains information regarding the definition of sexual harassment, including information on who to contact in such cases, and a link to the university’s plan of action for the prevention of gender-based violation (sexual harassment).

General Summary of Situation

The Department of Physics and Astronomy consists of eleven divisions; Applied Nuclear Physics, Astronomy and Space Physics, FREIA, High Energy Physics, Ion Physics, Materials Physics, Materials Theory, Molecular and Condensed Matter Physics, Nuclear Physics, Physics Education, and Theoretical Physics¹. All divisions have been historically, and remain to be, predominantly male in academic positions. For example, within Astronomy and Space Physics the first female Ph.D. graduate was as recent as 1996, and the first female lecturer was appointed around 2003. The department still has a remarkably low fraction of permanent female academic staff compared to other departments at the university.

The present situation regarding the representation of gender with respect to position and compared to the situation in the years 2010-2013 is presented in the table and figure below. The data have been retrieved using GLIS (<https://glis.uu.se/>). The situation is far from satisfactory. Put in historical perspective some progress has been made, particularly in the number of female PhD students at the department. But while there is clearly still progress to be made for equality at the PhD student level, the data on gender fractions do suggest that there is a problem at the critical transition between temporary and permanent positions, i.e. to lecturer and particularly professor positions. This means that the bottleneck in gender equality work is actually the step between assistant professor and lecturer rather than (as often assumed) between undergraduate and PhD studies. There is definitely need for improvement although there might be a positive long term trend towards evening out gender differences.

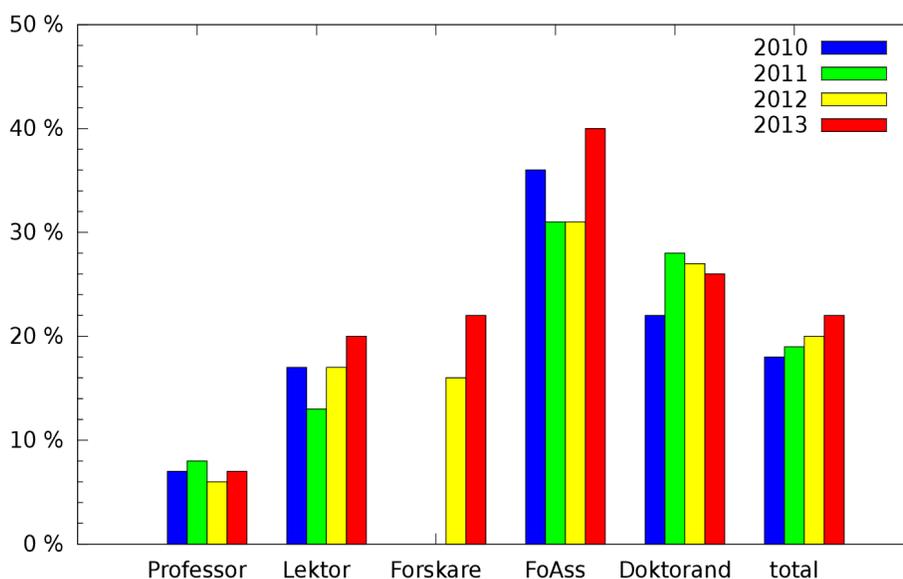


Figure and Table: Percentage of female employees for the department for the years 2010 – 2013 (source: GLIS, December 2013).

¹ Note that the department also shares staff and premises with the Swedish Institute for Space Physics, which does, however, not fall within the purview of this plan.

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Professor	7% (3/ 41)	8% (4/ 49)	6% (3/ 45)	7% (3/ 43)
Lektor	17% (5/ 30)	13% (4/ 31)	17% (5/ 30)	20% (6/ 30)
Forskare	?	?	16% (---)	22% (21/ 94)
FoAss	36% (4/ 11)	31% (5/ 16)	31% (4/ 13)	40% (4/ 10)
Doktorand	22% (15/ 67)	28% (18/ 64)	27% (22/ 82)	26% (25/ 97)
Total	18% (27/149)	19% (31/160)	20% (34/170)	22% (59/274)

Ongoing tasks at departmental level

As stated before, this plan serves as an addendum to the university and faculty gender equality / equal opportunities plans. Therefore, only additional tasks specific for the departmental level are listed here.

1. *Goal:* The gender equality group has decided to focus on supporting young female researchers to stay in research especially after their first Post Doc position.

Action: An efficient way for distributing the available grants has been found by announcing a call once a year. The biggest portion is used to support young female researchers at the department, but also invitation of female guest lecturers and other form of role models is strongly encouraged. In addition, an evaluation of how the distributed money has been used by the recipients of the grants is necessary. Therefore, everyone who received gender equality grants has to report how the money was used.

Responsible persons: Gender equality group.

2. *Goal:* There should be no gender related difference in passing courses.

Background: A study was done concerning the final grades in the eleven largest physics courses during the terms from HT2007 until HT2010. Female students were underrepresented at the highest grade (5) for over 50% of these courses and overrepresented in none of them.

Action: Investigate to what extent such differences exist and what could be done against them (if existent).

Responsible persons: Directors of studies and course teachers.

3. *Goal:* That the physical workplace should be less male dominated.

Background: Pictures of past professors adorn rooms and hallways and are usually entirely or predominantly men. Ways to break this picture in a way which does not appear artificial given the department's history are not trivial to achieve.

Action: Ways to break this picture should be discussed at the division level. It is suggested that the number of pictures of past scientists be kept to a minimum, and instead pictures with scientific content (e.g. astronomical objects, experimental facilities, theoretical simulations, science-inspired art work, etc) to be used. New lecture halls could be named after female scientists.

Responsible persons: Heads of Divisions and Head of Department.

4. *Goal:* At least one teacher of each gender per course for courses with more than one teacher (if possible).

Background: Female teachers, e.g. female PhD students as tutors in laboratory classes, are needed so that Female students need role models they can identify with, get valuable contacts within the field and see that the department is an environment where both women and men are active.

Action: Where possible engage more female teachers, e.g. female PhD students as tutors in laboratory classes. Take care to evenly divide the available female personnel among classes to avoid creating any extra teaching load on female teachers / PhD students. In courses with only one teacher, guest lecturers could be invited.

Responsible persons: Director of Studies (studierektor).

Evaluation of work during 2013

1. Based on the suggestions of the gender equality group, more than the available funds of 2 Million SEK could be distributed among 17 researchers in 2013 and again to 17 applicants in 2014.
2. A new gender equality plan has been written and is available on the gender equality homepage. The plan was written in consultation with the Head of Department, staff and students by the representatives of the different groups. Students could influence the plan via the student representative in the gender equality group.