

9. İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

9.1. Legislation, Curriculum, Policy, Stakeholder Analyses

Regulations, Directives, Directorates, Coordinatorship, Directorships, Application and Research Centers, mission and vision of the university, Internal Reports, Annual Reports, announcements, event calendars, course and curriculum sections on the pages of associate, undergraduate and graduate departments and programs on the İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University website, The ECTS Information Package, both the institutional social media accounts of the university and the social media accounts of the communities (Instagram, Facebook and Twitter), YÖK Thesis, Harman, TR Index, Web of Science indexes and databases were examined in detail to access data to monitor gender equality in the context of LGBTI+ rights in universities.

Bilkent University Discrimination Indicators against LGBTI+'s

	INDICATOR	SCORES			FINDINGS
		0	1	2	
1.	LGBTI+ Rights and Gender Equality in Academic Activities at Universities				6/10
1.1.	Number of compulsory courses on LGBTI+ rights and gender at all levels of education (associate, undergraduate, graduate, doctorate)	1			There are 5 compulsory courses.
1.2.	Number of elective courses on LGBTI+ rights and gender at all levels of education (associate, undergraduate, graduate, doctorate)	2			There are 17 elective courses.
1.3.	Academic event on gender equality in the context of LGBTI+ rights in universities	2			605 academic activities were carried out, including 576 publications and 29 events.
1.4.	The existence of gender and women's studies departments in universities	0			
1.5.	Existence of gender and women's research centers in universities	1			Human Rights Studies Application and Research Center
2.	Campus Climate for LGBTI+'s				10/12
2.1.	Existence of LGBTI+ solidarity/research clubs at universities	2			Bilkent Think Colorfully
2.2.	Status of LGBTI+ Community in Universities (official/unofficial/in the process of formalization)	2			Official Community
2.3.	Number of LGBTI+ specific events at universities	2			There are 176 events.
2.4.	Number of Pride Week/Month events on campuses	1			There is 1 event.

2.5.	Number of March 8 events on campuses	2	There are 14 events.
2.6.	Number and Accessibility of Gender-Free Restrooms on Campuses	1	The existing restroom was closed in the 2022-2023 academic year.
3. LGBTI+phobic and Sexist Stereotypes in Universities		2/8	
3.1.	Number of campaigns and informative materials raising gender awareness in the context of LGBTI+ rights	0	
3.2.	Number of trainings and seminars on gender equality in the context of LGBTI+ rights organized for members of the university, especially university employees and administrative staff	1	1 activity was realized.
3.3	Number of statements on university websites that comply with gender equality in the context of LGBTI+ rights	0	
3.4	Number of reports on gender equality shared by universities that can be analyzed in the context of LGBTI+ rights	1	Bilkent University Gender Equality Plan, Bilkent University National Nanotechnology Research Center Gender Equality Plan (2023)
TOTAL SCORE		18/30	

Although there is no KAM among the research centers at Bilkent University, there is the Human Rights Studies Application and Research Center (HRC), which conducts studies in the relevant thematic area. The objectives of the Center are stated in the Center's Regulation¹⁹ as "... to conduct theoretical and practical research, organize trainings, and carry out other related studies and projects in order to contribute to the recognition, protection, implementation and promotion of human rights".

The University's Curriculum Review was conducted in the "Offerings" section of the "STARS" (Student Academic Information Registration System). Although there are 5 compulsory courses containing keywords and 17 elective courses in the university curriculum, Bilkent scored full points in indicator 1.2. This is due to the fact that even though there is no keyword in the title, gender issues are included in many courses at the university.

Bilkent University Think Colorfully Club (BİRD) is an official university community and works on LGBTI+ rights.

Bilkent University has Gender Equality Plan²⁰ and National Nanotechnology Research Center Gender Equality Plan (2023)²¹. These plans, which are based on gender equality and take steps to institutionalize the fight against harassment and violence at universities, are only available

19 İhsan Dođramacı Bilkent University Human Rights Studies Application and Research Center Regulation. Official Gazette Date 09.08.2021, Official Gazette Issue: 31563.

20 Adopted by Senate resolution dated September 12, 2022 <https://www.bilkent.edu/bilkent/gender-equality-plan/> Last Access Date: 02.06.2023.

21 UNAM-PL-02 (ENG) <https://unam.bilkent.edu.tr/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/UNAM-PL-02-ENG-UNAM-Gender-Equality-Plan-GEP-Rev1.pdf> Last Access Date: 15.08.2023.

in English. No statements were made by the university administration on the relevant thematic area, nor were there any discourses or activities to strengthen gender equality in the university’s Strategic Plan, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 activity plans.

Looking at the activities carried out at the university in the last 5 years, it is obvious that the campus climate is inclusive for LGBTI+s in the activities and academic studies carried out. However, with a focus on Bilkent University, it is possible to say that the campus climate was more diverse in terms of gender equality 5 years ago. In the last 5 years of the university, which was observed to be more active in the context of March 8, violence against women and feminism, the decrease in the number of activities in this context is clearly noticeable.

Bilkent University LGBTI+ Rights Access Indicators

	INDICATOR	SCORES			FINDINGS
		0	1	2	
1. Gender Equality in the Context of LGBTI+ Rights in University Legislation, Directives and Policy Documents					7/12
1.1.	Number of regulations and directives referring to CEDAW and Istanbul Convention	1			Bilkent University Gender Equality Plan
1.2.	Number of references to concepts such as “gender” and “sexual orientation”, “gender identity” in legislation, directives and policy texts	2			Introduction of Human Rights Studies Research and Application Center, Bilkent University, Bilkent University National Nanotechnology Research Center Gender Equality Plan
1.3.	Number of regulations, directives and policies referring to Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals	0			
1.4.	Number of regulations supporting gender equality	2			Human Rights Studies Application and Research Center Regulation, Gender Equality Plan
1.5.	Number of universities’ anti-discrimination policies on gender, gender identity and sexual orientation	2			Student Clubs and Communities Directive, Gender Equality Plan, Bilkent University National Nanotechnology Research Center Gender Equality Plan
1.6.	Clear and understandable indication of the ways of name change in Diploma Graduation Certificates	0			
2. Collaborations and Activities of Universities with NGOs to Draw Attention to GE					4/4
2.1.	Number of campaigns, joint work, events, collaborations with NGOs and diversity in terms of GE (diversity of organizations, diversity of partnerships)	2			Cooperation was realized with a total of 21 stakeholders, including 15 NGOs, 3 professional chambers, 1 local government and 2 political parties.

2.2.	Number of models created and implemented with NGOs	2	Rights Summit, Feminist Summit, Women's Summit (5 copies), Feminism 101 (13 copies), Plus 101: Beyond the Rainbow
3. Institutionalization of Combating Violence and Harassment in Universities: Sexual Harassment and Assault Units		6/10	
3.1.	Presence of active Sexual Harassment and Assault Unit in universities	2	Sexual Harassment and Assault Reporting and Prevention Unit (SHARP)
3.2.	Clear and understandable indication of the ways to apply to the Sexual Harassment and Assault Units at universities	1	SHARP web page
3.3	Existence of a university website where information on Sexual Harassment and Assault Units can be obtained	1	https://w3.bilkent.edu.tr/www/cinsel-taciz-bildirme-ve-onleme-birimi/
3.4	Existence of content in Sexual Harassment and Assault Units on assisting access to justice, guidance, psychological support, etc.	1	SHARP web page
3.5	Number of trainings and/or seminars on issues such as harassment and mobbing	1	1 activity was realized.
TOTAL SCORE		17/26	

When the *mission, vision and core values* of Bilkent University were analyzed, no findings were found in the relevant thematic area. The article (5.2.) in the Student Clubs and Societies Directive²², which includes a statement against discrimination in the work of the Clubs/Communities and the activities they will organize, is in parallel with Article 10 of the constitution, as it includes the expression of respect for human rights and freedoms. Therefore, discrimination against gender and sexual orientation is not included. Within the scope of the monitoring study, the Medical and Social Services of the universities were also examined, and the titles of Sexuality, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Sexual Problems, Other Measures for the Protection of Sexual Health, Gender and Sexuality, which were accessed through the Bilkent University website, are relatively gender equitable. Despite the efforts to cover various gender identities and sexual orientations, the informative texts prepared contain outdated and incomplete information, especially in the title of Sexually Transmitted Infections²³, statements that stigmatize and marginalize sex workers, LGBTI+ persons and persons with active sexual life were encountered.

Although there is no reference to the concept of gender in the HRC Regulation, it is emphasized that the Center adopts working principles that respect gender equality in all its activities as required by the regulation. The Center's philosophy is based on the understanding that "the responsibility for the protection and fulfillment of human rights principles and norms should be assumed first–and foremost–by national authorities, ensuring effective implementation of relevant law, including

²² Bilkent University Student Clubs and Societies Directive. Approved by the Senate Decision No. 12.09.2022.

²³ Bilkent University. Sexually Transmitted Infections. <https://w3.bilkent.edu.tr/www/sm-cinsel-yolla-bulasan-enfeksiyonlar-cybe/> Last Access Date: 02.06.2023.

the Constitution and international obligations”. Although Bilkent University prepared Gender Equality Plans in 2022 and 2023 and referred to international legislation such as CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention in these plans, no regulation with these references was found.

During the Legislation Review, no directive on the ways of name change in diploma-graduation certificates was found. Although the Regulation on Undergraduate and Associate Degree Education and the Regulation on Graduate Education and Training provides information on diploma requirements, there is no explanation on the name change in the diploma. The directive was also not shared in the response to the information request made by ÜniKuir Association.

SHARP (Sexual Harassment and Assault Reporting and Prevention Unit), which was established as the Support Unit against Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault at Bilkent University, continues its work among the clinics of the Human Rights Studies Application and Research Center. There is no web page for this unit, but information about the unit and how to apply to the unit can be found on the HRC’s web page or on Bilkent University’s web page²⁴. Although there is no emphasis on gender identity and sexual orientation discrimination, the policy document, which states that support is provided against violence or sexual harassment and assault, has a content that is not sufficiently descriptive, including definitions, the names of the university members responsible for the unit and the responsibilities of the unit in case of harassment and violence. Although it is not defined as “harassment” in the Student Dormitory Principles and Rules²⁵, “engaging in behaviors that may disturb through insulting discourse, insults, phone calls, etc.” is sanctioned with reprimand, while “exhibiting immoral and rude behaviors such as slander, threats, insults, physical intervention against dormitory administrators or residents” is sanctioned with expulsion from the dormitory. Although many publications and brochures have been prepared as part of the Protective and Preventive Studies conducted by the Psychological Counseling and Development Center, there are no publications to prevent harassment and violence or to inform university staff about complaint and application mechanisms in such cases.

As can be seen from the table, the collaborations and activities carried out by the university with NGOs in terms of gender equality are quite diverse. In addition, within this stakeholder diversity, models that include LGBTI+ focused organizations and LGBTI+ activists have been developed and these models have been sustained for many years. It is also understood from the announcement texts that some activities and even lectures, which aim to raise awareness on issues of equality and violence, are open outside the university.

9.2. Scales on Discrimination against LGBTI+ Persons and Access to Rights

A total of 84 people, including 64 students, 6 academic staff and 14 alumni of Bilkent University, participated in the study. The 84 people who participated in the research were asked 16 questions on the Discrimination Against LGBTI+ Persons Scale and 19 questions on the Access to LGBTI+ Rights Scale and were expected to answer Likert-type responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The findings obtained from the analysis of the participants’ responses to the questions are shown below. The findings below were obtained by converting the averages of the participants’ responses into 100 values.

24 Bilkent University Sexual Harassment and Assault Reporting and Prevention (SHARP) <https://w3.bilkent.edu.tr/bilkent/sexual-harassment-reporting-and-prevention-unit/> Last Access Date: 02.06.2023.

25 Bilkent University Student Dormitory Principles and Rules [Senate decision dated 19.06.2019].

Bilkent University Discrimination Scale Scores for LGBTI+ Persons

1	LGBTI+ persons are not subjected to verbal violence within the university.	70,4	Violence	74,88
2	LGBTI+ persons are not subjected to physical violence within the university.	87,4		
3	LGBTI+ persons are not subjected to psychological violence within the university.	67,4		
4	LGBTI+ persons are not subjected to sexual harassment within the university.	74,2		
5	LGBTI+ persons who are discriminated against within the university can express this freely.	71,4	Academic Activities	74,88
6	During the courses, the lecturer observes gender equality.	70,2		
7	Students observe gender equality during lessons.	71,6		
8	Course contents take gender equality into account.	73		
9	LGBTI+ persons do not face discrimination in classes.	75		
10	Extracurricular academic activities (seminars, workshops, etc.) LGBTI+ persons are not discriminated against.	80,8		
11	LGBTI+ persons are treated equally when communicating with academic staff at the university.	77,6		
12	LGBTI+ persons are treated equally when communicating with students at the university.	79,2		
13	LGBTI+ persons are not subjected to discrimination in dormitories.	62,8	Housing	64,70
14	In dormitories, LGBTI+ persons are treated equally when communicating with dormitory management.	64,2		
15	In dormitories, LGBTI+ persons are treated equally when communicating with dormitory staff.	63,8		
16	In dormitories, LGBTI+ persons are treated equally when communicating with students staying in dormitories.	67,8		
			SCORES	72,34

As can be seen in the table above, the members of Bilkent University gave responses calculated as 74.88 points to the Discrimination-Violence sub-dimension consisting of 4 questions about LGBTI+s being subjected to violence at the university, 74.88 points to the Discrimination-Academic Activities sub-dimension consisting of 8 questions about being subjected to discrimination during academic activities, and 64.702 points to the Discrimination-Housing sub-dimension consisting of 4 questions about students being subjected to discrimination in dormitories. As a result of the answers given to the questions in the scale, the total score for Bilkent University was calculated as 72.336.

Of the 84 members of Bilkent University, 1 lives in a KYK dormitory, 2 in a private dormitory, 39 in a university dormitory, 6 in a foundation dormitory and 36 do not live in a dormitory. The average score of 64.702 in the housing sub-dimension is explained by the participants' experiences

or impressions of the dormitories where they reside. However, the dormitory experiences of 39 participants residing in the dormitory of Bilkent University have an average score of 69.872. As can be understood from this, the experience of another dormitory or general impressions of dormitories seem to be more negative than the experiences of the individuals staying at Bilkent University dormitory.

Bilkent University Access to LGBTI+ Rights Scale Scores

1	LGBTI+ rights are freely defended at the university.	73	Assembly and Advocacy	78,03
2	Activities related to LGBTI+ rights are carried out freely at the university.	74		
3	LGBTI+ themed activities are carried out freely at the university.	78		
4	LGBTI+ students at university can come together to defend LGBTI+ rights.	81,2		
5	LGBTI+'s at the university can be organized into student communities.	86		
6	Pride at the university can be organized freely.	73		
7	LGBTI+ persons can express themselves freely within student communities.	80,8		
8	Classrooms are safe for LGBTI+ students.	73,8	Safe Space	73,49
9	Common areas (e.g. cafeterias, canteens, libraries, study halls, laboratories, dining halls, sports facilities and similar socialization areas) are safe for LGBTI+ persons.	76		
10	Administrative buildings are safe for LGBTI+ persons.	70,8		
11	The university administration is knowledgeable about LGBTI+ rights.	52,8	Perception and Attitude of University Members	54,01
12	Administrative staff are knowledgeable about LGBTI+ rights.	50,8		
13	University security guards are knowledgeable about LGBTI+ rights.	45		
14	The university administration observes gender equality when communicating with students.	60,4		
15	Administrative staff observes gender equality when communicating with students.	61		
16	University security guards observe gender equality when communicating with students.	54		
17	Students have knowledge about LGBTI+ rights.	74,6		
18	Students observe gender equality when communicating among themselves.	71,6	Peer Behavior	75,79
19	In the circle of friends, LGBTI+ issues are discussed in a positive atmosphere.	81,2		
			SCORES	69,37

As can be seen in the table above, Bilkent University members scored 78.028 for the Assembly and Advocacy sub-dimension, which consists of 7 questions about organizing opportunities at the university, and 73.492 for the Safe Space sub-dimension, which consists of 3 questions about the university being safe for LGBTI+s, The responses to the Perception and Attitude of University Members sub-dimension, which consists of 6 questions about the thoughts and behaviors of university members towards LGBTI+ students, were 54.008, and finally, the responses to the Peer Behavior sub-dimension, which consists of 3 questions measuring the attitudes of peers towards LGBTI+ students, were 75.794. As a result of the answers given to the questions in the scale, the total score for Bilkent University was calculated as 69.374.