

CALL FOR PAPERS

The “Women in STEM” equality strategy – discourse, practices, narratives

Since the 1990s, the “Women in STEM” (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) agenda has been a central part of gender equality strategies in science, education, and business. While the focus in the 1980s was primarily on the low proportion of women in certain technical fields, the scope has since expanded considerably. In addition to issues of recruitment and choice of study, the focus is now on organizational structures, implicit bias, reconciliation of work and family life, processes of subjectification, and experiences of belonging and exclusion.

The agenda aims to increase the visibility, representation, and participation of women* in technical disciplines. At the same time, femininity and difference are often functionalized, for example through attributions such as “female leadership” or “soft skills,” whereas the “STEM woman” is framed as a high-performing exception. Critical reflections on equality strategies in STEM subjects have increased over time, with recent contributions coming from intersectional, queer-feminist, postcolonial, and decolonial perspectives.

This issue analyzes “Women in STEM” as a political, epistemic, and affective project. It focuses on the question of which normalizations, exclusions, and ambivalences – which discomfort – are produced by dominant narratives of equality, and what scope for transformative practices is apparent in the fields of social and technical sciences. We welcome theoretical, empirical, and practice-oriented contributions that critically examine existing neoliberal logics of excellence, funding and utilization, and discuss institutional and knowledge policy alternatives.

Possible questions/research topics in detail

- Genealogies and equality discourse: Developments in the “Women in STEM” agenda, narratives of excellence, expertise and meritocracy in technology and science.
- Institutions and equality in practice: Interventions in teaching, research and organization, as well as institutional obstacles and ambivalence.
- Alternatives and transformations: Acts of solidarity, diverse forms of knowledge, alternative understandings of technology, and critical masculinities.
- Subjectification and body politics: Belonging, exclusion and affective experiences, performance and body norms from intersectional and post-/decolonial perspectives.
- Gender politics and representations: Critique of binary and affirmative funding logics, neoliberal patterns of representation, and the “STEM woman” stereotype; ambivalences of feminist visibility.

Procedure and timetable

- Please submit a one- to two-page abstract by **28 June 2026**. Non-German speakers are welcome to submit their articles in English.
- Please send your proposal as well as your manuscript as Word file to: manuskripte@gender-zeitschrift.de (**subject: Special issue „Women in STEM“**).
- Once your abstract has been assessed and judged suitable for this issue, you will receive an invitation to submit. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by **13 July 2026**. The deadline for submission of the final manuscript is **13 December 2026**.
- Manuscripts must not exceed **50,000 characters (including space characters)**. A style sheet for authors is available at www.gender-zeitschrift.de/en/manuscripts.

All submissions will be reviewed in our double-blind peer review process based on which the final selection of contributions to be published will be made. The editors may give instructions to revise the contribution, which is the rule rather than the exception. In case of a high number of positively peer-reviewed contributions, the Editorial Department reserves the right to make a final selection of articles and to publish some contributions in a later issue.

About GENDER. Journal for Gender, Culture and Society

GENDER. Journal for Gender, Culture and Society was founded in 2009 as a journal on women and gender studies. The journal aims to cover a wide range of topics and academic disciplines in which gender issues are reflected. Given the journal's multi-disciplinary setting, we welcome analyses from, for instance, sociology, educational science, political science, cultural science and history which correspond to the interdisciplinary nature of gender studies. GENDER is published in three issues a year. Contributions to the free section are always welcome, irrespective of the focus of the special issue.

Do you have any questions?

For further topic-related information please contact the editors of the special issue: **Prof. Dr. Monique Ritter** (Monique.Ritter@haw-landshut.de), **Dr. Sahra Dornick** (s.dornick@tu-berlin.de), and **Bernadette Rohlf** (Bernadette.Rohlf@hszg.de).

For questions on formal issues and work flow please contact the editorial team of GENDER (redaktion@gender-zeitschrift.de).

Please note: Manuscript submissions only via manuskripte@gender-zeitschrift.de