



SDG-5: GENDER EQUALITY

“No country can ever truly flourish if it stifles the potential of its women and deprives itself of the contribution of half its citizen.”

Michelle Obama

According to UNFPA, gender equality is a central component to development, yet Pakistan currently ranks the second lowest country in the world for gender equality, according to the Global Gender Gap Index. Although efforts to promote gender equality are apparent within Pakistan's vision 2025, there is still much more to be done to improve the realities for women and girls across the country.

COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) strives to provide an environment which is conducive for women be it students, faculty, and or women at administrative positions. It aims to provide a competitive atmosphere where anyone can achieve his/ her goals despite the gender. CUI makes education and job opportunities accessible to the women through a selection criteria based on open merit considering previous academic achievement, without gender bias. As per Clause 5(1) of the CUI Act No. XI of 2018:

“The University shall be open to all persons of either gender and of whatever religion, race, creed, class colour or domicile and no person shall be denied the privileges of the University on the grounds of religion, race, caste, creed, class, colour or domicile.”

The number of women who started a degree program at CUI in 2021 was 4,117, out of a total of 9,977 who were admitted that year. Thus, the proportion of women among all admitted students was 41%, which is quite impressive in terms of gender equality in a developing country like Pakistan. The total number of students currently enrolled at all the seven campuses of the University is 34,323.

The University systematically measures and

tracks women's application rate, acceptance, and entry, through its Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC), which collects and compiles women's application data. It provides the relevant data to the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) annually.

Women's Access Schemes

The University provides numerous support services, which include exclusive scholarships for women, mentoring and women's access schemes.

Mentoring

A seminar come webinar on 'Empowerment of Women through Development of Digital Skills for Selling on Amazon' was arranged at the Sahiwal Campus in April 2021, by the Dukhtar-e-Pakistan (Daughters of Pakistan) Program, in collaboration with the University of Sahiwal and CUI.



Scholarships

The Scottish Scholarship Scheme is a fully funded scholarship offered exclusively to females, which covers their tuition fees, hostel costs, travel to and from home to university twice a year for four-year

bachelor's degree at an HEC-recognised Pakistani public university in the subject areas of education; sustainable energy; food security & agriculture and health science.

In addition, Pakistan-USAID Graduate Level Scholarships were also offered in Fall 2021 for studies in Engineering and IT, to female students only. Furthermore, the Ehsaas Scholarship Program, makes it mandatory that among the recipients at least 50% are females.

Other Access Activities

CUI conducted a Breast Cancer Awareness Day at the Abbottabad campus in October 2021. Faculty members from the Pharmacy Department explained the audience of the major risk factors and how to avoid them.

CUI has established a 'Women in Engineering (WIE) Society,' under the IEEE Chapter, in which female students of engineering disciplines participate in mentoring sessions, under the supervision of senior female professors.

The University is an open merit University which allows female applicants to apply in any of the programs offered by the University. 15,716 application were submitted by women at CUI during 2021.



Proportion of Senior Female Academics	Total	Percentage
Number of Employees (2021)	5,163	
Number of Academic Staff	2,143	
Number of Senior Academic Staff	46	
Number of Senior Female Academic Staff	5	11%
Proportion of Women Receiving Degrees:		
Total Number of Graduates (2021)	8,606	
Number of Graduates in STEM	6,632	77%
Number of Graduates in Medicine	117	2%
Number of Graduates in Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	1,854	22%
Total Number of Female Graduates	3,206	48%
Number of Female Graduates in STEM	2,281	34%
Number of Female Graduates in Medicine	49	42%
Number of Female Graduates in Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	879	47%

Maternity and Paternity Policies

The University has maternity policy in place that support women's participation in the workforce. The University's leave rules allow female employees to avail 90 days of maternity leave, which are not deducted from their 'earned' or 'casual' leave balances. Female employees are eligible for such leave after one year's satisfactory and uninterrupted service.

Childcare Facility for Faculty, Staff and Students

The University offers childcare facilities to its faculty members, staff as well as to married students, which allows recent mothers to attend the University without having to worry about taking care of their babies, who are looked after by well-trained staff. Such facilities are available at all campuses. The Abbottabad campus has the capacity to look after 50 children at any given time.

Tracking of Women's Graduation Rate

The University measures and tracks the likelihood of female students to graduate, in comparison with their male counterparts. Schemes are also in place to close gaps, if any, between male and female students in terms of opportunities. The Quality Enhancement Cell annually measures female graduates' data and forwards it to the Higher Education Commission each year. 3,206 females students graduated out of 8,606 graduates from CUI during 2021.

Policies to Protect Against Discrimination

The University also has a policy that protects those reporting discrimination in educational or employment opportunities. The Registrar Secretariat has formally notified committees that periodically deal with cases of harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority, at all campuses.

Moreover, Grievance Committees are also notified at CUI to address any grievances/complaints filed by the CUI employees.

