

Guidelines for the Integration of Sex and Gender variables in university research

1. Introduction

Sex and gender variables in research are essential, first and foremost, to meet the criteria of fairness and social justice required by a truly democratic society. In light of the persistent inequalities, both in Italy and internationally, in research and in academic careers, it is the duty of the School and its researchers to promote inclusiveness from the moment of selecting the research team through to the conclusion of the project, in order to protect and enhance both individual and group diversity.

The importance of these variables, however, goes beyond the ethical and social justice considerations mentioned above, although these remain crucial. An inclusive approach to research also contributes to improving the quality of results, as highlighted in the 2021-2027 National Research Program, and to fostering innovative and unprecedented approaches to problems. It is therefore in the direct interest of the School and its researchers to take sex and gender variables into account in all research processes.

2. Research design

2.1. Objectives

The School is committed to raising awareness to the importance of sex and gender variables in research design and to promoting possible strategies for the development of inclusive research projects. In this regard, it is essential to highlight how these variables should be considered throughout the entire research design process: from team building, to defining research objectives, and to assessing the expected impact.

2.2. Tools

In order to achieve the above objectives, the School may:

- Organize training sessions with faculty and researchers;
- Provide support in building inclusive research teams for projects;
- Train the staff of the Research and Project Reporting Unit on these topics;
- Provide support on the subject when drafting project proposals.

3. Data collection and analysis

3.1. Objectives

The School is committed to using research tools that allow for the collection and analysis of data, subject to informed consent regarding their use and in compliance with privacy regulations, on sex and gender variables. This will involve employing indicators that can guide decisions and strategies for integrating these variables into the research process and subsequently measuring their effectiveness.

3.2. Tools

The tools useful for achieving this objective may include:

- Updating the research project database to include data on the gender of research team members and Principal Investigators;
- Conducting periodic analysis of the database to identify sex and gender gaps in active projects;
- Conducting periodic analysis of the database to determinate the number of research projects that foresee, in terms of project implementation and outcomes, a positive impact with respect to these variables;
- Periodically monitoring progress achieved by comparing the data with those of previous years.