

IPARCOS Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Welfare Strategic Plan

Preamble

Executive summary

IPARCOS, the **Institute of Particle and Cosmos Physics (Instituto de Física de Partículas y del Cosmos)** at the **Complutense University of Madrid (UCM)**, is a research institute focused on advancing knowledge in areas such as particle physics, nuclear physics, astrophysics, gravity and cosmology. IPARCOS represents a hub for advancing the understanding of the Universe at the intersection of theoretical and experimental science. As a university institute, it also plays a significant role in promoting scientific outreach and education.

At IPARCOS we embrace equity, diversity, inclusion and welfare (EDIW) as core aspects of our mission. We value the rich diversity of our researchers, students and staff, appreciating their unique experiences and perspectives. This diversity not only enriches our research but also fosters stronger connections with the wider world. Creating an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive and where their welfare is prioritized is crucial to maintaining our position as a leading global institution.

What EDIW Stands For

EQUITY involves upholding a principle of fairness in how individuals are treated, recognizing and respecting their differences. It ensures that everyone has access to equal opportunities and is protected from discrimination or unjust treatment.

DIVERSITY refers to the broad spectrum of human characteristics that make each individual distinct. This includes, but is not limited to, factors such as gender identity or expression, ethnicity, national or social origin, age, religion or belief, political or other opinion, physical and hidden disabilities, neurodiversity, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. Valuing diversity means appreciating the unique insights and experiences that people from varied backgrounds bring.

INCLUSION focuses on fostering a culture where everyone feels they belong and can fully participate without barriers. It's about creating a space where individuals feel appreciated, respected, and accepted for who they are.

WELFARE refers to the well-being and quality of life of individuals, encompassing their physical, mental, and emotional health. It involves ensuring that people have access to the resources, support, and opportunities they need to lead fulfilling and secure lives. Promoting welfare means fostering an environment where individuals feel safe, valued, and cared for, enabling them to thrive both personally and professionally.

This document presents our EDIW Strategic Plan, committing to the principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunity in all research, training or outreach activities, and in all policies ruling the internal workings of the institute. In its programs, in its spaces, and among its participants and members, IPARCOS does not tolerate actions that constitute discrimination or harassment.

The following EDIW Strategic Plan is meant to be a common standard of achievement for all the members of IPARCOS and for all participants in IPARCOS activities. It aligns with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, fostering respect for and adherence to human rights and fundamental freedoms within our institute and across all its activities. It is also consistent with the Equity Plan of Complutense University [1] and with its Code of Conduct [2], that aims to foster solidarity, develop supportive attitudes and habits, and act inspired and guided by ethical principles and good conduct.

Acronyms

	<i>Meaning</i>		<i>Meaning</i>
AEI	Agencia Estatal de Investigación	IAT	Implicit Association test
AMIT	Asociación de Mujeres Investigadoras y Tecnólogas	IFT	Instituto de Física Teórica
CSIC	Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas	IPARCOS	Institute of Particle and Cosmos Physics
EDIW	Equity, Inclusion, Diversity, Welfare	LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersexual
ESO	European Southern Observatory	UAM	Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
GENERA	Gender Equality in Physics	UCM	Universidad Complutense de Madrid

External references

	Title	Link
[1]	UCM Equity Plan	https://www.ucm.es/unidadeigualdad/file/ii-plan-de-igualdad-y-anexos-1
[2]	UCM Code of conduct	https://www.ucm.es/file/codigo-de-conducta-complutense-para-impresion
[3]	IFT- UAM/CSIC EDI Plan	https://members.ift.uam-csic.es/ed/equality-plan/
[4]	University of Oxford EDI Strategic Plan	https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/edu/documents/media/oxford_university_edi_strategic_plan_2024_27.pdf
[5]	ESO-DEI Plan	https://www.eso.org/public/archives/static/about-eso/sustainability/dei-at-eso/eso-dei.pdf
[6]	Spanish Research Agency Equity Plan	https://www.aei.gob.es/ciencia-igualdad
[7]	UCM-HRS4R Excelencia en la Investigación	https://www.ucm.es/hrs4r_es/presentacion
[8]	UCM Code of Good Practice in PhD	https://edotorado.ucm.es/data/cont/docs/1348-2019-05-29-UCM-Code-of-GP-in-PhD.pdf
[9]	Harvard Implicit Association Test (TAI)	https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html
[10]	GENERA network	https://www.genera-network.eu/

[11]	UCM Sexual Harassment Protocol	https://www.ucm.es/unidaddeigualdad/protocolo-de-acoso
[12]	UCM Workplace Bullying protocol	https://www.ucm.es/catedra-irsst-ucm/file/protocolo-de-actuacion-frente-al-acoso-laboral
[13]	UCM Diversity-based discrimination protocol	https://www.ucm.es/diversidad/protocolo-de-prevencion-y-actuacion-ante-la
[14]	<i>Punto Violeta Somosaguas</i>	https://puntovioletaucm.wordpress.com/

Preparation of the EDIW Strategic Plan

The initiative to create an EDIW Working Group at IPARCOS took off at the end of 2024. Its mission started in January 2025. It is integrated by Álvaro Álvarez Domínguez, David Alonso López, Álvaro Cendal García, Enrique Galcerán García, Armando Gil de Paz, Juan Abel Barrio Uña, María Delgado Mancheño, Patricia Andrea Gutiérrez García, Darío Jaramillo Garrido, Paula Macías Pardo, Mercedes Martín Benito, Prado Martín Moruno, Francisco Miguel Montenegro Montes, Sara Piloñeta Álvarez, Javier Rubio Peña, Patricia Sánchez Blázquez, and Diego Tessainer Bonet.

The main task of this group is to prepare this EDIW Strategic Plan. It is inspired by action plans developed by similar institutions, mainly [3, 4, 5]. The present plan is thus aligned with the plan elaborated by the Spanish Research Agency (AEI) [6], but considers more specific measures designed to correct those issues inherent to our areas of physics and, in particular, those affecting IPARCOS.

To develop this plan, we have first conducted an analysis of the current gender situation within our institute. This includes a review of historical and statistical data to assess IPARCOS's status quo, identify biases—particularly those related to gender inequalities—and inform future initiatives.

Moreover, with the goal of fostering a healthier and more supportive environment at IPARCOS—particularly concerning the well-being of early-career researchers—we have developed an anonymous survey targeted at PhD students to evaluate their mental well-being in the workplace. The responses offer valuable insights into their overall welfare.

These analyses have motivated a set of policies which define our EDIW Strategic Plan, designed to guarantee gender equality and to promote a balanced, diverse, healthy and inclusive environment at IPARCOS.

IPARCOS EDIW Strategic Plan

This section outlines the main measures in the EDIW Strategic Plan designed to promote and encourage Equity, Diversity protection, Inclusion and Welfare across all personnel categories at the institute.

1. EDIW Committee

The implementation of this plan is meant to be overseen by an EDIW committee, vetted by the IPARCOS council. The institute is part of the UCM and so it has no power of overall policies. The main objective of the EDIW committee is to work in coordination with UCM on issues related to equity, diversity, inclusion and welfare in science. The EDIW committee will promote the compliance of the objectives, good practices, activities and initiatives listed below.

The EDIW committee is composed of a diverse set of representatives of IPARCOS, approved by the IPARCOS council and renewed every four years, unless the EDIW committee considers that it needs to be modified within a shorter period.

The evolution of the various indicators regarding gender balance and well being will be monitored as well by the EDIW committee on a periodic basis.

The EDIW Strategic Plan must be reviewed and approved by the council every four years, unless the EDIW committee considers that it needs to be modified within a shorter period, as a result of the monitoring process.

2. EDIW Policies regarding Human Resources at the institute

2.1 Objectives on gender balance

- Increase the visibility of women and gender diverse persons and offer role models for top-level women and gender diverse researchers, both to the public and especially to students.
- Contribute to increasing vocations to women and gender diverse persons.
- Participate in national and international women and gender equality initiatives.
- Promote the participation of women and gender diverse persons in research and outreach programs.
- Promote the principle of balanced women and gender representation in the composition of highest governing boards, with special emphasis on the appointment of the most representative positions (Director, Secretary and Scientific Strategy Committee).
- Promote the representation of female and gender diverse researchers in all governing boards of IPARCOS above the ratio according to the staff composition in order to take a positive action against gender bias.
- Track data on the presence of women and gender diverse persons in different aspects of IPARCOS and research.
- Facilitate the access to UCM gender balance services and activities.

2.2 Good practices in selection processes

IPARCOS members regularly perform selection processes of non-permanent personnel which must comply with the HRS4R UCM Code [7]. Aligned with UCM regulations, the following best-practice actions are recommended:

1. Review and, if necessary, adapt the language, images, text and content of job advertisements and job descriptions by the IPARCOS research groups, to ensure that they do not contain items against EDIW best practices.
2. Incorporate a commitment to equal opportunities in all job advertisements. All candidates will be evaluated based on their merits and qualifications, without regard to gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, or any other circumstance. Candidates from underrepresented and traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds will be particularly encouraged to apply. Broad job advertising is encouraged to ensure that it reaches underrepresented communities in the IPARCOS research areas and that the pool of candidates is as diverse as possible.
3. All committees formed at the IPARCOS research groups should actively incorporate a gender perspective and ensure that their practices are free from gender bias or any other forms of discrimination. This includes being aware of implicit biases, promoting diverse representation, and applying fair, transparent criteria in evaluations and selections.
4. All selection committees formed at the IPARCOS research groups will be conscious about parental leave periods. This will be explicitly stated in all job advertisements and taken into consideration when evaluating the scientific performance of the candidates.

2.3 Good practices in scientific collaborations

1. Ensure that the right to disconnect is upheld beyond working hours and during non-working days. It is recommended that professional communication between IPARCOS members be confined to weekdays between 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM, scheduling emails if necessary. Otherwise, email signatures like *“My normal working hours are Monday to Friday between 9am - 5pm (Madrid Time). I do not expect replies outside of your normal working hours.”* are recommended.
2. PhD supervisors should read the UCM Code of Good Practice in PhD [8] to make sure that they comply with it.
3. Supervisors are encouraged to remind PhD students of their right to respect their working hours and to make clear that they are under no obligation to respond to routine scientific communication or engage in work outside those hours. Additionally, supervisors should make it clear that periods of excessive workload must be exceptional, not routine, and should always be balanced with adequate and proportional rest.

4. Supervisors are encouraged to communicate with their PhD students via email or using other professional platforms –such as Slack– over personal ones (Whatsapp, Telegram, etc).
5. It is important to acknowledge that individuals with a part-time contract cannot be expected to carry the same workload as those with a full-time position. This should be clearly communicated to ensure that no one feels pressured to meet the same expectations or contribute more than what their role and contract fairly require.
6. Supervisors should be aware of the important role they play in creating a supportive and respectful environment where PhD students feel comfortable discussing any issues related to their thesis. Supervisors are encouraged to be approachable and proactive in checking in regularly—not only on academic progress but also on the student’s well-being, satisfaction with their research, and working conditions.
7. Foster an environment where collaborators are treated as equals, in particular avoiding paternalism or any sense of superiority towards early career researchers or colleagues from underrepresented groups.
8. Cultivate empathy in your interactions with collaborators, promoting open and smooth communication, and making sure that colleagues feel comfortable working with you.
9. The EDIW committee will consider the possibility of organizing training activities for the members of IPARCOS in equity matters, to raise awareness about unconscious bias, and to avoid discriminatory attitudes. IPARCOS will also promote training activities to guide its personnel in the use of inclusive language practices. The EDIW committee will advertise within the institute any courses which become available to the personnel of IPARCOS, and encourage their members to enroll (such as, e.g., those available through the UCM internal resources webpage).

3. Policies regarding the organization of scientific activities, awareness and outreach

3.1 Organization of colloquia, seminars, workshops and conferences

1. A balanced representation between men and women among the invited speakers will be actively searched for, respecting the principles of professionalism.
2. Special attention will be paid to having a proper gender balance in the highest profile seminar series, the IPARCOS colloquia, as well as in the sessions at events organized by the Institute. As a target, we aim to increase the percentage of female speakers in the IPARCOS colloquia up to at least 40% within the upcoming 3 years.
3. With the goal of having gender balanced events at IPARCOS, such as colloquia, seminars and workshops, we aim to create a list of male and female specialists in topics of interest at IPARCOS. This list will be accessible to all Institute members, and we encourage everybody to contribute to it.

4. We recall the legal principle of balanced representation between men and women whenever possible for organizing committees of workshops and conferences.

3.2 Activities to raise awareness on diversity and inclusion

The EDIW committee at IPARCOS aims to promote inclusion and diversity by organizing initiatives that address the underrepresentation of minority groups and combat various forms of discrimination, including those based on gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and nationality. A key objective of these activities is to raise awareness of the gender gap in IPARCOS fields of research and to illuminate the impact of unconscious biases in academic and professional environments.

To this end, the committee will aim to promote a range of activities, that may include:

- Screenings of films and documentaries that highlight historical and contemporary issues related to discrimination and diversity in science (e.g., *Picture a Scientist*, provided by the European Research Council).
- Unconscious bias awareness programs, such as:
 - Access to an Implicit Association Test (IAT) [\[9\]](#) through the institute's website, covering topics such as gender, religion, age, and sexuality.
 - Workshops and training sessions aimed at developing awareness and equipping participants with evidence-based strategies for identifying and mitigating bias.

IPARCOS will also try to establish connections at national and international levels with EDIW committees across different institutions. This will allow the IPARCOS-EDIW committee to be informed about the development of activities, talks, speakers, statistics and general information abroad and to improve the EDIW@IPARCOS activities in a broad sense. At present some members of the IPARCOS-EDIW working group actively participate in the GEMF of the RSEF, and in the Association of Women Researchers and Technologists (AMIT). IPARCOS might consider joining GENERA: Gender Equality Network in Physics [\[10\]](#).

3.3 Code of conduct

The IPARCOS code of conduct follows the lines of the UCM code of conduct [\[2\]](#).

All visitors and members of IPARCOS are expected to behave in a professional manner and to create and maintain an environment that is scientifically productive and enjoyable for everyone at the institute, regardless of their personal attributes including but not limited to: age, career stage/path, disability, ethnicity, gender, marital status, medical condition, nationality, physical appearance, political affiliation, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Visitors and members of IPARCOS are expected to uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Verbal, non-verbal, and/or physical harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Harassment includes verbal or physical abuse, offensive comments, inappropriate and/or unwanted physical contact, sexual attention or innuendo, deliberate intimidation, stalking, retaliation, as well as taking pictures or video of an individual without their consent. For further details on our harassment protocol please see the dedicated section 4.

All communication (oral or written) should be appropriate for a professional audience which includes people of very diverse backgrounds. Sexist, racist, or exclusionary language, comments, images, music or jokes are not appropriate at any time. Respect for others should be present at all times. This is especially important for senior personnel since less experienced researchers may be reluctant to express their objections or discomfort regarding unwelcome or disrespectful behavior.

Finally, IPARCOS encourages the use of a non-sexist and inclusive language for all oral and written communications. Inclusive language strengthens scientific collaboration and ensures that all members—regardless of gender, background, or ability—feel respected and valued. As scientists, our pursuit of truth should also reflect fairness and humanity in how we communicate.

3.4 Outreach

IPARCOS is very active in the organization and participation in outreach activities addressed to the general public. We organize masterclasses for high-school students, outreach talks and seminars, among other activities. The IPARCOS Outreach web page (<https://www.ucm.es/iparcos/outreach>) is becoming a rich tool, but, as in most science channels, with a low female ratio. We plan to continue pushing for improvement, with activities tied to February 11th (International Day of Women & Girls in Science) or dedicated talks at the **Madrid Science Week** (La Semana de la Ciencia de Madrid), in which the UCM Physics faculty receives every year hundreds of elementary and high-school students.

The EDIW committee may coordinate with the personnel responsible for outreach at IPARCOS to ensure a fair representation of minorities in the different outreach activities, as well as the organization of special dedicated initiatives with the aim to reduce the gender gap in STEM. These actions may include:

1. An analysis of the participation of IPARCOS members in outreach activities will be carried out in order to detect and correct any gender bias.
2. A balanced representation between men and women among the participants in outreach activities will be strongly recommended. This will be particularly emphasized in the context of activities targeted to young public or in elementary or high schools (outreach talks by IPARCOS members, and/or visits and activities for high schools at IPARCOS).
3. Organization of special outreach activities to commemorate February 11th (International Day of Women and Girls in Science).

4. Similarly, organization of special outreach activities for other special dates in order to raise awareness of minorities, especially in the scientific context, for instance November 18th as LGBTQI+ STEM Day, and other similar dates.
5. Organization of educational activities for the general public to raise awareness on EDIW aspects in science.
6. Active engagement in the gender equity activities organized at the Faculty of Physics, with a special focus on its mentoring program for young female students.

4. Protocols against harassment and to foster welfare

IPARCOS is committed to the fight against harassment in the workplace, be it due to gender, race, functional diversity or any other individual characteristic. Being that the case, we hereby attach several protocols that would apply whenever harassment is detected, aiming to protect the victim effectively in case it was to happen, as well as to prevent it and keep the workplace as a safe environment. These protocols are the ones designated by the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, that have been specifically detailed in the following links:

- Sexual harassment [[11](#)]
- Workplace bullying [[12](#)]
- Diversity-based discrimination [[13](#)]

Harassment and discrimination can present itself in many forms, and can be classified according to the attacked characteristic, which can as well manifest itself in several ways:

1. Sexual harassment is one of the most common important types of abuse in the workplace, especially targeted against women. This harassment can present itself very explicitly, through unwelcome sexual advances or even direct requests for sexual favors (be it in exchange for something or not), as well as through more aggressive displays like verbal or physical attacks. However, there are subtler executions of sexual harassment, like the creation of a hostile environment by the perpetrator, gaslighting (making someone doubt themselves, taking away their confidence and credibility) towards the attacked person, power abuse or stalking and cyberbullying.
2. Racial or ethnic harassment appears when an individual is attacked simply based on their race or ethnicity. This abuse is usually displayed through demeaning comments or jokes and public humiliation; the situation may also reach the point of racists making direct threats to people due to their origin, even getting to physical abuse.
3. Functional diversity is also often targeted by abusers. People with functional diversity may experience harassment in the workplace through insults or degrading comments, isolation or, again, through aggressive behavior.

4. Workplace bullying is repeated, unreasonable behavior by an individual or group towards an employee, creating a risk to their health and safety. It often involves a misuse of power, intimidating, degrading, or humiliating the target.

These are just four types of harassment that can easily be detected in the workplace, but IPARCOS remains vigilant, considering all abusive behavior that can be targeted to other characteristics (like sexual orientation, gender identity, age, beliefs, etc.) and can manifest itself in any of the ways previously displayed or any other not explicitly stated there.

As part of the EDIW Committee's commitment to fostering equality, equity, diversity, inclusion and well-being, IPARCOS will create a *Safe Point of Contact*. **The EDIW committee is in charge of proposing the persons of the *Safe Point of Contact*. The members of the Safe Point of contact are approved by the IPARCOS council, after being proposed by the EDIW committee, and remain in charge for four years, unless the EDIW committee considers that it needs to be modified within a shorter period.**

A member of the EDIW committee can also be a part of this *Safe Point of Contact*. The members of this group will act as an initial, confidential resource for any person seeking guidance, support or information regarding issues related to discrimination, harassment, or other concerns affecting their well-being. Members of this group will be carefully informed about UCM regulations and UCM protocols, to be able to refer individuals to the relevant institutional bodies or support services. They may also voluntarily receive training in equity, diversity and inclusion through the specific programs offered by UCM. Their role is not to replace formal procedures, but to ensure that everyone has access to a trustworthy and accessible first point of contact in a safe and respectful environment. As institutional protocols are often not available in English, the members of the *Safe Point of Contact* will provide for language support when needed.

The EDIW committee will create an EDIW webpage at the IPARCOS website with all relevant information about the Safe Point of Contact, UCM protocols and resources, and IPARCOS policy.

Finally, the EDIW committee will take additional preventive actions so that harassment can be mitigated:

- Prepare a short information guide compiling all the recommendations of the EDIW plan and send it to every new IPARCOS member, in the style of "*occupational risk prevention*" document.
- Give visibility to the UCM Equality Unit and to the UCM Diversity and Inclusion Unit, and encourage PhD students and rest of IPARCOS personnel to use them in cases of gender-based or diversity-based discrimination.
- Give visibility to other types of support such as the "*Punto Violeta*" [\[14\]](#).
- Prepare mental health surveys at the EDIW web page, so that PhDs, postdocs and seniors can themselves conduct self-tests.
- Facilitate internal dialogue sessions focused on the well-being of IPARCOS personnel, aimed at identifying and giving visibility to potential issues or areas for improvement.