



Gender Equality at University: Evidence from IRIS Survey

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The article shows the research performed by the University of Genoa within the project *Benchmarks Interfaculty Students: development of a gender perspective* to find strategies to understand what leads students to success in their studies.

The aim of our research was to evaluate gender equality of student achievement in higher education.

The main questions that aim the article are the existence or not of “male” or “female” university courses and if/how gender affects students’ choice about their university education.

An applied tool of research was the interfaculty indicator of student achievement of the University of Genoa, so called Indicatore di Rendimento Interfacoltà Studenti (IRIS), applied from the gender point of view. IRIS is an indicator that measures students’ performances in learning processes for their first year of higher education. IRIS takes into account both effectiveness and efficiency of learning processes: in the first case by monitoring the examination performances of the students within their first academic year; in the second case by the credits achieved by students within their first academic year.

From the methodological point of view, since the academic year 2004/2005, annually a survey was done to measure IRIS, involving totally 19.555 freshmen of the University of Genoa, of which 10716 females and 8839 males. IRIS is the ratio between the real student performances (examination scores per formative credits) and the best expected performances (the maximum scores per all the credits). For that reason, student’s IRIS is from 0 (minimum) to 100 (maximum).

Quantitative data analysis were done to study the grade and intensity of gender differences in front of IRIS results. The evidence shows that females success more than males. In the academic years examined here, the trend is that the females’ IRIS was on average 20 points higher than that of the males.