5 GENDER EQUALITY

masters' union university

MASTERS' UNION | ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2025

gender *equality*

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.



SDG 5 IMPACT REPORT

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01 Introduction

1.1 Understanding SDG 5: Gender Equality

Sustainable Development Goal 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. In higher education, this goes beyond simply looking at numbers. It is about ensuring that women can access education, participate safely in campus life, take on leadership roles, pursue economic opportunities, build enterprises, use enabling technologies, and progress without facing structural barriers.

For a business school, these issues are especially important because education plays a direct role in shaping opportunities in employment, entrepreneurship, and leadership. An institution contributes to SDG 5 through the conditions it creates for access and progress, the safeguards it keeps in place, the research it produces, and the chances it gives women to lead, build and shape decisions.

1.2 Masters' Union's Contribution to SDG 5

Masters' Union contributes to SDG 5 through four connected pathways.

01

Research

Examines gender diversity in governance, technology adoption and funding for women entrepreneurs.

02

Stewardship

Establishes equal-opportunity, safety, care and well-being systems.

03

Outreach

Places women leaders, founders and people professionals in visible public roles.

04

Teaching

Combines financial access, leadership development, field-based learning and venture creation with pathways to economic participation.

The institution's strongest evidence lies in the combination of policy and opportunity. The Equal Employment Opportunity framework covers non-discrimination across the employee lifecycle. PoSH and the Internal Committee provide prevention and redress. Family-friendly leave and childcare lower barriers to taking part. The Rajni Thethi Scholarship supports women learners, and women founders take part in venture-building, funding and investor platforms.

Annual metrics in this report are kept distinct from wider institutional context. Where evidence falls outside the 2024–25 reporting boundary, it is identified as contextual rather than presented as an annual outcome. Placement participation is reported as participation, not as a women-specific placement rate.

1.3 Contribution at a Glance

AREA	DOCUMENTED CONTRIBUTION
Rajni Thethi Scholarship for Women	48 women across three cohorts: 11 in PGP-TBM C5, 20 in PGP-TBM C6 and 17 in UG-TBM C2.
Women-founded / co-founded ventures	Five Cohort 5 ventures, as recorded in the Placement Report 2025, with ₹40.5 lakh in Masters' Union grants.
Gender-related faculty research	Three journal articles reported through 2025 on board diversity, governance and technology adoption by women entrepreneurs, plus a 2025 book chapter and conference papers on the funding of women-led ventures.
Institutional safeguards	EEO policy; PoSH and Internal Committee; family-friendly leave; childcare access; confidential counselling; women's wellness provisions and menstrual leave.
Leadership and public representation	Women represented in institutional leadership, student councils, public panels, national leadership forums and entrepreneurship mentorship.

02 Research

Research under SDG 5 examines the conditions that shape women's participation in governance and economic life. Masters' Union's current portfolio focuses on representation on corporate boards, the wider research landscape around board diversity, and technology adoption and funding among women entrepreneurs.

These themes align closely with participation and leadership and enabling technology. They also connect the institution's research agenda with its practice-led model: questions of representation, entrepreneurship and digital capability are examined academically and then encountered through leadership, venture and field-learning pathways elsewhere in the report.

2.1 Research on Women's Leadership and Inclusive Governance

Our first area of research looks at who sits at the top of corporate decision-making. Vohra, Sud and Bhayana study gender diversity and inclusion on Indian boards after the mandates of 2015 and 2019, and ask whether formal requirements lead to real inclusion rather than a compliance statistic alone.

A related study by Mahindru and co-authors maps research on board diversity and corporate governance. It identifies influential themes and emerging questions, strengthening the evidence base available to organisations and researchers considering how representation interacts with governance and accountability.

2.2 Research on Women's Entrepreneurship and Enabling Technology

Our second area moves from institutional governance to women's economic participation. Kaur, Mahindru and co-authors ask whether technology adoption is an enabler or a differentiator for Indian women entrepreneurs, linking digital capability with enterprise development, market participation and economic agency.

Access to finance is the next question. Dr Kashika Sud has studied how investors make funding decisions about women-led ventures, in a 2025 book chapter with Neharika Vohra and in conference papers presented in Milan, Seattle and Florence.

For an entrepreneurship-led business school, this question is directly relevant to how women founders acquire knowledge, reach customers, build networks and scale ventures. It therefore connects the institution's research contribution with the venture-support and experiential-learning systems described later in the report.

PUBLICATION	FACULTY LINK	RESEARCH FOCUS	SDG 5 RELEVANCE
Gender Diversity and Inclusion on Indian Boards: Post the Introduction of the Mandate in 2015 and 2019	Dr Kashika Sud (co-author)	Gender diversity and inclusion on Indian boards	Women's participation in decision-making and leadership
Research Perspectives and Trends of Board Diversity and Corporate Governance	Dr Rinku Mahindru (co-author)	Board diversity and corporate-governance scholarship	Evidence base for inclusive governance
Technology Adoption by Indian Women Entrepreneurs: An Enabler or Differentiator?	Dr Rinku Mahindru (co-author)	Technology adoption by Indian women entrepreneurs	Enabling technology and economic participation
The Case of Missing Women: Dynamics of Funding Women Entrepreneurs **(book chapter, Springer Nature, 2025)**	Dr Kashika Sud (co-author, with Neharika Vohra)	Funding of women entrepreneurs	Access to capital for women founders
Investor's Bias in the Funding of Women Ventures: A Qualitative Narrative Enquiry Using LIWC (conference paper, European Academy of Management, Florence, 2025; poster, American Psychological Association, Seattle, 2024)	Dr Kashika Sud	Gender bias in investor decisions	Fairness in access to funding
The Path to Building Legitimacy through Stories: Evidence from Three Women Entrepreneur Cases (conference paper, EGOS Colloquium, Milan, 2024)	Dr Kashika Sud	Legitimacy of women entrepreneurs	How women founders build credibility with investors and customers

03 Stewardship

Stewardship under SDG 5 concerns the institutional conditions under which women study, work and lead. Masters' Union's approach combines non-discrimination expectations with family support, childcare access, campus safety, complaint processes, healthcare, confidential well-being services and opportunities for women to participate in institutional and student leadership.

3.1 Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination

The Equal Employment Opportunity Policy establishes the institutional baseline for fair treatment. It applies to full-time and part-time employees, temporary and fixed-term staff, interns, apprentices, consultants and third-party contractors, and covers recruitment, selection, assignment, compensation, career progression, benefits, training, disciplinary action and separation.

The policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and other protected characteristics, assigns managers responsibility for inclusive practice, and provides reporting channels intended to operate without retaliation. Because the framework covers the employee lifecycle rather than recruitment alone, it addresses both entry and progression. Masters' Union publishes the results. The 2026 Gender Pay Gap Report records a median gender pay gap of 3.40% and a median bonus gap of 0.00%. Women make up 49.82% of mid-level roles, 56.44% of senior-level roles and 26.67% of leadership roles. These commitments sit within an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy with pre-defined, time-bound targets, and the Belong Club keeps conversations about inclusion, dignity and bias part of campus life.

3.2 Family-Friendly Leave and Childcare

The family-friendly policy is designed to protect continuity of participation when caregiving responsibilities change. Eligible women employees can take up to 26 weeks of paid maternity leave for childbirth, four weeks after a miscarriage or medical termination, and eight weeks to adopt a child under three months or for commissioning motherhood. Eligible men employees receive seven consecutive days of paid paternity leave.

The policy provides for return to the previous or an equivalent role where applicable. This matters to SDG 5 because leave is most effective when employees can return without an avoidable break in career continuity or status.

KLAY Day Care operates within DLF Cyber Park, where Masters' Union is located. The facility is not a Masters' Union-run childcare centre. Its location, however, gives students and employees access to professional childcare within the campus complex, which removes a practical barrier that often affects women with caregiving duties more.



KLAY Day Care reception at DLF Cyber Park.



KLAY Day Care classroom facility within DLF Cyber Park.

3.3 Safety, PoSH and Grievance Redressal

Masters' Union maintains a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying and gender-based misconduct through its Prevention of Sexual Harassment framework and Internal Committee. The framework establishes responsibilities, confidential reporting routes and time-bound procedures for reviewing complaints, and applies across students, faculty, staff, interns, consultants, visitors and contractual personnel. Masters' Union is vigilant about building this awareness early: students' first interaction with POSH is at orientation, in a session led by Sonia Jaitley. The student-led Safety Committee works to build channels students can trust when something goes wrong, and greater awareness of where and how to seek support.

External representation within the committee supports independent participation in the redressal process. Awareness and sensitisation sessions explain prohibited conduct, reporting routes, confidentiality requirements and the rights and responsibilities of community members. The policy is publicly available, and six training sessions across central functions and academic programmes reached 886 attendees. Campus security measures, including 24x7 personnel, CCTV, controlled access, visitor management, emergency-response protocols and designated support channels, complement formal redressal by addressing safety in day-to-day institutional life.



Awareness session on the prevention of sexual harassment and student safety.

3.4 Women's Health, Well-being and Campus Support

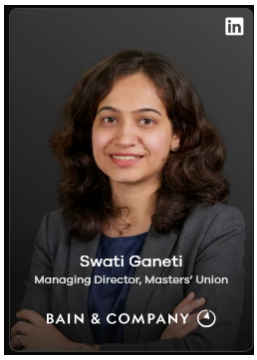
Gender equality also depends on whether institutional health and well-being systems address barriers that can affect participation. Masters' Union provides group medical insurance for employees, discounted preventive screening through Dr Lal PathLabs, confidential mental-health support for employees through Ekaant and counselling for students through Amaha.

Women employees may access one menstrual-leave day per month under the stated policy, which may be availed as a work-from-home day. Cross-SDG health evidence also documents sanitary-pad dispensers, PeeSafe solutions and safety-alarm systems across women's washrooms since 2020. These provisions connect health, dignity and safety with continued participation in study and work.

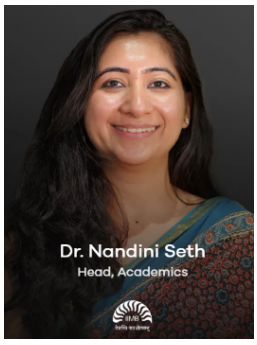
PROVISION	INSTITUTIONAL ROLE
Employee health insurance	Financial protection against hospitalisation and other covered healthcare needs.
Dr Lal PathLabs partnership	Discounted preventive health screening for employees and immediate family members.
Amaha	Confidential counselling and mental-health support for students.
Ekaant	Confidential counselling and mental-health support for employees.
Menstrual leave	One day per month for women employees under the stated policy, available as a work-from-home day.
Women's washroom provisions	Sanitary-pad dispensers, PeeSafe solutions and safety-alarm systems documented in the health and well-being evidence base.

3.5 Women in Institutional and Student Leadership

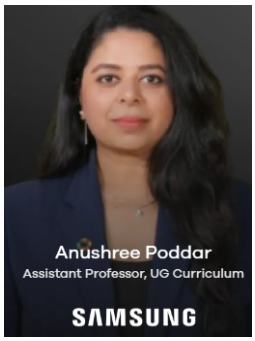
Women's participation is visible in institutional leadership, academics, programme delivery and student affairs. Women lead across the institution: Swati Ganeti in institutional and undergraduate programme leadership, Dr Anushree Poddar in sustainability programmes, Aayushi Banotra in student affairs Dr Nandini Seth in academics, Parinita in HR, Poornima in university partnerships, Jeneesha in alumni relations and Kamayani. Women faculty also contribute to teaching, research, mentoring and academic governance.



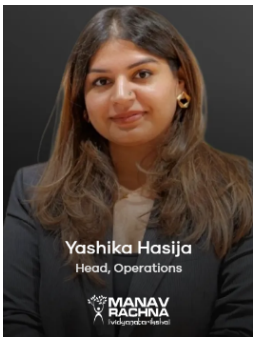
Swati Ganeti



Dr Nandini Seth



Dr Anushree Poddar



Yashika Hasija



Aayushi Banotra

Women students also hold leadership responsibilities across residential life, culture, careers, wellbeing, finance, media and safety. These roles give students direct experience of representation, peer accountability and decision-making rather than positioning leadership only as a classroom concept.

ROLE / BODY	WOMEN STUDENT LEADER	ROLE / BODY	WOMEN STUDENT LEADER
Vice President, Hostel	Praagya Choudhary	**President, B-Well**	Sanya Aggarwal
Vice President, Culture	Nandini Hemnani	**President, Fintech Club**	Akaksha Sehgal
Vice President, Careers	Parul Sarkar	**Lead, Safety Committee**	Abhisha Bhasin
President, Socio-Cultural Club	Tinisha Chhabra	**Media Committee**	Shweta Shah

04 Outreach

Outreach under SDG 5 extends women's leadership beyond internal representation. Masters' Union uses public forums, school-entrepreneurship platforms, podcasts and external leadership events to place women educators, founders, investors and people leaders in visible positions of expertise and decision-making.

PLATFORM	WOMEN LEADERS / ROLE	DOCUMENTED CONTRIBUTION
Intersect 4.0: School Leaders panel	Aditi Misra, Neeta Bali, Anita Malhotra, Sanchita Verma	Women education leaders discussing curriculum innovation, institutional leadership and future-ready education.
Women Leadership Summit 2025	Swati Ganeti and women executives across industry	National forum on inclusion, leadership models and representation in strategic decision-making.
High School Startup League Season 3	Priyanka Gill, judge and mentor	Women founder-investor visibility within a youth entrepreneurship platform drawing 10,000+ applications from 500+ schools across 15+ states.
CHRO Exchange Podcast	Neha Sharma, VP-HR, Kalaari Capital	Public conversation on organisational culture, talent, leadership and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.
ET Women Conclave 2026	Swati Ganeti	Post-reporting-period recognition of women in institutional leadership; retained as context, not counted as a 2024–25 outcome.

4.1 Public Visibility of Women Leaders

Intersect 4.0 convened education and industry leaders to examine the future of learning. Its School Leaders panel featured Aditi Misra, Neeta Bali, Anita Malhotra and Sanchita Verma, bringing women leaders into public discussion on curriculum innovation, institutional leadership and future-ready education.

The relevance to SDG 5 lies not simply in speaker representation but in the visibility of women as decision-makers. Students and participants encountered women leaders discussing institutional change in their own professional capacity, reinforcing expertise and authority rather than ceremonial inclusion.



Intersect 4.0: School Leaders panel featuring women education leaders.

4.2 Women Leadership Summit and External Forums

On 1 May 2025, Swati Ganeti represented Masters' Union at the Women Leadership Summit organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry in association with Masters' Union. The forum brought women executives together to discuss inclusion, leadership models and representation in strategic decision-making.

Participation connected academic leadership with a national industry platform and contributed to wider dialogue on how organisations develop women leaders and increase representation in decision-making roles.

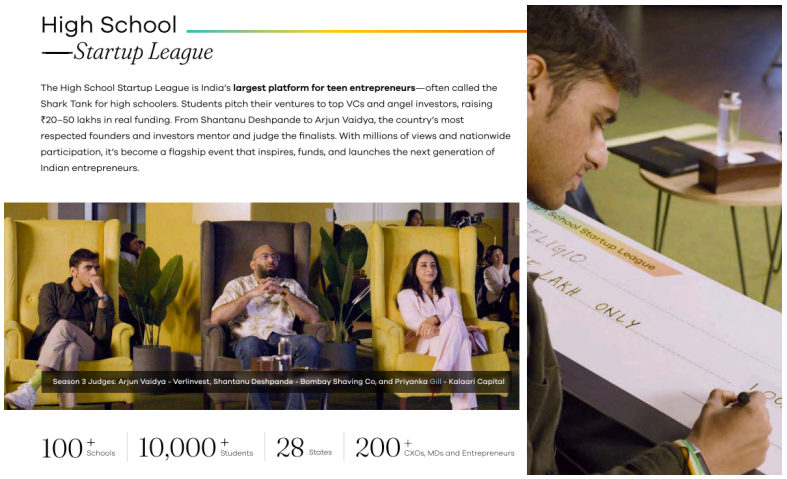


Women Leadership Summit 2025, organised by CII in association with Masters' Union.

4.3 Women Entrepreneurs as Mentors and Role Models

Season 3 of the High School Startup League engaged Priyanka Gill, Venture Partner at Kalaari Capital and co-founder of POPxo and The Good Glamm Group, as a judge and mentor. Her participation gave school students access to a woman leader with direct experience in founding, scaling and investing in consumer businesses.

The wider league has drawn 10,000+ applications from 500+ schools across 15+ states, supported by over 200 CXOs, managing directors and entrepreneurs. Within this larger platform, women investors and founders expand the range of visible entrepreneurial role models available to young participants.



High School Startup League Season 3: women entrepreneurship mentorship.



Women-led student teams and participants at HSSL Season 3.

Across wider public programming, Masters' Union also features women as speakers and subject-matter leaders. The CHRO Exchange Podcast hosted Neha Sharma, Vice President, Human Resources at Kalaari Capital, for a conversation on organisational culture, leadership development, talent and the realities facing women entrepreneurs.



CHRO Exchange Podcast with Neha Sharma: 'Culture is not an afterthought.'

4.4 Recognition, Community and Campus Engagement

Within the campus community, International Women's Day activities and women-focused well-being sessions create space for recognition, peer connection and discussion. The SEWA Club's first initiative, Courage Beyond Scars, with the Chhanv Foundation, brought women together to share stories through a ramp walk, storytelling and open dialogue. An employee-recognition programme also acknowledges women professionals across academic and administrative functions for their contribution to programme delivery, student experience, operations and institutional development.



International Women's Day communication.



Women participants in a campus well-being and learning session.



Women-focused sound healing and community-building session.



Recognition of women professionals across institutional functions.



Employee recognition for women professionals.

The public record continues beyond the reporting year. At the Economic Times Women Conclave 2026, Swati Ganeti was recognised as an Inspiring Women Leader for excellence in education innovation and future-ready learning. Because this falls after the 2024–25 reporting boundary, it is retained only as later institutional context and is not counted in annual metrics.



Swati Ganeti receiving the ET Inspiring Women Leader 2026 recognition (post-reporting context).

05 Teaching

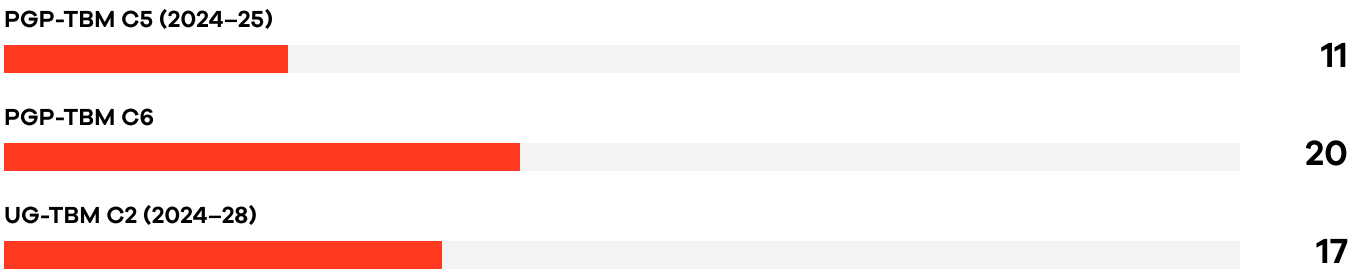
Teaching contributes to SDG 5 when women can access education, develop leadership capability, build enterprises and examine the structural conditions that shape economic participation. Masters' Union combines financial access with practice-led learning, mentorship, venture creation and immersion-based study of Indian enterprise ecosystems.

5.1 Access through Scholarships and Financial Support

The Rajni Thethi Scholarship for Women supports candidates with strong academic or professional records and the potential to emerge as industry leaders across postgraduate and undergraduate management education. Across three cohorts, 48 women have received the scholarship: 11 in PGP-TBM C5, 20 in PGP-TBM C6 and 17 in UG-TBM C2.

The institution's broader financing architecture also includes need-based, diversity, merit and entrepreneurship scholarships and education-loan facilitation of up to 95% of programme fees through partner institutions. These measures can reduce financial barriers to participation, although this report does not attribute gender-specific utilisation to schemes where women-specific uptake has not been documented.

RAJNI THETHI WOMEN SCHOLARS, BY COHORT **48**



Bar length shows share of the 48 scholars.

5.2 Participation and Graduate Opportunity

For PGP-TBM Cohort 5, women represented 72 of 233 students (30.9%). Of the 181 students who opted into campus placements, 57 were women (31.5%). These figures show participation in the cohort and placement process. They do not give a women-specific placement rate, because the records do not provide a reliable count of women placed against women eligible.

72 of 233

Women in PGP-TBM Cohort 5 (30.9%)

57 of 181

Women opting for campus placements (31.5%)

The women-specific placement rate is not stated and is not inferred from participation data. Keeping participation and outcome measures separate strengthens the credibility of gender reporting. Future reporting should link application, entry, continuation, graduation and placement outcomes using a consistent method that splits results by gender rather than inferring one stage from another.

5.3 Women's Entrepreneurship: From Curriculum to Capital

Entrepreneurship is embedded in the academic model rather than treated only as an extracurricular activity. Through OutClass and the Venture Initiation Programme, students move from opportunity identification and customer validation to product development, go-to-market design, operating decisions and investor pitching. Demo Day connects student founders to more than 150 venture capitalists and angel investors, while institutional grants provide early capital for selected ventures.

For Cohort 5, the Placement Report 2025 identifies five ventures with women founders or co-founders that received a combined ₹40.5 lakh in Masters' Union grants. Revenue is reported only where it appears in the Placement Report 2025, avoiding the unsupported historical or later-period figures contained in earlier drafts.

VENTURE	FOUNDER(S)	REPORTED ARR	MU GRANT
Flourish Foods	Sonam Sharma; Nikhil Sharma	₹7.2 lakh	₹8 lakh
Mom's Mixes	Anubhooti Jain	₹38.23 lakh	₹9 lakh
Yango / NutriZen	Sakshi Tuteja	₹27.8 lakh	₹7.5 lakh
Spawn Right	Lokesh Gaingade; Sanjana Nair	Not stated	₹8 lakh
Saaha India	Jaishree Soni	₹14 lakh	₹8 lakh

ARR: reported annual recurring revenue. MU grant: Masters' Union grant.



Women founders participating in the Venture Initiation Programme and Demo Day ecosystem.

5.4 Leadership Development and Workplace Readiness

Leadership capability is also developed through structured reflection and practice. A Women in Management session with Mahak Garg used role-play and open discussion to help women students strengthen leadership presence, articulate workplace challenges and examine responses to professional barriers in realistic situations.

This complements formal academic learning by giving students a peer environment in which to build confidence, reflect on gendered workplace experiences and strengthen their ability to communicate and lead.





5.5 PGP Immersions: Gender, Enterprise and Value Chains

PGP Immersions extend learning beyond campus by using business and community immersions to examine how women participate in markets, ownership structures and value chains. The strongest SDG 5 relevance comes from immersions where gender is material to the operating model rather than from the programme as a whole.

IMMERSION	APPLIED LEARNING CONTEXT	GENDER-EQUALITY LENS
Amul, Anand, Gujarat	Farmer-owned dairy cooperative, rural incomes, nutrition, cold chain and inclusive market access	Women's participation and agency in cooperative value chains; ownership, bargaining power and access to income.
Meesho, Bengaluru, Karnataka	Digital commerce, small-seller enablement and platform entrepreneurship	Digital access, market participation and the conditions that enable women-led microenterprise.
Ada Chikankari, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh	Heritage craft enterprise, artisan livelihoods and design-led market access	Recognition of home-based and artisan work; market access and value capture for women workers.
SEWA Chikankari, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh	Women's collective enterprise, artisan organisation and fair livelihoods	Collective bargaining, economic agency, safer work and inclusive participation in value chains.



PGP Immersions at Amul, Anand.



PGP Immersions engagement with Chikankari enterprise in Lucknow.



PGP Immersions engagement with SEWA and women artisans.

Across these immersions, the gender lens covers ownership, bargaining power, access to finance, recognition of home-based and unpaid work, digital access, workplace safety and the conditions that let women enter, stay and progress in markets. Where an immersion date is not established in the supplied evidence, it is treated as programme context rather than a verified 2024–25 annual outcome.

5.6 Women's Leadership in Academic Programme Design

Women's leadership is also present in academic design itself. The PG Programme in Sustainability and Business Management is led by Dr Anushree Poddar, Programme Director. A woman therefore shapes curriculum design and delivery for a postgraduate track that sits between business, ESG and the climate economy.

The programme's broader curriculum covers governance, policy, climate finance, renewable energy, circular economy, agritech and sustainable supply chains. These subjects are not counted as SDG 5 evidence just because a woman leads the programme. Their gender relevance is strongest where the curriculum and field learning examine inclusive participation, economic opportunity, leadership and who benefits from the value created. Five of its 40 courses are mapped to SDG 5: Social Impact, Leadership and Negotiation, Talent and People Decisions, Cross-Cultural Management and Managerial Decision-Making.

Subjects in the PGP-TBM Curriculum

The PGP-TBM course plan includes Gender, Diversity & Inclusion, which asks how to craft gender-inclusive strategies that foster innovation and growth, and Managing Diversity and Inclusion in Organizations, which asks how organisations build inclusive workplaces that drive performance and belonging.

06 Institutional Direction

We already have policies, safeguards and opportunities that help women study, work and lead on campus, and we support women founders. Our ambition is a campus and a business community where women lead as a matter of course.

6.1 A Campus where Women Thrive

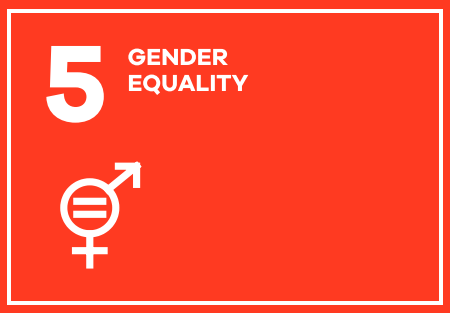
We want women to feel safe, supported and able to grow at every stage of their time with us. We will keep strengthening safeguards, leave, childcare and well-being support until they are a model for other institutions.

6.2 More Women in Leadership

We want more women to lead, in our classrooms, student bodies and management, and in the businesses our graduates go on to run. Our ambition is to widen scholarships, mentoring and leadership opportunities until leadership looks like the whole community.

6.3 Backing Women Founders

We want to become the place women founders choose first, with funding, mentors and investor access that help them start and grow businesses, supported by our research on how women entrepreneurs are funded.



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