



HITS Equality Plan  
(12.2024)

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## Preamble

The Heidelberg Institute for Theoretical Studies (HITS) was established in 2010 by physicist and SAP co-founder Klaus Tschira (1940-2015) and the Klaus Tschira Foundation as a private, non-profit research institute.

HITS conducts basic research in the natural, mathematical and computer sciences. Major research directions include complex simulations across scales, making sense of data, and enabling science via computational research. Application areas range from molecular biology to astrophysics. An essential characteristic of the Institute is interdisciplinarity, implemented in numerous cross-group and cross-disciplinary projects. The base funding of HITS is provided by the Klaus Tschira Foundation.

HITS employs its own staff and hosts students as well as visiting scientists from other institutions. We refer to all persons working at HITS as "HITSters".

## Basic considerations

Equality at HITS:

Equality describes the totality of measures to equalize the living conditions of groups to be treated equally in all areas of life.

As an internationally oriented research institute, HITS gGmbH is committed to research and the support of young scientists.

It is a matter of course for us to offer all people working at HITS the same opportunities to thrive in a scientific environment in which everyone can develop freely, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, nationality, and religion.

Integrity and sustainability, social responsibility in a dialogue with the public, international orientation, mutual respect, family friendliness and diversity are cornerstones of our institute.

The following is an overview of the measures already implemented and planned to ensure equality at HITS, in terms of gender and beyond.

## Goals

This plan is intended to focus on and ensure the implementation of the German Federal Equality Act (BGlG) and its objectives:

- Equality of women, men and non-binary persons.
- Elimination and prevention of existing discrimination based on gender.
- Improving family friendliness and the compatibility of family, care, and work.

The data in the table below was collected for the first time in December 2021 and is updated annually. The equality plan is reviewed and updated at least every three years with regard to the measures and their impact.

## Diversity at HITS in numbers (as of 12/2023)

	Total - 2023	Thereof women - 2023	Total - 2022	Thereof women - 2022	Total - 2021	Thereof women - 2021
HITSters total	177	66	162	57	168	71
HITSters, science*	155	53	143	46	144	58
HITSters, service groups	22	13	19	11	24	13
Bachelor and Master students	24	10	29	10	31	15
PhD students	52	15	49	14	45	11
Employees, science (excluding PhD students)	37	14	36	13	31	11
Group leaders, science	13	4	13	4	12	5

\*Employees, visiting scientists, and PhD students with scholarships

HITS is a research institute that is committed to diversity. Women, men and non-binary people work here. The number of women is stated separately in the table.

Science loses many female employees on the career path from first-year student to doctorate and to scientific employees<sup>1</sup>. At HITS, the proportion of female Bachelor and Master students in 2021 was nearly one half and has decreased to slightly above 0.40 since; the respective proportion for PhD students has increased to about 0.30 and for scientific employees (postdocs or senior scientists) it has increased to nearly 0.40.

The fact that one of our female-led research groups left HITS in autumn 2022 had a slightly negative impact on the proportion of women at HITS, particularly in leadership positions. We will continue to focus on and prioritize achieving parity in the recruitment of students and postdocs.

## Measures

### Workplace and hours

#### Place of work

We enable location-flexible working within Germany for a maximum of 50% of working hours in agreement with the supervisor.

#### Flexible working hours and core hours

Working hours at HITS are flexible. In line with our family-friendly working hours, meetings take place between 9am and 4pm where possible. This is to enable all HITSters to attend important internal meetings while balancing childcare and family commitments.

#### Working hours, part-time employment, parental leave

In accordance with German law, HITS offers the possibility of part-time employment within the

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<sup>1</sup> German Federal Statistical Office: Women's share by academic career ([destatis.de](https://www.destatis.de)), retrieved 18.01.2022. Resmini, Marina: The 'Leaky Pipeline'. Chemistry Europe, 2016

framework of parental leave. Flexible working hours and opportunities for part-time work can be agreed individually with the group leaders.

### Hiring criteria and salary

#### Equal Pay

Staff are selected and paid regardless of gender. We use a gender-independent pay scale for salaries.

#### Recruiting

Qualifications and suitability are taken into account when selecting applicants, regardless of gender.

Our job advertisements are always formulated in a (gender) neutral way. HITS sees itself as an institute where equal opportunities are practiced.

The consideration of facets of diversity in applications for advertised positions is planned.

### Promoting young talent

#### Girls' Day

Girls' Day - Girls' Future Day" is sponsored by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). This program introduces girls to apprenticeships and courses of study in the fields of IT, crafts, natural sciences and technology, in which women have tended to be underrepresented to date. HITS has been involved in "Girls' Day" since 2015 and offers workshops in the MINT area every year (MINT stands for mathematics, information technology, natural sciences, and technology).

#### Girls' Digital Camp

The "Girls' Digital Camps" are an initiative of the Ministry of Economics, Labor and Housing of the State of Baden-Württemberg and the Heidelberg University of Education, which offers female students opportunities on various IT and computer science topics in connection with social innovations. HITS is one of the cooperation partners of this initiative and offers project days for female students as part of this program.

## Communication

### Gender-sensitive language

We emphasize the importance of respectful and gender-sensitive language in presentations, publications, on the internet and in social media. To this end, we have developed our own guidelines that are binding for official communication. In addition, we sensitize all HITSters to this topic and provide information material.

### Communication on various topics

Current information on topics such as family friendliness and diversity can be found on our intranet. The relevant intranet pages offer presentations, guidelines, further links as well as information on contact persons.

### Awareness training

Since 2022, we have been offering awareness training courses at HITS to sensitize individual employees (management, administration, communications, group leaders, staff scientists, postdocs) with personnel responsibility to the topics of diversity and equality. In addition, we provide information on the intranet for all HITSters.

## Working groups

### Staff Representation

At HITS, there is a committee called Staff Representation, in which HITSters from various groups meet regularly to discuss suggestions for improving work at the Institute. The results are then discussed with the management and implemented. Documentation of the work of the Staff Representation can be found on the HITS intranet.

## Committees

In addition to the Staff Representation, there are other "committees" on the topics of family friendliness, diversity, and sustainability, respectively. These committees are organized by interested HITSters from various groups and deal with these specific topics. The results of their work can be found on the HITS intranet and in excerpts in this document.



## Family Friendliness

The Family Friendliness Committee has implemented the following items:

- Breastfeeding room: a room in the HITS main building can be used for breastfeeding babies.
- Core meeting times.
- Creation of an overview of measures and benefits related to family friendliness (to be found on the intranet).
- "Family friendliness" included as one of the goals in the HITS mission statement.
- Information about offers for family friendliness during the onboarding process.
- In exceptional situations, it is possible to bring children to the office. Children's books and toys for different age groups are provided.

We are constantly working on further measures.

## Offers for professional development

### Annual reviews

During annual reviews, HITS employees discuss the past working year and future tasks with their supervisors. Work results are evaluated, goals agreed and training needs identified.

### Mentoring Program

The junior group leader phase is particularly important in an academic career. We support junior group leaders at HITS by providing them with other group leaders as mentors who advise them on content-related issues and questions about group leadership or their own career planning.

### Networking

In science, exchange with other working groups is important and career-enhancing. HITS supports this exchange both within the Institute and with external scientists. Among other things, we facilitate participation in conferences, workshops and other events that promote scientific and interpersonal exchange. In addition, HITS awards the "Isabel Rojas Travel Award", which enables research stay of up to two months at a scientific institution of choice.



## Other Benefits

### Health Promotion

HITS offers a wide range of social benefits and health promotion measures:

- As part of a private supplementary health insurance, every employee can take advantage of preventive medical check-ups, which are included in the catalog of Individual Health Benefits.
- There is a subsidy on membership fees for a large gym chain in the region as well as yoga and other fitness activities on site.
- The institute offers a subsidized healthy lunch in the HITS canteen, which includes vegetarian options.
- There is a spacious garden on campus that can be used for walks or meetings, for example, as well as two ping pong tables.

### Person of trust

In the event of conflicts within the team or with superiors, it is possible to call in external consultants as mediators. Both an advisor and a counselor are available as contact persons. There are also two mental health first aiders who can provide advice.

### Coaching

If necessary, we support coaching to overcome communication barriers in teams. The management and the HR team are available to assist in the search for a suitable coach. Upwards feedback can be initiated by both group leaders and their teams. This is carried out by an external consultant and is strictly confidential.

Gesa Schönberger, Managing Director

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