

Smart Academia.
Assessment, work, well-being and fairness in a changing university

Annual Conference of the National Conference of the Italian Universities Equal Opportunities
Bodies

Politecnico di Milano
3-4 December 2020

In recent months, measures to prevent contagion from COVID-19 have imposed the rapid transformation of universities, which have adopted various forms of remote working (agile work, teleworking, smart working), radically reorganising much of their research, teaching and technical-administrative work. The epidemiological emergency has not only resulted in the transferral of the activities carried out in universities on-line, it has also required a repositioning of academic institutions and their role in society, and continues to do so daily. The universities have reorganised their operational activities on the ground, remodelling, transforming and, sometimes undertaking new training and knowledge transfer activities, orientation for schools and collaboration with healthcare structures. Academic expertise and research have taken on a key role in the definition of policies and interventions implemented during the emergency and are involved in the post-emergency reconstruction processes. At the same time, these transformations are leading to a reorganisation and reconfiguration of working relationships as we know and have experienced them, and to the assessment of performance at work. The weight borne by work and remote teaching suggests new risks for the well-being of employees and students, with the possible escalation of gender, social, territorial and cultural inequalities. In this situation, the equality bodies of Italian universities can play a decisive role, upon which we want to reflect.

The changes brought about by the health emergency are part of a context marked by recent transformations/reforms in university and research assessment systems that have profoundly changed academic practices. With this in mind, the conference also intends to propose a comparison of the assessment processes applied in universities. How and with which criteria can the current assessment processes of academia be remodelled on the basis of the new challenges facing the university institution? In recent years, numerous researches have highlighted the non-neutral dimension of excellence which, as a social construct, is defined within paradigms and theoretical perspectives. These prioritise competitive processes in research and the construction of knowledge, on the one hand, and subjective practices on which researchers base the identity of their scientific profiles, on the other.

At the same time, systems for assessing individual and organisational performance, risks relating to work-related stress and the organisational climate also have a differentiated impact on the work of technical and administrative staff at universities.

The transformations that have been taking place in universities over the past few months offer an even clearer picture of the inadequacy of an ideal model of worker focused, in contemporary societies, on expectations/standards of visibility in the workplace and the invisibility of care workers.

The emergency in which we are all involved and required to face highlights the need to redefine academic assessment as a practice to encourage collaborative practices and the promotion and development of social equity.

Both qualitative and quantitative (or mixed-method) theoretical and empirical papers are appreciated, with micro, meso and macro approaches, on the following topics (without this being a complete list) in a university context from a gender perspective:

1. Well-being and work during the COVID-19 emergency
2. Academic and administrative work on a remote basis
3. Impact of assessment on career profiles, recruitment and career progression
4. Research quality assessment
5. Performance measurement and assessment
6. Work-related stress risk assessment
7. Gender balance in assessment processes
8. Impact and assessment of remote teaching
9. The role of equality bodies

Contributions offering policy reflections and comparisons between countries or areas of the country are also welcome.

On these topics, abstracts of 3,000 - 5,000 characters (with spaces) should be submitted using the attached format by 20 July 2020 to: counipar@gmail.com.

The subsequent publication of the proceedings of the congress is planned within the framework of the Series entitled *I Potenziali* of the National Conference of University Equality Bodies by Casa Editrice ETS.

You will receive notification of acceptance of the paper by 30 September.

Whether the conference will be held with audience participation and/or remotely will depend on the public health situation and the provisions in force in autumn 2020.

Scientific Committee: Arianna Montorsi, Tindara Addabbo, Chiara Bertone, Rita Biancheri, Fiammetta Costa, Carmelo Di Rosa, Rosy Musumeci, Ilenia Picardi, Cristina Rossi, Donatella Sciuto, Mara Tanelli, Patrizia Tomio.

Organising Committee: Erica Alberti, Silvia Barattieri, Federica Pillo.

Logistical info: cug-segreteria@polimi.it