

IZMIR INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES REGARDING GENDER EQUALITY

1. DEFINITION AND SCOPE

This document includes the principles, strategies, and measures to be taken by the IZTECH administration towards creating equal opportunities at all levels, securing rights and freedoms among the academic and administrative staff, students, and all other employees of İzmir Institute of Technology.

“Gender” can be defined as the roles, responsibilities, behaviours, judgments, and characteristics attributed to the sexes by society. This document acknowledges the existence of gender inequality as a problem which mostly puts women at a disadvantage because of the differences among individuals in access to resources in social and private life according to their gender. With this awareness in mind, this document aims to promote gender equality and it has been prepared to support equal visibility in public and private areas, women's empowerment and participation, equal distribution of social resources and opportunities, and women's access to these resources and opportunities, regardless of gender.

In defining the principles and strategies of IZTECH regarding gender equality, this document is based on the "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)", which Turkey became a party of in 1985, and Article 10 of the Constitution defining and guaranteeing equality between women and men as the responsibility of the state, and its relevant legislation, as well as the decision of the General Assembly of the Council of Higher Education dated 28.05.2015.

2. GENDER EQUALITY PRINCIPLES

IZTECH, with all its staff and students, opposes any discrimination regarding language, religion, race, culture, gender and species by respecting social differences on the basis of universal values such as freedom, equality, inclusiveness, respect for human dignity, social responsibility and justice, which it accepts as fundamental values at the institutional level. IZTECH works to develop and implement an effective policy that rejects discrimination and ensures equality in all public and private areas, as well as in all institutional components, academic competence and merit-related processes, and scientific research fields.

3. INSTITUTIONAL TARGETS

In this document, the institutional targets and measures to be taken are grouped under three headings. These targets and measures are in accordance with IZTECH’s mission and vision statements laid out in the IZTECH 2019-2023 Strategic Plan, which was prepared in accordance with Article 9 of the Law No. 5018 on Public Financial Management and Control and accepted with the decision of our Institute Senate dated 25.12.2018 and numbered 24/5. The said institutional targets and measures are valid for every unit using the name of IZTECH on different levels. These three headings are:

- a) Raising awareness on gender equality
- b) Adopting and maintaining a merit-based egalitarian approach in gender participation, representation, appointment and promotion
- c) Prevention of sexual harassment and/or assault

3.1. Raising Awareness

IZTECH first establishes information and data networks on gender equality within the institution. It takes a leading role in developing and establishing awareness and understanding of gender equality among academic and administrative staff and students. It organizes and supports events to raise awareness on individual and corporate rights and responsibilities in line with gender equality in all of its departments.

3.2. Protecting Gender Equality in Representation and Participation

It is essential to ensure gender equality in representation and participation and to base appointments in management of academic and administrative units of IZTECH and in organization of events on merit.

The prioritized objectives in this regard are:

- a) To review the practices at regular intervals in order to correct the ones that create gender inequality, to report these studies every six months and submit them to the Rectorate,
- b) To protect gender equality in the establishment of the relationship between society and science and in the management of innovation processes, to make this equality visible on an institutional and social scale,
- c) To strengthen the institutional resources and support for all academic and administrative personnel by considering merit and gender equality,
- d) To take measures to eliminate inequality in scientific fields and positions where gender inequality is evident, with the effect of stereotypes regarding the social division of labor based on gender,
- e) To support female and male academic and administrative staff in parenting and giving care for family members not just by their rights to official leave, but also by showing them the institutional understanding and sensitivity they may need and by supporting them in sharing responsibilities equally, without discrimination between men and women.

3.3. Prevention of Sexual Harassment and/or Assault

At IZTECH, it is essential to prevent and eliminate any kind of (verbal or physical) sexual harassment and/or assault. No individual or institutional tolerance is to be shown in this regard. Institutional arrangements to be made in this area include preventing sexual harassment and/or assault, raising awareness about the issue, providing a safe working and living environment with physical arrangements, receiving complaints about the issue, conducting the necessary investigation promptly and diligently, and putting in place support units and mechanisms.

4. INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES AND MEASURES

4.1. Raising Awareness

The following steps will be enabled:

- a) Protecting the principle of gender equality in communication between individual and institutional subordinates and superiors and peers
- b) Adopting the principle that the language and expressions used in all means of communication inside and outside of the institution such as course materials, audio-visual materials, e-mails, homework-articles-reports, brochures, posters, announcements, social media, should be respectful to human dignity, sensitive to discrimination, and gender
- c) Avoiding stereotypes in communication and using gender-related concepts without prejudice as a requirement of opposing all kinds of discrimination based on gender identity
- d) Opening elective courses on gender equality throughout the Institute, adding topics related to gender equality to the courses (related to humanities and social sciences) that are appropriate for their content in all departments, organizing informative activities on gender equality for students during the orientation week
- e) Providing academic and administrative staff with in-service training opportunities on gender equality
- f) Organizing informative meetings and workshops on the subject for the managers of academic and administrative units
- g) Supporting the scientific activities (such as seminars, workshops, conferences, or congresses) related to the subject
- h) Supporting the research, publications, and preparation of projects on the subject
- i) Including the principles of equality and inclusiveness in the “social benefits and outputs” section of scientific research projects, the relationship among science, technology and society, and access to the scientific and technological outputs

- j) Preparing posters, brochures and such instruments to announce the principles and successful practices of IZTECH on gender equality, which will make IZTECH a pioneer model and contribute to the society
- k) Including announcements regarding gender equality on the Institute's website and social media pages

4.2. Ensuring Equality in Assignments, Appointments and Promotions in Terms of Gender

Based on the fact that there is an inequality in the ratios of men and women in promotions and assignments of important positions, the following measures are taken to develop an egalitarian approach on this aspect:

- a) The situation is determined by considering the female-male ratios and a 'Gender Equality Database' is created.
- b) Reports based on analyses from the perspective of gender equality are prepared at regular intervals on the decisions regarding assignments and promotions at the Institute.
- c) By sharing all the collected data and analysis reports related to the subject with the relevant units, goals for gender equality are determined, and situation assessment is carried out regularly in line with the determined goals.
- d) A sensitive approach based on equality and merit is shown, taking the situations for both sexes related to their parenting experiences and giving care for their members into consideration during the evaluations to extend the contracts of the academic staff.
- e) An approach is developed towards observing gender equality in assignments of important institutional duties, particularly in decision-making mechanisms.

4.3. Prevention of Sexual Harassment and/or Assault

It is obligatory to carry out studies aimed at preventing sexual harassment and/or sexual assault in accordance with the international agreements Turkey has signed, the provisions of the relevant legislation and the decision of the General Assembly of the Council of Higher Education dated 28.05.2015. These measures require the participation of institute units, staff, students, and all other stakeholders on campus.

In order to fight against sexual harassment and/or sexual assault as a form of discrimination and violence arising from gender inequality and to create a campus environment free from sexual harassment and/or sexual assault, IZTECH:

- a) takes security measures by working towards the regulation of the physical conditions of the campus in order to prevent sexual harassment and/or assault, and by providing a sufficient number of lighting units and security guards for the safety of all individuals in all indoor and outdoor areas of the campus for 24 hours,
- b) In case of sexual harassment and/or assault, it carries out an effective and fast investigation and practice developed within the framework of the relevant disciplinary legislation (Higher Education Law No. 2547 and relevant provisions of the Law No. 657 on Civil Servants).

5. EXECUTION

The Department of Strategy Development carries out the tasks and procedures regarding the collection and processing of relevant institutional data regarding gender equality principles and strategies, shares them with the Rectorate and Dean's Offices until the end of January each year.

The provisions of this document are executed by the Izmir Institute of Technology Rectorate.

This document has been prepared by the IZTECH Gender Equality Principles and Strategies Determination Commission, and has entered into force with the decision numbered 02 of the meeting of the IZTECH Senate dated 19.10.2021 and numbered 34.

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*Appendix: Definitions and Principles Regarding Sexual Harassment and Assault

DEFINITIONS AND PRINCIPLES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT

Definitions

Sexual harassment is defined as 'non-consensual, sexually explicit words, attitudes and other forms of behaviour made without body contact with the person'. Repeated acts or a single act can be considered as sexual harassment, depending on the setting and context in which the event takes place. Continuity is not a prerequisite in this regard. People of all sexual orientations and ages can be sexually harassed. Sexual harassment can take different forms. While not entirely inclusive, some forms of sexual harassment can include threats of a sexual nature, gender-based harassment, hostile media harassment, and unwanted sexual attention and intimacy. Three common forms of sexual harassment on campuses are retaliation, stalking, and promises of reward.

a) Retaliation is the making of work or education difficult for the purpose of revenge, either explicitly or implicitly, because the person refuses sexual or emotional attempts and offers or wants/goes to complain about being harassed.

b) Persistent stalking, is the act of stalking a person without his/her consent, waiting in front of his/her home, school, workplace, watching from afar or closely on the road, making inquiries to learn about his/her personal information and daily life, and using this information for harassment.

c) The promise of reward is the promise that the person will be rewarded with an award, promotion, grade, or similar gains as a result of accepting an undesired sexual or emotional behaviour or offer.

Sexual assault is defined as 'violating a person's bodily immunity by non-consensual sexual behaviour'. Sexual assault is considered as a violation of bodily immunity by exposing a person to a physical behaviour with a sexual content, such as the use of physical and/or psychological force, threat, fear, coercion, intimidation, cheating and deception.

Child sexual abuse is considered as acts of sexual assault and sexual harassment against those under the age of 18. In case the crime is committed by abusing the influence of public office or service relationship, the punishment is aggravated. The commission of the act by force or threat also aggravates the punishment.

The concept of consent is important in defining rights violations, psychological harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. The use of physical and/or psychological force, threat, fear, pressure, intimidation, cheating and deception by using title and/or position cannot be accepted as consent. Silence is not consent. Continuity of consent is essential; consent can always be withdrawn.

The emergency situation means that the applicant's life safety or rights and freedoms are threatened unless immediate action and measure are taken. It is also defined as the situation in which the possibility of loss of evidence regarding sexual harassment and assault arises.

Discrimination is defined as an arbitrary or unfair treatment based on gender and thus victimizing that person. More specifically, it means treating a person or group arbitrarily, unequally, or victimizing others with whom they are in the same or similar position because of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

The applicant is defined as the person who applied to the unit concerned with the alleged sexual harassment or assault.

The witness is defined as the person who has direct knowledge of the incident through any means and is not one of the parties to the incident that may constitute sexual harassment and/or assault.

Principles

Principle of Attentiveness: In the face of sexual harassment and/or sexual assault allegations, the Institute effectively investigates these allegations, takes necessary action against those who do not act and/or tries to cover up, prevents the victims of harassment and/or violence from being victimized a second time, and shows the necessary attention and care in understanding the situation. Especially in the application process regarding the allegations of sexual harassment and/or assault, this principle is aimed at ensuring that the victim of violence is not re-victimized and requires acting on the principle of "the applicant's statement is essential" in initiating the evaluation.

Confidentiality Policy: The Institute acts in accordance with the principle of confidentiality of the private lives of the applicant and the complainant at all stages in which allegations of sexual harassment and/or assault are handled.

The principle of Trust: The Institute abides by the principles of confidentiality and care, and acts in a way that does not harm the trust of the parties.

Principle of Urgency: The Institute ensures prompt action in the face of allegations of sexual harassment and/or sexual assault. In particular, the institute acts promptly and actively

- a) when such undesirable sexual attitudes and approaches occur between people who have an institutional hierarchy and power asymmetry,
- b) when this situation adversely affects the education, academic or administrative career, and/or employment status of the abused person,
- c) undesired sexual approaches are used as a reward or a means of retaliation or revenge,
- d) when certain sexually explicit approaches seriously disrupt the learning or working environment of the person due to their frequency or intensity, and when they create a hostile, humiliating and offensive environment.

The Applicant's Statement is Essential: The commitment way of sexual harassment and/or sexual assault acts between two people are often difficult to prove. For this reason, when starting the evaluation process regarding sexual harassment and/or sexual assault, the principle of "the applicant's statement is essential" is adopted. This principle has been introduced by considering situations such as the victim of violence not being able to make a complaint due to gender inequality and other reasons and is only related to the initiation of the evaluation process. This principle, often in the absence of clear evidence, is in question together with the principle of understanding the nature of the incident with a more holistic reasoning about the nature of the harassment, the context of the incident and the persons, and does not alone determine the outcome of the investigation.

The Principle of Support Without Judgment: It is essential to provide psychological, medical, and legal support to the complainant at every stage of the process and in line with their request by the authorities. All components of the Institute give support without judgment to people who report that they have been subjected to sexual harassment, sexual assault or sexual abuse.

Principle of Notifying Risks and Precautions: Authorities are responsible for explaining to the person making a complaint or application during the support process, the legal and other solutions they can choose, the processes followed in these ways, the risks that each of these ways may pose, and the precautions to be taken.

Awareness and Precautions Against Intentional Misrepresentations: Allegations of sexual harassment and/or sexual assault should not be used as a tool for personal reckoning. Disciplinary sanctions are applied when it is understood beyond any doubt that the complainant has deliberately lied and made false statements.

**Source: Middle East Technical University*