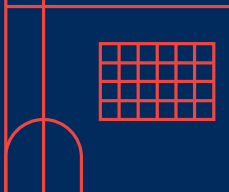


**Catalogue of good practices
for counteracting
undesirable behaviours
at the University of Gdańsk**

Edition 2026



**University
of Gdańsk**

Catalogue of good practices for counteracting undesirable behaviours at the University of Gdańsk

The UG Office of the Ombudsperson
for Equal Treatment and Counteracting Mobbing

The UG Equality and Inclusion Coordinator

Edition 2026

Table of contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Undesirable Practices – Definitions and Selected Examples	4
3. Procedures for protection against undesirable practices, differentiated by staff, doctoral candidates, and students	5
4. Actions aimed at preventing undesirable practices	6
4.1. Education and prevention	7
4.2. Information campaigns on rights and reporting options for undesirable behaviours	8
4.3. Monitoring the atmosphere	10
4.4. Support in difficult situations	11
4.5. Emphasising the key role of management in counteracting undesirable practices	12
4.6. Preventing conflicts and building healthy relationships in the academic environment	12
4.7. Building a culture of communication, respect, and transparency	13
5. Whistleblowing Procedure	14
6. Investigation procedure – stages	15
7. Protection of mental and physical well-being	16
8. Conclusions	17
9. Important Documents at the University of Gdańsk	17
10. Key Contacts at the University of Gdańsk	18
11. Equality Initiatives at the University of Gdańsk	19

1. Introduction



This document constitutes an extended catalogue of good practices aimed at preventing undesirable behaviours in the workplace and academic environment, such as mobbing, discrimination, inappropriate communication, interpersonal conflicts, and ethical violations, developed and implemented at the University of Gdańsk. It supports the implementation of the European Commission's policy on equality, diversity, and inclusion in academic life.

The University of Gdańsk has been implementing a gender equality policy since the 2019/2020 academic year. In December 2019, by order of the Rector of the University of Gdańsk, the Committee for the Implementation of the University's Social Responsibility Policy was established.


In 2022–2023, the first **Gender Equality Plan** was implemented, for which the University of Gdańsk received the European Commission's **EU Award for Gender Equality Champion** in 2024 (second edition). The award has been granted in three editions to date, and the University of Gdańsk is the only Polish institution to have received it.

The University was also nominated twice (in 2024 and 2025) for the "Równowaga" Award, organised by the Kulczyk Foundation, the Congress of Women, and the Lewiatan Confederation, as an institution implementing equality policies and mechanisms.





A key strategic document defining the University's policy on preventing undesirable practices is the **Gender Equality Plan 2024–2028**. It constitutes one of the instruments for implementing the **Strategy of the University of Gdańsk for 2025–2030**, which assumes not only the development but, above all, the implementation of a model of social inclusion, fostering a sense of safety, the prevention of discrimination and social inequality, as well as other elements of sustainable development policy (p. 3.3 of the UG Strategy). These include, among others, the implementation and monitoring of anti-discrimination policies, fostering an academic community based on a culture of equality in research, and the development and implementation of a coherent system for monitoring gender equality policy.



At the University of Gdańsk, procedures aimed at counteracting undesirable practices in the workplace are implemented by various organisational units; however, their coordination should ultimately be centralised within the **Office of the Ombudsperson for Equal Treatment and Counteracting Mobbing**. To this end, as of 1 April 2026, the position of Equality and Inclusion Coordinator has been established within the Office.

2. Undesirable Practices – Definitions and Selected Examples

Undesirable practices at the University are manifested primarily in behaviours such as:

- **mobbing** – prolonged and persistent harassment of an employee, directly regulated under Article 94³

of the Act of 26 June 1974 – the Labour Code (consolidated text: Journal of Laws of 2025, item 277, as amended);

- **discrimination** – unequal treatment based on a protected characteristic, regulated by legal provisions: Articles 183a–183e of the Labour Code (Chapter IIa: Equal Treatment in Employment) and the Act of 3 December 2010 on the implementation of certain European Union provisions on equal treatment (consolidated text: Journal of Laws of 2025, item 1452). Discrimination may take the form of direct or indirect discrimination, harassment, or sexual harassment;
- **microaggressions** – subtle, often unconscious behaviours that cause harm to another person;
- **inappropriate communication** – shouting, threats, intimidation, ridicule;
- **abuse of position** – the misuse of authority or influence to coerce or intimidate.

3. Procedures for protection against undesirable practices, differentiated by staff, doctoral candidates, and students

Protection against undesirable practices is carried out under separate procedures for employees and for students/doctoral candidates.

Employees and persons employed under an employment contract are subject to procedures regulated by Order No. 16/R/21 of the Rector of the University of Gdańsk of



2 February 2021 on the **Policy for Counteracting Mobbing and Discrimination at the University of Gdańsk**.

Students and doctoral candidates are subject to procedures regulated by Order No. 189/R/21 of the Rector of the University of Gdańsk of 30 December 2021 on the **Policy for Counteracting Discrimination of Students and Doctoral Candidates at the University of Gdańsk**.



Academic teachers are also obliged to comply with the principles set out in the **Code of Ethics for Academic Teachers of the University of Gdańsk** (Resolution of the Senate of the University of Gdańsk No. 40/07 of 28 June 2007, consolidated text of 27 July 2020).

4. Actions aimed at preventing undesirable practices

In the area of preventing and counteracting undesirable practices, the University commits to implementing actions in the following areas:


- 1) Education and prevention;
- 2) Information campaigns on the rights of employees, doctoral candidates, and students, as well as on the procedures for submitting reports;
- 3) Monitoring the atmosphere within the academic environment;
- 4) Support in difficult situations;
- 5) Emphasising the role of management staff in counteracting undesirable practices;

- 6) Preventing conflicts and fostering healthy relationships within the academic community;
- 7) Building a culture of communication, respect, and transparency.

4.1. Education and prevention

The Office of the Ombudsperson for Equal Treatment and Counteracting Mobbing, together with the Office for Persons with Disabilities, provide regular anti-mobbing and anti-discrimination training, developed and delivered online or in-person:

- Online training sessions prepared within the Horizon 2020 project **MINDtheGEPs**, in cooperation with the AGH University of Science and Technology in Kraków:
 - *Discrimination and Sexual Harassment at the University – Response and Prevention;*
 - *Diversity Management in the Academic Environment;*
 - *Equal Treatment in Recruitment and Career Development Processes;*
 - *Diversity Management in Research Projects;*
- Training sessions commissioned by the *Office of the Ombudsperson for Equal Treatment and Counteracting Mobbing* by the authorities of specific organisational units at the University of Gdańsk, focusing on issues particular to each unit;
- Implementation of a mentoring program that incorporates a gender and inequality perspective in the academic environment for academic and administrative staff, provided by the University of Gdańsk's Centre for Teaching Excellence and Tutoring.

- 
- Implementation of a mandatory course: *Diversity in Intercultural Interactions in Collaboration and Research* for all Doctoral Schools. The course will be delivered in modules during the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd years of the four-year doctoral program, in both online and in-person formats (**UG Senate Resolution No. 4/25 of 23 January 2025 on the establishment of doctoral school curricula at the University of Gdańsk from the 2025/2026 academic year**). The program will include training sessions outlined in the **Gender Equality Plan 2024–2028**;

4.2. Information campaigns on rights and reporting options for undesirable behaviours

To raise awareness within the academic community about rights, principles of equal treatment, and options for reporting undesirable behaviours, the University implements the following informational and educational measures:

- Annual report from the *Office of the Ombudsperson for Equal Treatment and Counteracting Mobbing*, submitted to the University of Gdańsk Senate and made available on the UG website, including an updated catalogue of undesirable behaviours and a list of actions taken;
- Provision of informational materials for staff, including:
 - Development by the *Office of the Ombudsperson for Equal Treatment and Counteracting Mobbing* of good practices in employee evaluation;

- guidelines entitled 'How to Deal with a Student in Crisis' developed by the *Academic Psychological Support Centre* have been drawn up;
- Anti-discrimination measures aimed at achieving gender pay equity, including:
 - in pay regulations related to increased Ministry of Education and Science funding;
 - in promotions to higher positions;
 - in new hires.
- Annual **Rector's Joanna Schopenhauer Award** for female academic teachers who have achieved the title of professor and incorporate a gender perspective in their research (the 2nd edition of the award was held in 2025);
- Organization of an annual *Equality Day* at the University of Gdańsk – a conference dedicated to gender equality and the inclusion of gender perspectives in research. Ultimately, this will become an annual conference promoting equality and inclusivity at UG and highlighting work awarded the **Rector's Special Prize "I Include Gender in Research"**. The prize is awarded for the best master's, doctoral, and habilitation theses in the humanities, social sciences, and natural and exact sciences (a total of six prizes are awarded annually; the 4th edition took place in 2025);
- Introduction of the "No Women, No Panel" principle to ensure equal representation of women in organising and participating in scientific events at UG – currently in the implementation phase;

- Adoption of a document defining inclusive communication within UG and across the SEA-EU alliance: **The SEA-EU Inclusive Communication Charter**;
- Enabling the use of feminatives at the University of Gdańsk.

4.3. Monitoring the atmosphere

Monitoring the atmosphere within the academic environment of the University of Gdańsk is carried out through a set of diagnostic and evaluative actions, including surveys of the academic community, analysis of equality indicators, and regular consultation meetings. In particular, this includes:

- Periodic anonymous surveys assessing organisational climate among employees, doctoral candidates, and students;
- During the implementation phase: surveys of the student and doctoral community regarding perceptions of equality and inclusivity at UG – as part of **the Gender Equality Plan**;
- Meetings with employees conducted by specialists external to UG;
- Meetings between the Ombudspersons for Equal Treatment and Counteracting Mobbing and representatives of the doctoral and student governments;
- Participation of the Ombudspersons in committees evaluating staff performance within individual faculties;

- Monitoring equality indicators for women and men, including collection and analysis of HR, financial, and demographic data;
- Monitoring the equality index – the UG Rector's Plenipotentiary for Gender Equality Monitoring prepares biennial reports comparing survey results across years;
- Monitoring perceptions of inclusivity and equality at the University of Gdańsk through regular surveys within SEA-EU, an alliance of nine European coastal universities that creates a shared space for the development of education, research, skills enhancement, and cross-border collaboration.

4.4. Support in difficult situations

The University of Gdańsk provides support to all employees, doctoral candidates, and students, particularly those affected by undesirable behaviours from other employees, doctoral candidates, or students. Such support includes, among other measures:

- Access to consultations with a psychologist (through the Office of the Ombudsperson for Equal Treatment and Counteracting Mobbing, the **University Psychological Support Centre**, or the **Office for Persons with Disabilities**) or with an HR specialist;
- Mediation or negotiation support at the first signs of conflict;
- Application of the dispute de-escalation procedure developed by the Office of the Ombudsperson for Equal Treatment and Counteracting Mobbing.



4.5. Emphasising the key role of management in counteracting undesirable practices

During the implementation of procedures aimed at preventing undesirable practices in the workplace, management staff are required to participate in:

- Team management training for heads of academic units;
- Training for new leaders of research and scientific projects;
- Team management training for doctoral candidates.

4.6. Preventing conflicts and building healthy relationships in the academic environment

The following actions support this goal:

- Prompt response to sources of tension, for which the following are responsible: heads of organisational units at UG (deans), HR department, University Psychological Support Centre, and the Office of the Ombudsperson for Equal Treatment and Counteracting Mobbing;
- Establishment of internal mediation pathways (the Deputy Ombudsperson for Equal Treatment and Counteracting Mobbing – a licensed mediator with substantial practical experience; in urgent cases, experienced staff from the Institute of Psychology act as mediators in disputes);
- Encouraging employees to engage in conversations that respect both facts and emotions;
- Availability of external mediators;
- Clear rules for providing feedback.

4.7. Building a culture of communication, respect, and transparency

- Regular team meetings with opportunities to ask questions.
- Clear presentation of organisational decisions and structural changes.
- Use of neutral, non-violent language.
- Informing employees about options for reporting problems.
- Establishing communication standards, including:
 - Appointment of the UG Rector's Representative for the introduction of feminatives into the UG Statute (November 2024) (see **Rector's Announcement of 25 November 2024 on enabling the use of feminatives at the University of Gdańsk**);
 - Adoption, across the entire SEA-EU alliance, of a document defining inclusive communication (see **Rector's Announcement of 24 March 2025 regarding the Inclusivity Policy, allowing UG students and doctoral candidates to use alternative first or last names and access accommodations based on their justified individual needs during their studies at the University of Gdańsk**).



5. Whistleblowing Procedure

Everyone has the right and the responsibility to report any behavior that violates organisational standards. Reports may concern mobbing, discrimination, abuses, conflicts, breaches of safety rules, or other irregularities.

Available reporting channels:

1) Direct reporting:

- immediate supervisor;
- HR department.

2) External reporting:

- To supervisory authorities, if internal channels do not ensure safety (see UG reporting procedures: **Order No. 16/R/21 of the Rector of the University of Gdańsk on the Policy for Counteracting Mobbing and Discrimination of 2 February 2021**, and **Order No. 189/R/21 of the Rector of the University of Gdańsk on the Policy for Counteracting Discrimination of Students and Doctoral Candidates of 30 December 2021**);
- Full confidentiality of the reporter's identity;
- Prohibition of retaliation (anti-retaliation measures);
- Informing the reporter about the progress of the case.

6. Investigation procedure – stages

The manner of conducting an investigation is regulated in the University of Gdańsk's internal documents: Order No. 16/R/21 of the Rector of the University of Gdańsk on the **Policy for Counteracting Mobbing and Discrimination** of 2 February 2021, and Order No. 189/R/21 of the Rector of the University of Gdańsk on the **Policy for Counteracting Discrimination of Students and Doctoral Candidates** of 30 December 2021.



The investigation procedure includes the following stages:

1) Receipt of the report:

- Confirmation of receipt;
- Ensuring anonymity if needed.

2) Assessment of validity:

- Analysis of the information collected;
- Conversations with the parties involved (with respect for their safety).

3) Remedial actions:

- Mediation;
- Adjustment of duties;
- Change of workplace location;
- Corrective or disciplinary measures against the perpetrator;
- Provision of psychological support.

4) Final report submitted to the Rector:

- Summary of findings;
- organisational recommendations;
- Preventive/remedial measures for the future.

7. Protection of mental and physical well-being

The promotion and implementation of work–life balance at the University of Gdańsk is supported by measures including:



- **Promotional and informational campaigns** encouraging men to take parental leave;
- **UGrants Acceleratio**, designed to support University of Gdańsk academic staff in initiating and conducting research after returning from extended parental or medical leave;
- Organization of university events celebrating leisure time for family and loved ones, highlighting its importance for staff well-being (e.g., *Fahrenheit Science Picnic*, *UG May Day*);
- Creation of family rooms for parents of young children in various UG units – at the International Centre for Cancer Vaccine Science (2022) and at the Intercollegiate Faculty of Biotechnology (2024);
- Development of recreational spaces on the UG Campus, such as relaxation areas in faculties, playgrounds, outdoor gyms, community gardens, and “0 stress zones” in faculties;
- Stress management training;
- Ergonomic workstations;
- Access to psychological consultations through the Office of the Ombudsperson for Equal Treatment and Counteracting Mobbing and the University Psychological Support Centre;

- Promotion of a culture of mutual support and openness, including debates and conferences held at least annually.

8. Conclusions

The introduction of transparent procedures for reporting undesirable behaviours, along with a catalogue of good practices, strengthens the organisational culture of the University of Gdańsk, based on respect, transparency, and safety. A university that responds to such phenomena builds trust and long-term engagement among all members of the academic community. However, only the effective implementation of the strategies established in this area can allow the university to be recognised as a friendly and safe place to work and study. For this reason, the UG Office of the Ombudsperson for Equal Treatment and Counteracting Mobbing and the UG Equality and Inclusion Coordinator recommend systematically developing additional methods for safe, anonymous reporting, for example by creating and implementing an online reporting form or introducing a physical reporting box in the workplace.

9. Important Documents at the University of Gdańsk

University of Gdańsk Strategy for the years 2025-2030

The Gender Equality Plan for the University of Gdańsk for the years 2024–2028

The Code of Ethics of Academic Teachers of the University of Gdańsk

The Policy for Counteracting Discrimination of Students and Doctoral Candidates at the University of Gdańsk [PL]

The Policy for Counteracting Mobbing and Discrimination at the University of Gdańsk [PL]

How to deal with a student in crisis [PL]

Rector's Announcement of 25 November 2024 on enabling the use of feminatives at the University of Gdańsk [PL]

Rector's Announcement of 24 March 2025 regarding the Inclusivity Policy

The SEA-EU Inclusive Communication Charter

UG Senate Resolution No. 4/25 of 23 January 2025 on the establishment of a mandatory course : Diversity in Intercultural Interactions in Collaboration and Research in all doctoral schools curricula at the University of Gdańsk from the 2025/2026 academic year [PL]

10.Key Contacts at the University of Gdańsk

Academic Psychological Support Centre

UG Office of the Ombudsperson for Equal Treatment and Counteracting Mobbing

Office for Persons with Disabilities

Centre for Doctoral and Student Activities

11. Equality Initiatives at the University of Gdańsk

Promotional and informational campaign on parental leave

UGrants Acceleratio – program supporting UG researchers
returning from long term parental or medical leave

Joanna Schopenhauer Rector's Award for female professors

I include gender in research – Rector's special award

Women in science – webpage

The following people participated
in the preparation of this document:

Magdalena Błażek
Marta Dziedzic
Natasza Kossakowska-Berezecka
Joanna Kruczalak-Jankowska
Beata Możejko
Ewa Łojkowska
Maciej Nyka
Barbara Pawłowska
Magdalena Żadkowska

English translation:

Marta Dziedzic

Proofreading:

Marta Wass

Editing:

Joanna Kamień

Graphic design:

Kaja Mucha-Król

Layout:

Łukasz Gwizdała