



Gender in the curriculum self-assessment and diagnostic checklist

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This document outlines some key ideas that need to be considered to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in the curriculum of research organisations with significant responsibility for teaching such as universities.

It is provided as a checklist that can allow institutional actors to self-assess the extent to which they already mainstream gender in their curriculum, but also as a result provide some possible actionable avenues where necessary.

This checklist is not meant to be a prescriptive tool, but rather aims at offering reflection points. It is a living document to be discussed with each GEP implementing institution's Task Force. Any additional ideas or concerns which should be added are welcome (please liaise with the GEARING-Roles team at Oxford Brookes University with comments).





1. Is gender a stand-alone element of the curriculum?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Yes

It is important to ensure that gender is included as a stand-alone element in the curriculum to give it visibility, legitimacy and weight. Ideally, this could be in the form of an entire module within a larger programme of study. For example, an undergraduate programme in Computer Science would include a stand-alone module on gender issues, ethics and the rise of data science.

2. Is gender a compulsory element of the curriculum?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Yes

Ensuring that gender is a compulsory part of the curriculum is crucial to ensure that it does not become sidelined as a special-interest topic. Making gender compulsory makes it clear that it is not only about looking at women's issues as a minority issue, but instead to instil the idea that gender is about thinking about, and challenging, power relations in society for the benefit of everyone (women and men).

3. Are key concepts related to sex and gender present in the curriculum?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Yes

An in-depth understanding of key concepts related to sex and gender are needed. This includes the fundamental distinction between sex as a biological marker, and gender as social construction, more or less anchored onto the concept of sex. This understanding should extend to gender as an organising principle in society, with discussion of implications for gender norms, gender roles, gender stereotypes, gender biases, gender identity, sexuality and heteronormativity. It should also feed into promoting an intersectional approach, which recognises the inherent diversity within groups, and the common unbalances of power experienced by different minoritized groups. Finally, this should include discussions of how sex and gender operate different levels (micro, meso, macro). Overall, this approach is about ensuring that empowerment remains at the core of gender mainstreaming the curriculum so that power structures are identified, challenged and dismantled.





4. Are key concepts related to human rights, fundamental rights and equality legislation present in the curriculum?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Yes

Students should be provided with learning content that addresses the legal, policy and regulatory frameworks that inform sex and gender equality. These should address key concepts related to sex and gender in relation to human rights, fundamental rights and equality legislation. These should be examined at different levels, considering for example how these operate at organisational, national, EU or international level.

5. Are teaching materials regularly reviewed to ensure the absence of stereotypes?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Yes

Teaching materials should be regularly reviewed to ensure that the images, examples or illustrations they contain are representative of the lives of both women and men. This also extends for example to readings lists or to the portrayal of key actors in the curriculum. For example, women scientists continue to remain largely absent from the curriculum. This can be addressed by presenting collective ideas rather than individual thinkers for example.

6. Does the curriculum provide alternative views and approaches besides the ‘orthodox’ approaches?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Yes

Subject areas typically rely on canonical readings, that is texts by key authors seen as being central to the historical development of the discipline. This is particularly strong in some areas such as economics or sociology for example. To gender mainstream the curriculum, it is important to provide students with alternative perspectives, and discuss how a plurality of approaches can deepen knowledge and understandings.





7. Are standpoint and/or feminist approaches and methodologies considered in the curriculum?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Yes

Ways of knowing (epistemologies) can be considered from various standpoints. From a gender lens, feminist epistemology has challenged the androcentricity of much knowledge created and taught. Adopting different standpoints can provide a richer perspective for students, and allow them to be introduced to a wider perspective on the world.

8. Are opportunities created within teaching for students to work collaboratively in diverse groups?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Yes

The way in which students work together during their learning, and how this is affected by gender relations needs to be examined. This is to ensure that the diverse experiences of students are used to add value to the learning experience for everyone. It is also to ensure that there is gender diversity in student groups/teams, and that isolation is avoided. For example, teaching staff should ensure that a student team does not comprise one woman and the rest men (and vice versa).

9. Is there gender balance in the programme delivery team?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Yes

It is important to promote a gender diverse teaching delivery team within programmes, and where possible within modules. This also means ensuring gender balance throughout the programme delivery, for example avoiding cases where students are only instructed by women or by men during the first half of their programme. This is all the more important in subject areas with high levels of gender segregation such as in the case of engineering, mathematics, nursing or early childhood education.





10. Is training available to ensure teaching staff are aware of gender-related pedagogical issues?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Yes

Making a case for why a gender perspective is important in each subject area is important, as is ensuring that teaching staff have the appropriate knowledge and skills to deliver gender mainstreamed content in their areas of expertise. Training to build up knowledge and skills, ideally on a continuous basis, can allow teaching staff to better identify examples and illustrations of where a gender lens is needed.

11. Is there an assessment mechanism to report on whether gender is included as a horizontal issue in module descriptors?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Yes

Module descriptors need to reflect the possible gender-related perspectives of the content of learning. It is important to ensure that this learning content is not gender neutral (i.e. assumes that the perspective presented is universal, which often results in an androcentric bias, such as for example in history where women's accounts are often neglected) or gender oblivious (i.e. does not see gender as a category of relevance, for example in biology with failing to report the sex of cells).

12. Are data regularly collected on gender in the curriculum for monitoring and reporting purposes?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Yes

Data on relevant aspects of mainstreaming gender in the curriculum are important to ensure that institutions are able to assess their baseline, and subsequently monitor and report on the progress made in ensuring that gender is included in the curriculum. This involves the identification of appropriate indicators, and putting into place systems to support these efforts and feed into wider institutional quality monitoring.





13. Are data regularly collected on gender in the student body for monitoring and reporting purposes?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Yes

Data collection and monitoring of the student body can show where there are gaps in provision and outcomes from a gender perspective. This can include monitoring student's enrolment, attainment and subject choices. This ensures that gender gaps are identified and where possible, remedial action taken. This exercise can provide key information of the reasons, be them individual or structural, that enable or prevent equal representation in all sectors and levels of education.

14. Is there a commitment to promoting gender in the curriculum among decision-makers in the senior management team?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Yes

Institutional efforts to mainstream gender in the curriculum need to be supported and promoted as the highest level of the organisation. This ensures that appropriate mechanisms are put into place, adequate resources provided, and gives legitimacy and importance to the efforts.

15. Is the case being made as to why mainstreaming gender in the curriculum is important?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Yes

In a context where not all teaching staff are familiar with gender as a subject area or perspective within their own subject area, it is important to ensure that they understand its importance and the necessity to embed a gender perspective in all aspects of the curriculum. This includes working on different potential benefits from adopting a gender perspective that relies on both a social justice and business case approaches. It also means illustrating the importance of adopting a gender lens through the use of a range of visual and/or interactive materials, videos or training materials.





16. Are there community actions that multiply gender knowledge in the wider society?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Yes

The promotion of gender in the curriculum can be enhanced by engaging with the wider community and particularly the student body. This can take the form of organising events and workshops that focus on gender-related topics, participating in open days and student fairs to showcase gender research activities, or running campaigns to increase the gender awareness of staff and students.

17. Are measures in place to ensure the physical, sexual and psychological integrity of both women and men in the institution?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Yes

Gender-based violence against women and girls, including harassment, continues to be an issue of concern throughout education. Institutions should be aware of the issues, take appropriate steps to prevent any forms of violence, and where necessary ensure appropriate responses. This also involves making standards of conduct explicit, i.e. the way that students are expected to behave.





What next?

Use the scores above to assess the overall score for your institution. This can be used to visually identify where possible areas of action are located.

	1	2	3	4	5
Gender as a stand-alone component					
Gender as a compulsory element					
Key concepts on sex and gender					
Key concepts on human rights, fundamental rights, equality legislation					
Regular review of teaching materials for stereotypes					
Provision of alternative views and approaches					
Provision of standpoint and/or feminist approaches					
Opportunities for students to work collaboratively in diverse groups					
Gender balance in the delivery team					
Provision of training for gender-related pedagogical issues					
Assessment mechanism on the inclusion of gender in descriptors					
Regular data collection on gender in the curriculum					
Regular data collection on gender in the student body					
Commitment of senior management team to gender in the curriculum					
Case provided for the importance of gender in the curriculum					
Availability of community actions to multiply gender knowledge					
Measures in place to ensure physical, sexual and psychological integrity					

