



# Inserm



La science pour la santé  
From science to health

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## Plan for Professional Equality between Women and Men at Inserm January 2021-December 2023

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In France, higher education and research are still plagued by an imbalance between women and men in numbers similar to those observed at the European level.

Inserm is no exception to our society's gendered structure, and though biology and the health field in general is one of the most attractive to women and our population is predominantly female, the ratio of women decreases as you move up through the hierarchy.

This situation can be explained by a number of factors described in scientific literature, such as the persistence of stereotypes and prejudices, the reduced visibility given to women's work in the sciences, which results in less recognition, the "boys club" of male networks that favor career opportunities, and the more complex work/life balance for mothers.

In its Strategic plan, Inserm emphasized its determination to pursue a policy in favor of professional and gender equality, to strengthen its international attractiveness, as well as its ambitions in terms of scientific performance.

The obligations set out in legislative and regulatory texts, as well as published recommendations (the Dussot law of August 6, 2019, the agreement on professional equality in the civil service of November 30, 2018, the MESRI reference framework) have been taken into account and have guided this reflection.

In line with international recommendations (UN, European Commission) on gender equality, if we are to move from declarations of intent to a significant change in the situation, there must be massive involvement and commitment on the part of the entire management team.

Inserm, because of its aspirations in terms of scientific performance and in the face of international rivalry, must be able to appreciate the full potential of its staff, and can no longer ignore the existence, demonstrated in numerous publications, of biases that are often unconscious and which interfere with the practice of equal opportunity in recruitment, assessment, detection and evaluation. This phenomenon must be acknowledged by everyone and actively addressed.

In order for everyone to be able to develop their professional capacities to the fullest, we must provide modern and optimized working conditions and structures that allow for a balance between different life stages and a management system that is suited to the contingencies and transitions between personal and professional life.

Finally, studies on sexism and the struggle against sexist and sexual violence all show the continued existence of comments and behaviors in the workplace that were tolerated by some in the past, but which are no longer acceptable today, whether it be so-called "ordinary" sexism or harassment. The clear display of the will to prevent and put an end to any inappropriate action likely to deteriorate the health conditions at work of the victims within its entities is a requisite condition for advancing gender equality and professional equality at Inserm.

Inserm's Directorate General has been monitoring these issues for several years, which has led to an increased awareness of them. This, however, is still insufficient, as can be seen from the gender data in the Institute's social report and key figures for achieving professional equality.

It is thus essential to adopt a series of measures intended to: launch a collective and engaging action (I), create the conditions for equal access to responsibilities and promotions (II), improve the articulation between different life stages and better support parenthood (III), and also fight against sexism and sexual violence (IV).

The principles for implementing these proposals are as follows:

All of the initiatives proposed in this plan are designed to promote gender equality. Most of them can also be used to fight against other forms of discrimination (racism, antisemitism, anti-LGBTQ+, etc.). They are all to be implemented in the short term, before the end of 2023 at the latest.

Communication, awareness, and training will be given priority in order to make the proposals and results more widely known.

These proposals are the result of extensive consultation and analysis of internal data, and may be supplemented and improved through feedback.

A systemic approach has been chosen: Equality and the implementation of these proposals is everyone's responsibility, each in their own role and daily actions, through an analysis of our processes and practices with regard to gender equality.

An operational decentralization of the measures is planned, in consultation with the *Parité Egalité Professionnelle* (PEP, i.e. Professional Gender Equality) mission, at the level of the Regional Offices, to ensure effective coordination with the measures of our site partners, as well as our functional departments for specific areas: communication, training, etc.

### **I-Launch a collective and operational institutional action**

*The success of our proposals requires us to adapt our organization to ensure that our gender equality policy is widely communicated and that all managers are held responsible for its implementation, thereby strengthening their involvement. The plan will be monitored closely to sustain motivation and will be reinforced by a multi-media communication campaign to reach a broad audience.*

- a) Establish a Professional Gender Equality network that will influence the entire community

Create a unit within each structure, each department, that is made up of people with diverse backgrounds, with an assignment... the role of these units will be to share our campaigns, propose actions, lead discussions, and monitor the structure's progress in terms of gender equality. They will be led by the Regional Offices with the support of the PEP mission.

*Actors: Regional Offices, research structures, departments*  
*Follow-up: monitoring by Regional Offices and Headquarter Administration of the number of units created/number of entities (an entity: a department, research structure, Unit, Theme-Based Institute, etc.)*  
*Objective: 2021: 10%; end of 2022: 30%; end of 2023: 60%*

- b) Ensure that implementation is inclusive and personally engaging

Send out and have each entity manager sign a letter of commitment to Inserm's gender equality and professional equality policy, personalized and adapted to their role, which contains both cross-functional and specific provisions. This letter will be able to be shared.

*Actors: Directorate General/Regional Offices, PEP mission*  
*Follow-up: monitoring by Regional Offices and Headquarter Administration of the number of letters signed vs. number of letters sent*  
*Objective: 2021: Directorate General, Regional Offices and Theme-Based Institutes: 80%, 2022: 100% and for managers of research structures, 30%; and 2023: 60%, then 80%*

c) Organize active follow-up

With a committee made up of the Directorate General, PEP mission, representatives from the Regional Offices and Departments, and representatives from the research structures, which meets every six months. Also plan to have an annual review by the Management Committee and the Technical Committee. Integrate gender into all tools and studies, to be able to observe our progress and improve the measures taken as needed.

*Actors: Directorate General, PEP mission*

d) Widely publicize our policy in favor of gender equality:

Whenever appropriate, share our policy, plan, and first initiatives. Include a reminder about our commitment to gender equality and Professional Equality in our documents and on the Inserm website, and integrate the appropriate provisions in the gender equality conventions, internal regulations.

*Actors: Directorate General, Scientific Information and Communication, National and Foreign Affairs, Legal Affairs, PEP mission*

**II-Create the conditions for equal access to responsibilities and career development**

*Potential gender biases in evaluation, identification, and promotion are part of the general context of our social system and constitute a complex and pervasive issue.*

*In order to ensure that everyone at Inserm can have a career and earn recognition on the sole basis of their professional qualities and activities, we must collectively be able to understand and master this notion of gender bias, to ensure equal opportunities at key moments, to broaden our detection methods, and to recognize and reward career paths at their true value.*

a) Acculturate the Inserm community to the concepts of gender and discrimination

Implement communication that is free of bias and stereotypes. Comply with the circular of 21 November 2017 and the guide published by the French *Haut Conseil à l'Égalité* [High Council for Equality]. Use appropriate vocabulary when speaking with individuals.

Circulate scientific studies on the subject, and make Inserm's figures and resources available on the intranet.

Develop a basic digital training module to raise awareness about the concept of gender and the fight against discrimination, sexism, and violence. Ask all entity heads and managers to take it.

*Actors: HR director, Regional Offices*

*Follow-up: monitoring of the number of people trained/number of invitation letters sent by the training department*

*Objective: 2022: 30% ; 2023: 60%, then moving toward 100%*

b) Promoting equal opportunity

Design new training courses tailored to committee, board, and jury members to raise awareness of stereotypes and unconscious biases that must be avoided. Until these courses are available, plan to view existing videos. Write a guide that summarizes best practices.

Make sure that part-timer staff have equal access to career advancement.

Include these concepts in existing management and evaluation training.

Expand the possibility of being interviewed by videoconference.

Create the role of "Guarantor" in all meetings where decisions are made about individuals, or where there is an effect on careers: allocation of resources, bonuses, recruitment, promotion, etc. The Guarantor tracks statistics throughout the process (eligible population vs. beneficiaries) and ensure that the principles of equal opportunity are followed. (By extension of the Circular of June 18, 2020)

*Actors: HR director*

*Follow-up: produce an annual chart of the populations of agents eligible for promotion/promoted for all promotions, all levels, with gender data*

*Objective: to detect gaps and analyze them with regard to the criteria used*

c) Increase the visibility and reputation of Inserm's women

Review our media, documents and websites from 2021 onwards to ensure that our female researchers are fairly represented.

Ask the History Committee to ensure there is no "Matilda effect" (omission of women's contributions) and correct attributions if needed.

Ensure female Inserm experts are promoted in the media, community, and at the national and regional level.

Institute the general principle of gender equality in appointments: of members and presidents of committees, juries, and Inserm representatives.

And refuse all financial and institutional support by Inserm to events or conferences whose programming is clearly unbalanced.

*Actors: Directorate General, Scientific Information and Communication, Regional Offices, Theme-Based Institutes, research structures*

*Follow-up: 2021 distribution of conference recommendations and appointments*

d) Diversify candidate pool for positions with high responsibility

Establish conditions that encourage diversity within the candidate pool:

Remind the decision-making bodies, partners, and managers, during site meetings for example, of the general recommendation to avoid combining management positions with other important responsibilities if possible, and of renewing the mandate of the head of the structure more than once (maximum 10 years). Inserm recommends a rotation of positions of responsibility.

For each site, set up a review of potential female candidates at the mid-term point (at the latest) with the co-supervisors and partners, in order to stimulate vocations and to increase the number of women in charge of a structure, team, platform, etc. in the short or medium term.

This review, prior to the constitution and presentation of projects, aims to identify possible future female candidates, whatever their status, from a pool of candidates created by employers.

Mobilize the regional delegates and the executive policy mission to ensure a follow-up suited to the profile of the persons detected.

Offer prospective candidates personalized support, with priority given to strategic training: media training, management, High Potential program, etc.

*Actors: Directorate General, Regional Offices, Program Assessment and Follow-up, Theme-Based Institutes, with site co-supervisors*

e) Ensure the compensation policy is fair and equitable

Analyze the criteria for awarding bonuses from a gender perspective and draw the consequences in the Management Guidelines.

Increase vigilance in recruiting for strategic positions that are eligible for salary supplements, as well as in making positions with a strong gender imbalance (category B, Information System, etc.) more attractive. Monitor this point.

Offer an HR interview for any new request for part-time work (more than 90% of part-time work is done by women) in order to discuss all relevant information with the employee, particularly with regard to remuneration and additional contributions.

Create a group of experts to identify and analyze in detail the weight of the factors that lead to pay gaps at Inserm, as noted in the social report, based on the DGAFP tool. Produce an annual study on the changes in the pay gap. Integrate the lessons learned into the Management Guidelines.

*Actors: Directorate General, HR director*

*Follow-up: annual table that analyzes the attribution of bonuses and allowances by gender*

*Schedule: first analyses published in 2022*

### **III-Improve the articulation between different life stages and better support parenthood**

*Finding a balance between private and professional life contributes to good working conditions. Expectations in terms of social innovation concern all Inserm staff, whatever their family situation or position.*

*With this in mind, we shall strive to seize every opportunity to continue to develop a modern and pragmatic approach to work organization, and to provide more appropriate support during periods of transition.*

a) Improving our work organization

Communicate best practices in work organization, taking into account the goal of work-life balance and ensuring, through comparative monitoring, that the arrangements do not reinforce inequalities by means of evaluation and assessment.

Take advantage of the possibilities offered by telecommuting and remote work.

Develop and encourage modern ways to give as many people as possible access to information and to develop their skills: video capture, e-learning.

b) Improving the management of long periods of leave\* (family or medical reasons, etc.)

Require a meeting with management prior to departure, except in the case of an unforeseen absence, and upon return, in order to agree on the terms of the leave and to ensure a smooth re-entry.

Support managers by providing recommendations (training, guides).

Communicate about donating days off.

Initiate a multi-departmental discussion (Financial Affairs, Human Resources, scientists) in order to reduce the impact of long leave on research contracts.

*(\*Long leave: more than 30 consecutive days, other than annual leave, time saving accounts and working time reduction days)*

c) Supporting parents

Provide special support for single-parent families.

Recognize all forms of parenthood.

Ensure that there are suitable spaces to allow new mothers and pregnant women to take a break in privacy.

Systematically offer all first-time parents a meeting with an HR manager to review all useful information and, if necessary, refer them to other resources, such as preventive healthcare or social services.

Prepare a guide for new parents that is available on the intranet.

*Actors: HR, Regional Offices*

*Follow-up: integration of the new parents' interview into the HR process and distribution of the guide*

*Schedule: 2022*

d) Ensure the return to work is smooth and motivating

Encourage and share best practices for hosting welcoming conferences: childcare, break rooms, accessibility of the site and online content.

Explore the possibility of encouraging participation in a conference in the year following a long absence due to the birth of a child.

Study the eligibility of childcare expenses when it is offered during conferences.

#### **IV-Fighting against discrimination, sexism, and sexual violence (including LGBTQ+\*)**

*It is Inserm's responsibility to prevent, train, inform, support, and sanction in order to fight against all forms of discrimination, and on the broad spectrum that goes from daily sexism to harassment, to provide safe working conditions for a predominantly female population, to understand the issues at stake, and to clearly demonstrate its commitment to putting a stop to any inappropriate behavior within its community.*

(\*LGBTQ+: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, asexual, and others)

- a) Integrate the risk into our occupational health and safety system

Treat gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) as a major occupational hazard, both because of the impact on the victims and because of the devastating effect on the team, working conditions, and potentially on Inserm as an employer-authority.

Specifically extend the *Cellule veille sociale* (CVS, i.e. Labor Issues Monitoring Unit) to include the prevention of this risk, with communication and displays in all structures and on all units' websites.

Regularly ensure that the system is known and available, and use external systems if needed.

Professionalization of resource persons: regional representatives, HR, Preventive healthcare, etc. In line with government recommendations for training, through a service provider or MOOC.

*Actors: HR director, Regional Offices*

*Follow-up: discrimination and GBSV training rate of resource people and members of CVS*

*Objective: 2021 50%; 2023: 100%*

- b) Inform the public about Inserm's commitments on this issue

Display Inserm's commitments on the website. Regularly raise staff awareness about their rights and obligations, reminding them of the sanctions provided for by the regulations.

Ensure that official campaigns are widely publicized on our sites and media.

Initiate a reflection process with a view to signing a diversity and inclusion charter.

Give each new person who joins Inserm a document in French or English with all the useful contacts and procedures in the event of discrimination, in the broadest sense, and to display it in the departments and units.

*Actors: Scientific Information and Communication, HR director, PEP, RO-Units*

*Follow-up: availability of the information: document and display*

*Schedule: document and display available in 2021, widespread dissemination 2022*

- c) Capitalize on and pool skills in the handling cases

a- Provide an anonymous annual report on the number of cases handled and the sanctions handed out by the establishment during a CSHSCT or a CT.

b- Form a cross-functional group of experts to help capitalize on the handling of cases and offer the best possible protection to victims. This group will focus on the issue of complexity linked to the multiple supervisory organization of the research structures, and will make recommendations to improve local coordination, to be integrated into the gender diversity agreements, and will share its recommendations with the regional representatives, HR managers, etc. Actors: HR, Legal Affairs

Summary chart for tracking the 5 main objectives (1)

No.	Title	Actors	Indicator	2021 objective	2022 objective	2023 objective	Remarks
1	Equality unit	Regional Offices, Unit directors	% cells	10%	30%	60%	Then 80%
2	Letter of commitment	Directorate General, PEP	% signed	80% Directorate General	100% Directorate General 30% Unit directors	60% Unit directors	Then 80%
3	Raising awareness of managers to the concepts of gender and discrimination	HR director, Regional Offices	Module attendance rate	Development	20%	50%	Then 80%
4	Training, raising awareness of jury members to biases	RH director, Program Assessment and Follow-up, Regional Offices	follow-up	Specialized Scientific Committees members*	*Examination committee juries	*Other selection committees	*Otherwise video
5	Training on discrimination and GBSV of CVS members and Resource staff	HR director, Regional Offices	Training attendance	20%	60%	90%	

(1): Revision of objectives planned for the end of 2021 based on initial results

Summary chart for tracking the 5 main actions:

No.	Action	Schedule	End goal
1	Display the gender ratio of promotable/promoted population for all promotions	Starting in 2021	Verification of trend
2	Write up and circulate recommendations on gender equality: conferences, nominations	2022	Increase the visibility and reputation of women
3	Annually produce and display the analysis of bonuses and allowances with respect to gender	2022, 2023	Verify improvement of gender equality in remunerative positions
4	Creation of a guide and integration of HR processes to support parenthood	2022	Supporting parents
5	Information about contacts and procedures in case of discrimination and GBSV	2021	Ensure general awareness of the procedures and useful contacts