



Gender Equality Policy

Guide Lines for Gender Equality Policy in the Azienda USL Toscana Sud Est

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Introduction

The South-East Tuscany Local Health Authority (AUSLTSE) bases its policies on equity and respect for diversity. As a Public Administration, the Authority safeguards gender equality in compliance with current legislation and National Labour Contracts. At the same time, it has long-standing experience in combating discrimination, beginning with the establishment of the “Codice Rosa” (2009), and in implementing specific actions and policies aimed at removing barriers to gender equality. These measures go beyond the corporate context, extending to local communities and territories, thus acquiring a broader social significance.

According to its Statute, the Authority is committed to taking responsibility for the impact of its actions on society and the environment in which it operates. It therefore seeks to adopt responsible behaviours that contribute to sustainable development, including ethical and transparent practices, compliance with applicable laws and commonly accepted standards, and advanced tools for safeguarding the health and safety of all employees.

Furthermore, AUSLTSE was the first public healthcare organisation to adopt a DE&I strategy—an innovative vision based on equity, the elimination of all forms of discrimination, and the inclusion of diversity in all corporate policies. The goal is to maximise the potential of every individual working within the Authority and to promote an open, positive, and inclusive corporate culture.

As part of the implementation of its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) Strategy, AUSLTSE has adopted a corporate Gender Equality Plan (GEP)—a three-year action plan, periodically revised, that concretely and collaboratively defines the lines of action to counter gender inequality in all organisational and work settings. Gender disparities represent not only a significant loss of value due to the underuse of the skills and competences of a large portion of healthcare and social resources, but also overlap with inequalities linked to other factors (economic, social, ethnic, etc.).

Enhancing all human resources requires the active involvement of everyone, starting with the respect of each person in concrete terms. This is the concept of equity pursued by the Authority—not only in the care provided to patients, but equally in the care of its staff. Promoting gender equality in the workplace means ensuring that all employees can access and enjoy the same resources and opportunities, regardless of gender identity.

AUSLTSE values the diverse abilities and perspectives that people bring to the workplace based on gender, age, language, ethnicity, cultural background, disability, religious belief, sexual orientation, working style, level of education, professional skills, work and life experience, job function, socioeconomic status, geographic location, marital status, and family responsibilities.

According to its Statute, the Authority is guided by the following principles: the enhancement of human resources and the promotion of organisational well-being; the development of professional skills and competences in every role and profile; the recognition of equal opportunities and the appreciation of diversity; and the rejection of all discrimination.

AUSLTSE is also committed to: i) treating all personnel fairly and equitably, regardless of gender identity, while fostering a positive, respectful, and constructive approach; ii) promoting gender awareness and sensitivity; iii) promoting communication that transparently affirms the pursuit of gender equality, values diversity, and supports women’s empowerment.

1. Objective

With this document, AUSLTSE intends to define and adopt its policies in line with UNI/PdR 125:2022, aimed at ensuring and achieving the principles, commitments, and objectives established by the Authority within the framework of its gender equality policy and the DE&I strategy adopted.

2. Responsibilities

By Resolution of the General Director No. 696 of 13/06/2023, AUSLTSE adopted the project related to the “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy (DE&I Strategy).” Through this resolution, a DE&I Manager was appointed, acting under the direct mandate of the General Director as a strategic advisor on DE&I matters, and a DE&I Think Tank was established with the task of pursuing a broader strategy designed to implement a comprehensive DE&I approach across the organisation.

By Resolution of the General Director No. 930 of 19/09/2024, the DE&I Think Tank was formally assigned the role of Steering Committee for Gender Equality Policies, with a mandate, responsibilities, and objectives fully aligned with UNI/PdR 125:2022.

The composition of the Steering Committee was subsequently updated by Resolution of the General Director No. 295 of 28/03/2025, which also approved the Committee’s Operational Regulation.

3. Gender equality policy

3.1 Language

The Authority is committed, at all levels and in both internal and external communication, to using respectful and inclusive language (written, spoken, and non-verbal). Such language should reflect the subjective perception of each individual, acknowledging the possible variations of personal and identity dimensions, while preventing the use of inappropriate or potentially discriminatory expressions.

To this end, the Authority has issued specific Guidelines on Gender-Sensitive Language (Resolution of the General Director No. 140 of 12 February 2024 “Directives on Gender-Sensitive Language”) and established a permanent interdepartmental working group tasked with implementing concrete actions to integrate gender equality into the institutional and administrative communication practices of entities, organisations, and institutions involved.

3.2 Training

Organised training activities must guarantee fair and equal participation, without discrimination, in training and development programmes, including leadership courses. Each year, AUSLTSE approves an Annual Training Plan, which includes equity in training opportunities among its guiding principles. Ensuring equitable access to training is one of the key aspects in removing barriers that hinder equal career development across genders.

Training programmes at all levels must be designed according to principles of inclusion and equality, addressing gender-based prejudices and stereotypes.

3.3 Staff recruitment and hiring

Recruitment and hiring procedures at AUSLTSE follow national and regional regulations governing recruitment in Public Administration.

It is ensured that throughout all phases of competitive examinations, as well as in selection, evaluation, and hiring processes, measures are applied to prevent any form of discrimination, including gender inequality (ESTAR Resolution DG No. 533 of 23/12/2023 – amendment to the regulations on competitive and selection procedures of Estar).

By law, job profiles and required competencies are neutral with respect to gender and other potentially discriminatory factors, as they are defined by regulations and by the National Collective Labour Agreements (CCNL), which cannot be modified by the Authority (ESTAR Resolution DG No. 533 of 23/12/2023).

During recruitment, where professional skills are equivalent, preference is given to rebalancing the representation of the gender that is numerically underrepresented (ESTAR Resolution DG No. 533 of 23/12/2023).

By regulation, both genders must be represented in the appointment of competition boards (ESTAR Resolution DG No. 533 of 23/12/2023). Furthermore, all boards are subject to approval by the Regional Equality Counsellor (Consigliera/Consigliere di Parità) (ESTAR Resolution DG No. 533 of 23/12/2023).

The regulation also establishes that questions posed by board members or evaluators must strictly concern technical-professional aspects and the verification of competencies required for the professional profile under competition/evaluation/selection, and must not in any way address potentially discriminatory matters, particularly with reference to marital status, pregnancy, or caregiving responsibilities.

3.4 Career management

Professional advancement at AUSLTSE is governed by the contractual rules of the National Collective Labour Agreements (CCNL). Within the scope of its responsibilities, AUSLTSE is committed to eliminating barriers to fair career development for staff, with particular attention to gender, but not limited to it.

AUSLTSE guarantees equal career opportunities and ensures that professional development programmes are available to all staff without any form of discrimination, not only gender-based. AUSLTSE also commits to implementing actions aimed at achieving gender balance in the allocation of corporate leadership positions.

The Authority supports the creation and maintenance of a work environment that fosters diversity and safeguards the physical and psychological well-being of staff.

A monitoring system is in place, in line with the indicators defined by UNI/PdR 125:2022, to collect data on: recruitment status; workforce description by gender, type of role, assignment, and position; training; career development and promotions; resignations; retirements and early retirements; and actual remuneration received.

3.5 Pay equity and remuneration

At AUSLTSE, salaries are defined on the basis of national CCNL contractual regulations. An annual monitoring process is in place to evaluate average remuneration by assignment/role, with particular attention to gender differences.

3.6 Parenthood, family care and work-life balance

In addition to the provisions of the CCNL, AUSLTSE promotes initiatives dedicated to the protection of maternity/paternity and to services aimed at supporting the reconciliation of personal and work life (e.g., smart working, part-time arrangements, flexible hours). These initiatives, which support the sharing of family responsibilities and ensure a more equitable distribution of time between home and work, also help remove potential obstacles to career development.

3.7 Prevention of all forms of physical, verbal and digital abuse in the workplace

The Company is committed to implementing internal processes to identify, analyze through risk assessments, and manage all forms of abuse, non-inclusivity, and/or discrimination.

A specific procedure has been developed and adopted for reporting and managing cases of abuse and/or violence related to work activities (PA-SSOS-001 “Prevention and Management of Violence and Aggressions against Workers at AUSLTSE”).

With Resolution DG No. 321 of 27/03/2024, the role of the Trusted Advisor for the prevention and fight against discrimination, abuse, and harassment in the workplace was established.

3.8 Corporate Bodies for Combating Discrimination

The Joint Committee for Equal Opportunities (CUG)

The Joint Committee for Equal Opportunities (CUG), established under Law No. 183/2010, is an instrument for preventing and combating all forms of discrimination, including those based on gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, disability, religion, or language, as well as discrimination related to access to employment, working conditions, professional training, career development, and workplace safety.

Additionally, the CUG addresses organizational well-being and the fight against all forms of moral and psychological violence, as well as sexual harassment, within public administrations.

The objectives of the AUSLTSE CUG are to: i) ensure gender equality and equal opportunities, strengthening the protection of workers and guaranteeing the absence of any form of moral or psychological violence or discrimination, direct or indirect, related to gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, disability, religion, and language; ii) foster a work environment based on the principles of equal opportunity, organizational well-being, and the prevention of all forms of discrimination and moral or psychological violence against workers, in compliance with the provisions introduced by Legislative Decree 150/2009 and Legislative Decree 81/2008 (Consolidated Law on health and safety in the workplace).

The Trusted Advisor

With General Director Resolution AUSLTSE 321/2024, *“Approval of the Code of Conduct for the Fight against Sexual Harassment and Establishment of the Trusted Advisor Role for the Prevention and Fight against Discrimination, Abuse, and Harassment in the Workplace”*, the Company has equipped itself with a tool that, on one hand, concretely, openly, and inclusively defines corporate actions for combating sexual harassment, and on the other regulates the activity of the Trusted Advisor role.

The appointed Trusted Advisor provides assistance and counseling to workers who are victims of conduct harmful to personal dignity; ensures monitoring of risk situations; proposes appropriate actions to foster a climate that guarantees equal dignity and freedom for all; participates in information and training initiatives promoted by AUSLTSE and in CUG meetings; and submits an annual report to the Administration and the CUG on the outcomes of their activities.

4 Reference documents

- UNI/PdR 125:2022 – Management System for Gender Equality
- Azienda USL Toscana sud est. (2018) Resolution of the General Director No. 275 of March 22, 2018 “Establishment of the Joint Committee for Equal Opportunities, the Promotion of Workplace Well-Being, and the Fight Against Discrimination (CUG) at AUSLTSE”
- Azienda USL Toscana sud est. (2022) Resolution of the General Director No. 1618 of December 21, 2022 “Renewal of the Joint Committee for Equal Opportunities, the Promotion of Workplace Well-Being, and the Fight Against Discrimination (CUG) at AUSLTSE”
- Azienda USL Toscana sud est. (2023) Resolution of the General Director No. 348 of March 28, 2023 “Joint Committee for Equal Opportunities, the Promotion of Workplace Well-Being, and the Fight Against Discrimination (CUG) at AUSLTSE: Inclusion of the FIALS Trade Union”
- Azienda USL Toscana sud est. (2023) Resolution of the General Director No. 571 of May 23, 2023 “Call for Expressions of Interest for Participation in the Joint Committee for Equal Opportunities, the Promotion of Workplace Well-Being, and the Fight Against Discrimination (CUG) at AUSLTSE”
- Azienda USL Toscana sud est. (2023) Resolution of the General Director No. 696 of June 13, 2023 “Gender Equality Plan and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Strategy: Provisions”
- Azienda USL Toscana sud est. (2023) Resolution of the General Director No. 856 of August 1, 2023 “Appointment of Company Representatives and Presidency of the Joint Committee for Equal Opportunities, the Promotion of Workplace Well-Being, and the Fight Against Discrimination (CUG) at AUSLTSE”
- Azienda USL Toscana sud est. (2023) Resolution of the General Director No. 1054 of October 17, 2023 “Approval of the Gender Equality Plan”
- Azienda USL Toscana sud est. (2023) Resolution of the General Director No. 1224 of November

28, 2023 “Adhesion of the Joint Committee for Equal Opportunities at AUSLTSE to the National Network of Joint Committees”

- ESTAR. (2023) Resolution of the General Director No. 533 of December 23, 2023 “Amendment to the Regulations on Competitive and Selection Procedures of Estar”
- Azienda USL Toscana sud est. (2023) PA-SSOS-001 2023 “Prevention and Management of Violence and Aggressions against AUSLTSE Workers”
- Azienda USL Toscana sud est. (2024) Resolution of the General Director No. 6 of January 8, 2024 “Replacement of Members of the Joint Committee for Equal Opportunities, the Promotion of Workplace Well-Being, and the Fight Against Discrimination (CUG) at AUSLTSE”
- Azienda USL Toscana sud est. (2024) Resolution of the General Director No. 66 of January 23, 2024 “Call for Expressions of Interest for Participation in the Joint Committee for Equal Opportunities, the Promotion of Workplace Well-Being, and the Fight Against Discrimination (CUG) at AUSLTSE”
- Azienda USL Toscana sud est. (2024) Resolution of the General Director No. 140 of February 12, 2024 “Directives for Gender-Inclusive Language”
- Azienda USL Toscana sud est. (2024) Resolution of the General Director No. 321 of March 27, 2024 “Approval of the Code of Conduct for Combating Sexual Harassment and Establishment of the Trusted Advisor Role for the Prevention and Fight Against Discrimination, Abuse, and Harassment in the Workplace”
- Azienda USL Toscana sud est. (2024) Resolution of the General Director No. 930 of September 19, 2024 “Gender Policies: Toward Gender Certification”
- Azienda USL Toscana sud est. (2025) Resolution of the General Director No. 295 of March 28, 2025 “Update of the Composition of the Steering Committee for Gender Equality Policies under UNI/PdR 125:2022 and Approval of the Committee Regulations”