

Gender Equality Plan

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In the traditionally male-dominated maritime industry, the discussion of gender diversity and equality has only recently become a focal point of the maritime sector, with women taking up around 2% of the global workforce (MacNeil and Ghosh, 2017). Nevertheless, the number of women both in shore employments and onboard ships is steadfastly growing (Horck, 2010), along with a number of questions surrounding the need to open up this discussion, to increase the attractiveness of the seafaring profession to all genders, to train future seafarers to deal with issues of gender imbalance and to support seafaring women, still a small minority, to cope with ensuing mental and physical problems (Wu et al., 2017; Dragomir & Utureanu, 2018).

Antwerp Maritime Academy, the only University College in Belgium where academic degrees in Nautical Science and Marine Engineering can be obtained, is aware of its role as a key player in this debate. As a small institute, we have chosen to adopt four points to bring the debate into focus and question our own position and attitudes.

1. Dealing with gender imbalance among the student population

Even at our institute, not more than 15% of the student population currently consists of female students. To attempt to reduce this gap, we will:

- report on gender balance among our students in the Annual Report (continually).
- take care to use proper campaign images showing students of different genders in different roles during their training and during internships on board (continually).
- take care to use testimonials of female officers on board, explaining how to deal with gender issues, so that female students feel more comfortable with their choice of a seafaring career, and that male students become more aware of the difficulties faced by female cadets/officers (continually)
- having a specific and confidential contact point for reporting gender-based violence for students (continually).

Additionally, we noted that relatively few male students enroll in the STUVO course on Stress and stress resilience (around 50% of the total number of students in the course). STUVO will search for the drivers behind this difference in enrolment and propose actions based on their insights (academic years 2022-23 and 2023-24).

Responsible: Student administration, Coordinator PR and Communication, STUVO

2. Dealing with gender balances among the AMA staff

AMA Staff has a better balance between female and male staff members than the average ratio in the maritime industry (with 47 male and 28 female staff members in 2021).

Nevertheless, we wish to stay vigilant at this point, by

- reporting on gender balance among our staff in the Annual Report (continually).
- ensuring proper representation in the governing bodies of the Academy, where at most 2/3 of the members can consist of persons of the same gender (*Organiek Reglement*, articles 6 and 55) (continually).

- ensuring gender-neutral language in AMA job vacancies (continually)
- having a specific and confidential contact point for reporting gender-based violence for staff (continually).
- creating a vision text on the organization of a family-friendly work environment at AMA (end of 2023).

Responsible: Administration, Coordinator PR and Communication, WG Beleid

3. Dealing with gender balances in our budding research groups

Gender is not only an issue in the maritime sector, but also in research environments. AMA does not have a long research tradition yet, but is keen to address gender balance issues in its organizational aspects of research, by:

- adding a paragraph in its internal project application documents asking for a need to reflect on possible gender issues in research topics and research project organization (end of 2022)
- discussing the answers given in that paragraph with the applicants, to avoid that the answers remain stale and rehashed (continually).
- reporting on gender balance in the research teams in the Annual report (continually).
- creating a vision text on how to increase diversity in the AMA research teams (end of 2023).

Responsible: Commission Scientific Research

4. Strengthening the staff's awareness and capacity to debate gender issues

AMA wishes to strengthen its capacity to deal with the gender debate, by organizing a workshop on implicit biases, obligatory for staff members in a leadership role, and open for all other staff members on a voluntary basis (end of 2023).

Moreover, the reported statistics in points 1-3 will be discussed yearly in the Commissions for Operational Management (Werkgroep Beleid), Education and Educational Innovation (COO) and Scientific Research (CWO) (continually).

Responsible: Werkgroep Beleid, Commission Scientific Research, Commission Education and Educational Innovation

Scientific literature

Horck, J. (2010). The gender perspective in maritime education and training. *WMU Journal of Maritime Affairs*, 9(1), 93-119.

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Dragomir, C., & Utureanu S.L.. (2018). Gender in maritime transport—a scientific literature overview. *Ovidius Univ Ann, Econ Sci Ser*, 18(1), 158-163.

Wu, C. L., Chen, S. Y., Ye, K. D., & Ho, Y. W. (2017). Career development for women in maritime industry: organisation and socialisation perspectives. *Maritime Policy & Management*, 44(7), 882-898.