



KTH SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE – GENDER EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

This policy applies: 2021-2023

Background

The KTH School of Architecture's Gender Equality and Diversity Policy reflects the requirements set out in the Higher Education Act, as well as the overall policy framework of the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), the goals of "A Gender Equal KTH" and the strategies contained in the "Plan for Gender Mainstreaming of KTH-JIKTH". The School of Architecture's work with gender equality and diversity follows these policies and is part of the ongoing development of the institution. It also aligns with the mission of KTH's Equality Office, which seeks to establish an inclusive educational environment across all programs at KTH.

Gender equality and inclusivity are central to the values of our institution: the KTH School of Architecture operates in an inclusive manner by guaranteeing all students and staff equal opportunities. Diverse perspectives make our educational programs and work environment richer.

All staff and all students are to be offered equal opportunities to work and study, regardless of their gender expression or identity, cultural background, or functional variation. Equal conditions are of great importance to the quality of the education offered by our School and the workplace environment it provides for its employees. All students and staff are expected to work to ensure that the educational and work environments are free of discrimination. This policy is intended to provide concrete support for teachers and staff in their daily work

How do we work with gender equality?

Ensuring equality of opportunity to people of all gender identities and expressions is a priority in the institutional development of the School of Architecture. This policy highlights two important areas for action in working towards this goal. Firstly, quantitative improvements are necessary in relation to ensuring that an adequate degree of diversity is present in the gender identities and expressions of our staff and student bodies and in the School's research and education activities. Secondly, qualitative improvements are necessary to address the basic structures and values that cause gender-based discrimination within the School and its education. "Role models" is a keyword that weaves both of these areas of action together. We must strive to show examples of the work of architects and thinkers of diverse gender identities and expressions; where a diversity of gender identities are not possible to show or reference, we must always be able to explain why – for instance, by putting buildings and places in a historical and legislative contexts and explaining the norms of the era in which they were created.

How do we bring the School of Architecture's gender equality and diversity policy to life in our work?

Our Gender Equality and Diversity Policy applies to management and decision-making activities, and to all students and all employees. The policy also acts as a foundation for the expectations and demands that we place on guest lecturers, guest critics, and consultants and other people who meet our students.

We encourage staff to further their education in matters of gender, gender equality and inclusion, by utilising the pedagogical tools provided by KTH Equality Office and taking part in higher education pedagogical course offerings. We will highlight and develop the School of Architecture's tradition and history of working with gender equality in the education that it offers, the feminist commitments of its researchers and in international networking activities.

To ensure that we have the tools to be able to implement this policy, staff with managerial positions must participate in training in gender-conscious leadership. The School will also be represented in the JMLA group of the School of Architecture and the Built Environment (ABE), which engages continuously with educational efforts and provides opportunities for reflection on the daily running of the School.

Important terms

Diversity – For us, "diversity" means that all admitted students have the same right to participate in their education, regardless of their gender identity or expression. It also means that we, whether we are staff or students, respect and affirm each other's differences. Discrimination and racism must not occur in any form.

Gender equality – For us, "gender equality" means that all staff and students are given the same opportunities, and have the same obligations and rights, regardless of their gender identity or expression.

Discrimination - We understand "discrimination" in the terms set out in the Discrimination Act; discrimination occurs when a person is disadvantaged or treated either directly or indirectly.

References - References are important to us because they say something about who has created places and buildings in the past and who can create places and buildings in the future. We work actively to broaden our references.

Our focus areas for ongoing work

1. **Unconscious bias** – Our goal is to highlight those unconscious biases that exist within the field of architecture and in our own culture at the School. In order to bring these to the fore, we need to ask ourselves questions such as: How do unconscious biases affect our workplace and us as employees? How do they affect us as an educational institution, our staff and students? How do we reveal norms and unconscious biases so that we can make more considered, conscious choices?

2. **Gender-diverse references** – Our goal is to achieve diverse gender representation in our references and exemplars, both in the content of study courses and in participation in teaching. In order to achieve gender diversity, we need to ask ourselves questions such as: Which references do we display? Whose work imparts high status? How do we choose exemplars and compile course lists? How do we relate to literature from earlier eras that is not gender-diverse? How do we relate to societies and cultures from a historical perspective? How do we ensure that the tracks we leave behind us as educators are appropriate in terms of our goal of gender-diverse references?

3. **Diversity of perspectives** - The goal is to allow for a variety of perspectives and to encourage a pluralistic approach to the definition of architecture and its significance in different contexts and situations. Diversity work encompasses the various grounds of discrimination; age, ethnicity, religion and other beliefs, gender identity and gender expression, sexual orientation and disability. This is achieved through actions and explicit examples in our teaching, as well as by promoting and encouraging different interpretations. In order to move in this direction, we should ask ourselves the following questions: Do we evaluate projects with aesthetic expressions outside a Eurocentric norm differently? Does a student's background affect our understanding or evaluation of their work? How do we develop pedagogical practices that allow for different approaches and interpretations?

Our Five-Point Gender Equality Checklist

Gender equality does not pose a threat to quality in our chosen field; it is about improving quality through greater choice. Everyone who is in any way active at the School of Architecture should pay attention to who they choose to refer to at any given point in time.

1. Think about who, or what, you display as a reference, and why. Consider what or who the image/lecture/critique omits and why. Always examine the completed text/lecture/presentation/image/task formulation/appointment with a gender-diverse and inclusive gaze. What perspective do you have on the issue at hand? Do you need to make any changes in order to create gender equality and diversity?

2. Travel outside of your normal network to ensure gender diversity among participants on discussion panels and juries, at seminars, conferences and reviews.

all gender identities and expressions. Avoid segues such as “and now, we come to a female architect”. Instead, move on naturally with no particular emphasis.

4. Name or cite women, men, trans, non-binary and agender people in the same way, always initially using both first and last name and subsequently either both names or first name only. Remove superfluous value words or gender-specific expressions.

5. Consider how you converse with or ask questions of students. Always maintain a positive tone that shows respect for every student as an individual. Is there a risk that the person you are speaking to may perceive your actions as exclusionary? If so, consider whether there is something you can change about your interaction.

Checklist - Five points on gender diversity

Diversity promotes quality in the subject and in our work as an institution. By “diversity”, we mean openness to diverse perspectives and approaches. Everyone who is active at the School of Architecture should think about how they treat those with a different background than our own.

- 1. Think about what you are referring to and what you are highlighting.** Teacher and students build a culture together through the examples we highlight tutorials, reviews and lectures. What do we include and what are we excluding?
- 2. Remember that it is possible to read a situation in many different ways.** Work actively with including diverse perspectives and approaches to illuminate an issue. Provide space for many voices to be allowed to take place and be heard.
- 3. Always strive for an inclusive environment.** Be open to other perspectives. Diversity enriches the study environment and the workplace.
- 4. Tell us if you experience discrimination in any form.** Discrimination is not tolerated in any form at the School of Architecture.
- 5. Just because something is not visible does not mean that it does not exist.** Be open to the idea that there are different ways to experience a situation and try to create a climate where everyone feels comfortable to say what they think and feel.