

Simula Research Laboratory Gender Equality Plan (2026–2028)

Simula relies on the competence and motivation of skilled employees in order to achieve its goals. Recruiting highly qualified researchers from around the world has led to Simula becoming an increasingly diverse workplace. As of year-end 2025, women represented approximately 26% of Simula's workforce, more than half of employees came from outside Norway, and 37 nationalities were represented. This diversity provides a variety of perspectives and approaches and contributes to a dynamic and creative workplace.

Simula is registered as a limited company under 100% ownership of the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. Simula Research Laboratory is the parent company with four subsidiaries: Simula Innovation AS (SI), Simula UiB AS, and Simula Metropolitan Center for Digital Engineering AS (SimulaMet).

Working towards gender equality and anti-discrimination is firmly anchored in Simula's management approach and is pursued through Simula's strategies and guidelines. For more than a decade, Simula has worked purposefully to recruit and cultivate female research talent. The initial goal of increasing the proportion of women in research positions to 25% was achieved in 2013, and Simula now aims for women to represent 40% of the overall workforce. Simula's culture document, which is published on the company website, clearly describes the company's core values and expectations for an inclusive working environment.

In 2022, Simula formalised its long-standing equality work within the Horizon Europe Gender Equality Plan framework, building on earlier Gender Action Plans, diversity strategies and established organisational practices. The GEP has since been formally reviewed and revised every 12-18 months, while remaining continuously implemented.

On behalf of Simula, I hereby confirm our continued commitment to the work of ensuring gender equality throughout our work at Simula.

Dr. Lillian Røstad
Managing Director/CEO
Simula Research Laboratory

Dedicated resources

Simula works actively and deliberately with equality and anti-discrimination, which are essential components of Simula's efforts to ensure good working conditions in practice. Responsibility for this work is shared across several functions, including health and safety representatives, the Working Environment Committee, human resources, managers at all levels, the company directors, Group Management and the Boards of Directors. These groups meet regularly to carry out this work.

Gender equality and inclusion have long been important at Simula, with a concentrated focus and allocation of resources over many years. Since 2021, Simula has participated in the Research Council of Norway's BALANSE programme through three consecutive projects: HiddenFigures (2021–2023), HiddenGems (2024–2026) and IgnitingPotential (2026–2028). These projects provide not only dedicated financial resources, but also protected time and organisational attention: staff and leaders commit working time to developing, testing and evaluating new approaches to equality and inclusion. Simula Academy, the unit responsible for researcher training and professional development, provides an organisational structure through which successful measures can be integrated into regular practice.

Simula's approach is deliberately experimental and participatory. Relevant employees and organisational groups contribute to identifying needs, developing and testing interventions and refining them through experience. Where measures prove useful, they are incorporated into established organisational structures and programmes rather than remaining stand-alone equality initiatives.

Data collection, monitoring and the GEP life cycle

In Norway, private companies with more than 50 employees are required by law to increase their efforts and report on working for equality and anti-discrimination. This obligation, which is called the activity and reporting obligation (Aktiviteten og redegjørelsesplikten), is laid down in Section 26 of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act and requires annual reporting in two parts:

1. *the actual state of gender equality in the company*: gender-disaggregated counts of employees in the different job categories, as well as by employment status (temporary, part-time, parental leave).
2. *how the company works with equality and against discrimination*: descriptions of the relevant policies and practices that are in place, as well as future plans. In particular, the company is required to follow a 4-step model: 1. examine the risk of discrimination and obstacles to equality, 2. analyse causes, 3. implement measures, and 4. evaluate results.

This statutory process provides an established mechanism for implementation and monitoring of Simula's GEP. Workforce and working-environment data inform annual audits and priorities; measures are planned and implemented continuously throughout the year; and progress is monitored and reported annually. The results of each cycle inform subsequent measures and are incorporated, as appropriate, into the biennial revision of the GEP.

Responsibility is distributed across existing organisational structures. The Working Environment Committee reviews equality and working-environment issues quarterly, Group Management considers relevant issues throughout the year, and the Boards receive regular reporting on employee welfare and organisational risks. Working-environment surveys and shorter employee surveys provide additional evidence for identifying barriers and assessing interventions.

The results are published as part of the publicly-available Simula's Annual Report under the section Gender equality, social responsibility and the working environment, providing a reliable source of gender-disaggregated monitoring and updated descriptions of equality and inclusion activities.

Intersectional approach

Simula recognises that gender can interact with other personal characteristics and circumstances to shape employees' experiences and opportunities. Particular areas of attention in this GEP include the intersections of gender with nationality, age/career stage and neurodivergent traits and working styles.

Gender, nationality and age/career seniority can be monitored quantitatively through existing personnel data. For other characteristics, such as health or diagnostic status, religion or sexual orientation, Simula does not systematically collect personal data. Where quantitative monitoring is therefore not available or appropriate, employee input, working-environment evidence and inclusion-by-design principles are used to identify potential barriers and inform organisational measures.

This intersectional perspective is applied throughout the GEP cycle: it shapes how barriers are identified, how measures are designed and implemented, and, where appropriate data are available, how their effects are monitored and assessed.

Training: awareness raising and capacity building

Simula offers all students and staff access to a wide range of workshops, guest lectures and training opportunities. Staff with decision-making responsibilities participate in regular training that contributes to inclusive working environments. In-house training includes supervision of graduate students, managing people and projects, recruitment practices and leadership development, with gender and diversity considerations incorporated where relevant.

Individual researchers can be provided with mentoring and career-development support through Simula Academy. As part of onboarding, new employees participate in seminars where the Simula Culture, expectations and opportunities are presented and the importance of an inclusive workplace is emphasised.

As part of the Research Council's BalanseHub network, Simula takes part in four full-day workshops per year focused on improving gender balance and diversity in academia. These workshops provide the opportunity for Simula to gain knowledge and inspiration about the best practices for achieving gender balance in Norwegian research institutions. They also

create a venue for Simula to share its successes and failures with the other participating institutions, and to learn from their experiences.

Thematic areas and concrete measures

Work-life balance and organisational culture

Simula has several initiatives in place to facilitate good work-life balance and provide an environment in which employees with different circumstances can do their best work. This intention is formalised through the [Simula Culture](#) and company policies.

Simula combines clear expectations around core working hours and office presence with flexibility outside those boundaries. Employees may work remotely for part of the working week, providing flexibility to combine demanding research careers with responsibilities and activities outside work.

Employees returning from parental or other extended leave are offered structured re-boarding conversations with their leaders to identify any required accommodations, recalibrate expectations and establish an appropriate plan for returning to work.

Simula also applies inclusion-by-design principles to aspects of the physical and social working environment. These include access to both quiet and collaborative working areas, clear written organisational communication, flexible workplace equipment and a varied programme of optional social activities designed to accommodate different interests, life situations and participation preferences.

Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

In recognition of the importance of representation at decision-making levels, Simula aims to maintain strong gender balance in its governing and senior management structures.

The Board of Directors has maintained gender balance since 2003, as has Simula's Management Group since 2019. Simula continues to monitor representation at other levels of scientific and organisational leadership, including the pipeline into future senior and leadership roles.

Gender equality and diversity in recruitment and career progression

Simula continuously works to attract, develop and retain talented researchers from diverse backgrounds.

Human Resources is integrated into recruitment processes to support consistent use of Simula's recruitment guidelines. Job advertisements are designed to appeal to a broad applicant population; qualified candidates of both genders should be included in interview processes; and both genders should be represented on interview panels. These procedures are intended to broaden candidate pools and reduce avoidable barriers associated with gender or background.

For those recruited from abroad, Simula facilitates a positive transition to the Norwegian workplace through administrative support, social activities and Norwegian-language training. Language training is also offered to accompanying spouses or partners.

Professional development is a critical element of career progression and is available through Simula Academy. Relevant offers include leadership training, project and time management, communication, supervision, career development and other transferable skills. Simula increasingly uses these existing programmes to embed inclusion-related interventions rather than creating separate programmes available only to designated groups. Employees who may particularly benefit can nevertheless be actively encouraged to participate.

Every year, Simula assesses scientific staff for promotion according to established and documented criteria. Those meeting the requirements are duly promoted. This avoids relying on self-nomination and reduces the potential for gender-, cultural- or confidence-related differences in willingness to apply for advancement.

Simula conducts a comprehensive evaluation of salary conditions every second year. Internal comparisons examine relevant employee groups, including gender and Norwegian/foreign-born background, alongside job category, responsibility, education, experience and contribution. Deviations that cannot be justified by relevant factors are followed up and corrected.

Representation across career stages is also monitored. Current data show lower representation of women in permanent research positions than in early career researcher stages and Simula's leadership structures. Strengthening career development and leadership pathways for early-career researchers from underrepresented groups is therefore an explicit area of attention for 2026–2028. This work includes career-development planning, role modelling, and network building.

Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content

Simula is strengthening attention to gender dimensions in research and teaching. Piloted workshops co-developed with external subject-matter experts aim to help researchers distinguish gender balance from gender dimensions in research and examine how sex, gender and potentially intersecting variables may be relevant to research questions, methods, data and societal impact. These workshops will be further developed and tailored to Simula's research environment during the course of this GEP period.

Gender and diversity dimensions are also incorporated where relevant into researcher education and training. Examples include Simula's PhD course *Communicating Scientific Research* and teaching activities associated with the Simula *Summer School in Computational Physiology*. Simula will continue developing this thematic area and integrating relevant guidance into research, proposal support, researcher training and leadership development.

Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

Simula aims to ensure a safe and secure working environment in accordance with the Group's principles on workplace culture. Simula does not accept or tolerate harassment, victimisation or discrimination based on religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, nationality, disability or political views.

Simula has clear guidelines to prevent harassment and a corresponding notification system. Guidelines for conflict resolution and notification encourage employees to contribute actively

to an environment where concerns can be raised and handled constructively. Employees have a duty to make known harassment encountered at work, and reported concerns are investigated through established organisational procedures.

Priorities for 2026–2028

During the 2026–2028 GEP period, Simula will continue to:

- Work towards sustained gender balance across all levels of seniority, with particular attention to permanent research positions.
- Maintain gender balance in Simula's leadership and governing bodies.
- Support the progression from early-career to senior research and leadership through structured career development, role modelling, networking and targeted training.
- Maintain fair and transparent recruitment, promotion and salary-review processes, and monitor gender equality alongside career stage and national background where appropriate data are available.
- Further integrate gender dimensions into research, proposal development, teaching and leadership- and supervisor training.
- Use the established four-step process to identify barriers, test and evaluate inclusive measures, embed effective approaches into normal practice, and inform subsequent GEP revisions.