

# Equal Opportunities Commission

## Gender Equality in Hong Kong

### Overview

Hong Kong has made significant progress in advancing gender equality in recent decades. Nevertheless, gender imbalances still remain in the fields of employment and political and public affairs.

The **Sex Discrimination Ordinance (SDO)** came into force in 1996. It prohibits discrimination against either men or women on the basis of sex, marital status and pregnancy in seven public domains, including employment, education, and provision of goods, services and facilities. It also protects both men and women from sexual harassment.

On 19 June 2020, the Discrimination Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Ordinance 2020 came into effect. The Ordinance amended the SDO to protect workplace participants in common workplaces from sexual<sup>[1]</sup> harassment. It also provides protection from direct and indirect discrimination, as well as victimisation for breastfeeding women in key sectors. On 17 March 2021, the Legislative Council passed the 2020 Sex Discrimination (Amendment) Bill to provide protection for breastfeeding women from harassment.



In 2025, the EOC handled

**588** complaints under the SDO.

### Education



- In 2024, **67.1%** of female (aged 15 and over) had received upper secondary education and above, as against **70.8%** for men. <sup>[2]</sup>
- The number of female students (55 898) enrolled in higher education programmes funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC) in the 2024/25 academic year continued to outnumber male students (54 432). <sup>[3]</sup>

- In the 2024/25 academic year, the proportion of female students was higher than that of male students in most UGC-funded academic programmes, except for science and engineering and technology programmes. <sup>[4]</sup>



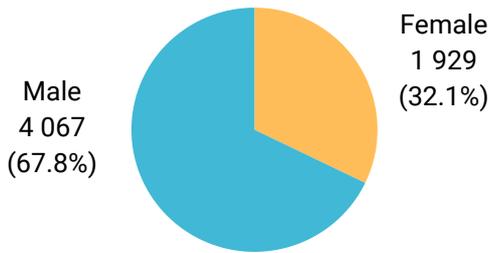
<i>UGC-funded academic programmes enrolment by sex (2024/25)</i>		
<b>Programme</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
Medicine	2 436 (52%)	2 247 (48%)
Dentistry	434 (62%)	259 (38%)
Health	5 478 (62.5%)	3 283 (37.5%)
Sciences	7 419 (35.7%)	13 349 (64.3%)
Engineering & Technology	5 776 (28.4%)	14 555 (71.6%)
Business & Management	10 563 (54.8%)	8 716 (45.2%)
Social Sciences	8 686 (62.2%)	5 285 (37.8%)
Arts & Humanities	9 178 (69.7%)	3 988 (30.3%)
Education	5 938 (68.4%)	2 748 (31.6%)

- In a study published by the EOC in 2019, 23% of the surveyed students reported that they were sexually harassed at least once in the 12 months before the survey. The prevalence rate is higher for female students (27%) than male students (18.4%).<sup>[5]</sup>

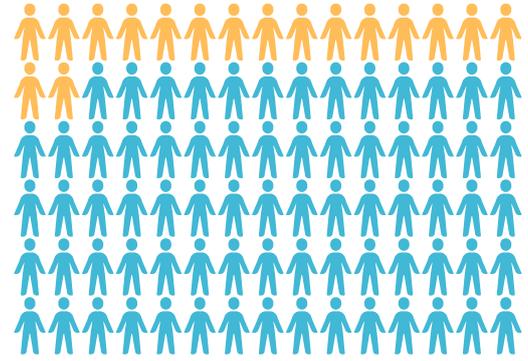
## Employment

- Women (excluding foreign domestic workers) had lower labour force participation rate (**47.6%**) than men (**62.7%**) in 2024.<sup>[6]</sup> There were more economically inactive women (1 762 600) than men (1 113 100). Among the economically inactive women, 564 000 claimed they were inactive because of the need to engage in household duties, as compared to 38 900 men who cited the same reason.<sup>[7]</sup>
- The labour force participation rate of never married women (excluding foreign domestic workers) was 63.6% in 2024, much higher than that for ever married women at 41.5%. In contrast, the labour force participation rates for never married men (66.1%) and ever married men (61.1%) are similar, reflecting the trend for married women to exit the labour market temporarily or permanently after marriage.<sup>[8]</sup>
- The median monthly employment earnings (excluding foreign domestic helpers) for women in 2024 was HK\$20,000, around 16% lower than the HK\$24,000 for men.<sup>[9]</sup> Over half of the female employed persons (63.7%) were workers in elementary occupations, service and sales, or clerical support, compared to around 33% for male. The proportion of female working as managers, professionals and associate professionals stood at 35.1%, lower than the 46.2% for male.<sup>[10]</sup>
- According to a survey by the EOC in 2021, 11.8% of respondents reported having experienced sexual harassment at work in the 24 months prior to the survey. The overall prevalence rate of sexual harassment for women was 14.6%, while the figure stood at 8.8% for men. The prevalence rate was highest among women aged 18 to 34 (22.5%).<sup>[11]</sup>

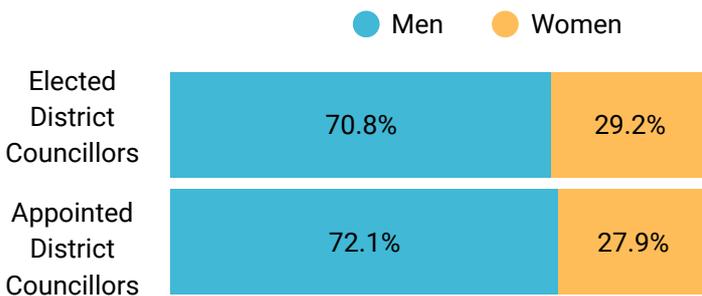
## Social & Political Participation



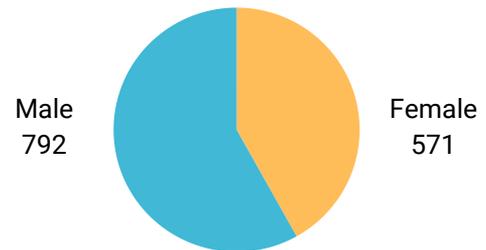
- In 2024, 32.1% (1 929) of the 5 996 non-official members serving on public sector advisory and statutory bodies were female, while 67.8% (4 067) were male. <sup>[12]</sup>



- Out of the 90 Legislative Councillors elected in 2025, 17 were female and 73 were male.



- Out of the 264 elected District Councillors in 2023, 29.2% (77) were women while 70.8% (187) were men. Out of the 179 appointed District Councillors in 2023, 27.9% (50) were women while 72% (129) were men. <sup>[13]</sup>



- The number of male and female Directorate Officers in the Civil Service stood at 792 and 571 respectively in 2024. <sup>[14]</sup>

## Pregnancy Discrimination & Breastfeeding Discrimination/Harassment



- In 2025, the EOC handled **95** pregnancy discrimination complaint cases and **9** breastfeeding discrimination/harassment complaint cases.

- In a study published by the EOC in 2024, **81%** of the participants who have breastfed or expressed milk felt that there is a need for more breastfeeding or milk expressing facilities in public places. <sup>[15]</sup>



[1] All the provisions of the Ordinances came into effect on 19 June 2020, with the exception of the provisions on breastfeeding discrimination and harassment, which came into effect on 19 June 2021.

[2] Census and Statistics Department, [Women and Men in Hong Kong - Key Statistics \(2025 Edition\)](#).

[3] *ibid*

[4] Census and Statistics Department, [Women and Men in Hong Kong - Key Statistics - Education and Training Characteristics \(2025 Edition\)](#).

[5] Chan, J., Lam, K., Cheung, C., and Lo, J. (2019) [Break the Silence: Territory-wide Study on Sexual Harassment of University Students in Hong Kong](#).

[6] Census and Statistics Department, [Women and Men in Hong Kong - Key Statistics \(2025 Edition\)](#).

[7] Census and Statistics Department, [Economically inactive persons aged 15 and over by reason for being economically inactive and sex](#).

[8] Census and Statistics Department, [Labour force and labour force participation rate by marital status, age and sex \(excluding foreign domestic helpers\)](#).

[9] Census and Statistics Department, [Women and Men in Hong Kong - Key Statistics \(2025 Edition\)](#).

[10] Census and Statistics Department, [Employed persons by occupation of main employment, age and sex](#).

[11] Ip, C. Y. (2022) [A Territory-wide Representative Survey on Sexual Harassment in Hong Kong 2021](#).

[12] Census and Statistics Department, [Women and Men in Hong Kong - Key Statistics \(2025 Edition\)](#).

[13] *ibid*

[14] *ibid*

[15] Equal Opportunities Commission (2024) [Study on Breastfeeding at Publicly Accessible Premises in Hong Kong](#).