



FEM*MA - WS/24 & SS/25

Annual report



Annual report fem*MA 2024/25

After a successful year we would like to look back at all the accomplishments and progress that fem*MA has achieved during this last academical period. Not only has fem*MA grown within its members, but it has also opened the doors for women* of many different ages to get encouraged and to get the needed support in this field of science.

Why do we need women networks?

Even though it has been quite some time since the scientific world has opened its doors to all genders, it still remains dominated by men—especially in mathematics. Instead of getting frustrated or discouraged by this reality, it takes active members of the community to step up and create change. This is exactly why fem*MA exists.

One of fem*MA's most important fields of work is offering support at every possible stage of an academic career. For first-semester students, the network organizes events that help counteract the feeling of being “the only one”—whether that means having only male professors throughout the initial semesters at TU Wien or finding yourself one of just a few women in your exercise group. These early experiences matter, and fem*MA ensures that new students have a place where they are seen, welcomed, and supported.

But the network doesn't stop there. fem*MA also offers visibility, community, and guidance for women* further along their academic path: master's students, PhD candidates, postdocs, and even professors. Through mentoring, collaborations, discussion spaces, and simply being present in the department, the network helps women navigate challenges, find role models, and build confidence in environments where they are still underrepresented.

In all these ways, this women's network in mathematics makes itself visible and impactful. It helps build a sense of belonging, fosters connections across career stages, challenges structural barriers, and inspires the next generation of mathematicians. fem*MA shows that change doesn't happen on its own—it grows from people coming together, supporting each other, and shaping the future of mathematics at TU Wien.

Initiatives

As a quick introduction, looking back on the last year, let's look at the established initiatives and their members:

Newsletter and Announcements (how to spread news): Martina Iannella, Hannah Kuhn, Lena Wallner

Website (how to present online): Lena Wallner, Viola Garstenauer, Hannah Kuhn, Sabine Cirtek

Student Connect (how to reach and connect female students at TU Wien): Leah Hartmann, Timna Oyrer, Jenny Wing Yan Fan, Lisa-Marie Schuberth, Sarah Packfrieder

Outreach (how to inspire schoolgirls to study mathematics at the TU Wien): Sabine Cirtek, Leah Hartmann

Networking: Anna Kubin, Anastasia Molchanova, Rossella Giorgio, Alexia Fürnkranz-Prskawetz

Career-Booster (mentoring for female mathematicians at TU Wien): Martina Iannella, Katharina Schuh, Leila Taghizadeh, Li Ling Ko

Finance: Sabine Cirtek, Leah Hartmann

Funding & Organization: Sandra Müller, Gabriela Schranz-Kirlinger, Sabine Cirtek, Hannah Kuhn

Throughout the year, we established these initiative teams to better distribute the various tasks that come with running a network, such as organizing events, meetings, and maintaining a website.

Events of the year

To expand visibility and significance of fem*MA we organized two main events this year. Through these events bloomed the possibility of putting female* scientists on a pedestal and to visualize the community of female* researchers.

Austrian Day of Women in Mathematics

On the 28th of February TUtheSky became a welcoming and inspiring environment for females* and males* to celebrate women in mathematics – the fifth time this event took place. Fem*MA was happy to be able to host this event in collaboration with the Austrian Association of Women in Mathematics (A²WiM).

The welcome dinner the day before the event took place at the "10er Marie" where all female* participants had the opportunity to come together in a special environment and start off this amazing celebration with according solemnity. A representative of the city of Vienna was on sight to express the city's support and participation in celebrating women* in mathematics.



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Altogether we welcomed over 150 guests on the day of the event which was solemnly opened with speeches from Ute Koch (Vice Rector Human Resources, TU Wien), Peter Ertl (Vice Rector Research, Innovation and International Affairs, TU Wien) and Dirk Praetorius (Faculty for Mathematics and Geoinformation, TU Wien). The day offered many different opportunities for women to discuss difficult topics, present their research and network amongst each other.

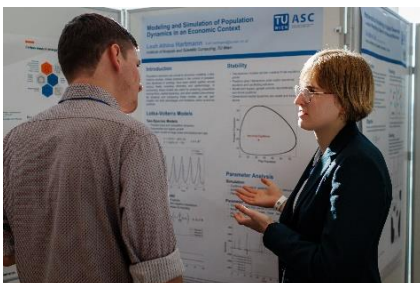
After the warm welcomes the event was kicked off by Sandra Müller, one of the two founders of fem*MA. She opened the floor for the three award-winning speakers - Noemi Nicolussi, Vera Fischer and Karin Schnass.

Noemi Nicolussi is a postdoc at the Institute of Analysis and Number Theory of the TU Graz who received one out of three study grants in 2021 for her master- and PhD-thesis "Spectral Analysis of Infinite Quantum Graphs". With her outstanding work she was able to elevate work around describing the quantum mechanical properties of nanostructures for example.

Vera Fischer is an associate professor and the president of the European Set Theory Society. She has received the START-award in 2017 for her project on "Infinite Combinatorics and Definability ". Additionally, during her career she has received the medal of the Austrian Mathematical Society and the Excellence of Teaching Award of York University.

Karin Schnass is a professor at the Department of Mathematics at the University of Innsbruck. She has won grants in the years 2012 and 2014. Starting off with an Erwin Schrödinger Fellowship followed by a START-program grant just two years later for over 6 years working at the project "Optimization Principles, Models & Algorithms for Dictionary Learning".

After each of these amazing women had given their individual talks on their special field, they were once more invited on stage to talk about their career paths as females* in a male dominated field of science. Opening the room for questions from the audience and to encourage female* participants who are having similar experience at work.



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At the events half time people were able to help themselves at the buffet while 15 scientists were sharing their research through our poster session. Women* from all around Austria took the

opportunity to exchange their work and fields of passion, inspiring each other and creating an environment of appreciation and admiration. Enhanced by the number of male* colleagues that attended to show support and to be part of the fifth celebration of women* in mathematics.



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Since the demand for giving talks was so incredibly high the event supplied the speakers and participants with four different contributed sessions. Therefore, everybody at the event could choose which one of the sessions they wanted to participate in and join the presenters in the seminar rooms accordingly.

The event then was closed by a panel discussion about “the role of third-party funding for career development in academia”. Four invited panelists out of different parts of Austria and professions shared their expertise and experiences with the audience. Among them Christof Gattringer - President of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), Alberta Bonanni - Vice Rector for Research, Gender and Diversity (JKU Linz), Erika Hausenblas - Chair of Applied Mathematics (Montanuniversität Leoben) and Sara Merino-Aceituno - Associate Professor, Faculty of Mathematics (University of Vienna).

All in all, it was an incredible fifth anniversary of celebrating women* in mathematics. The energy and support on that day but such an event would never have been possible without the support of many behind the scenes.

Therefore, special thanks go to the Austrian Association of Women in Mathematics, TU Wien, the city of Vienna, the university of Vienna and its faculty of mathematics, Ute Koch, Peter Ertl, Dirk Praetorius, all the invited speakers, panelists, participants of the poster sessions, speakers of the contributed sessions, the organizing committee and everybody else involved. Thank you all for your support and simply making this event possible.



Power! – Workshop with Deborah Ruggieri

With this project fem*MA introduced a two days-long workshop revolving around leadership and visibility for women* in scientific fields. All the way from Berlin Deborah Ruggieri led us through both days with incredible knowledge, exercises and power. Besides many years of experience moderating events, being visible and coaching young and old Deborah Ruggieri enriched our event with her momentum and energy.

*Power to! – the fem*MA intern workshop*

The first of the two workshop days was dedicated to fem*MA itself. Who are we as a network? What does “power” mean? In what ways can we communicate power? Does power always have to be verbal? Where do I fit in? What is my personal role? And many more questions were part of the ‘power to!’ workshop.



© Hannah Kuhn

Deborah Ruggieri travelled from Berlin to Vienna to make these two workshop days happen for us. Her open personality was the perfect fit for fem*MA to be encouraged and to feel heard and seen with all our challenges. The workshop was a quite profound opportunity for fem*MA to bond on a whole other level and to detect common issues for women* in our field. Sharing experiences and solutions for repetitive problems.

The schedule of the day included proactive exercises, theoretical scenarios and motivational input by Ruggieri herself. Fem*MA consciously chose this day for an intern workshop to strengthen the team spirit and therefore offered a second day for women* from all faculties at TU Vienna to participate.

Power with! – the TU wide workshop for female networks*

On the second day, the Prechtlsaal was opened to all women* interested in female* empowerment. Deborah Ruggieri kicked off the day with an inspiring talk about women’s roles throughout history in various social contexts. She shared numerous examples from TV shows, films, and historical events, sparking a lively discussion. Women* from all departments of TU Wien gathered to share their personal experiences and concerns, exchanging perspectives and gaining valuable insights from one another. After the event, attendees had the opportunity to network, deepening connections and discussing potential collaborations. Many expressed excitement about continuing the conversations and building a supportive community moving forward.



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Other accomplishments of the year

fem*MA's own email

Within this year fem*MA introduced its own email address. Therefore, you can now reach out to us by simply sending us a quick message via femma@tuwien.ac.at. This indicates the importance of fem*MA being independent and visible. Since the birth of our mailbox many people have reached out to us with a lot of different matters. Among them, networking requests, job-, fellowship- and PhD offerings.

Offers for young students

Due to our incredible growth, we were able to start a new project to support females from an even younger age on. The project "Studieren Probieren" offers school kids to have a look into an average day as a student here at TU Wien. Our members handcraft lectures for the kids to follow and encourage them to take this big step in their further education.

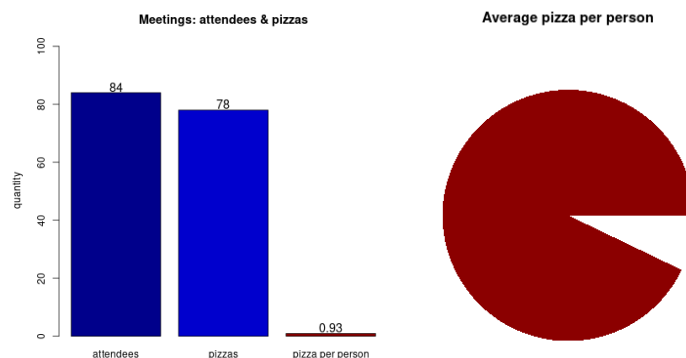
Not only were we able to establish a guided day through our daily life here at TU Wien but we also were able to welcome three kids in context of their mandatory "berufspraktische Tage" in cooperation with TUForMath. Within those three days they got to be part of the workshops at TUForMath and joined our student assistant in her office with an additional tour through our building and the student areas here at the Freihaus campus.

Student Connect

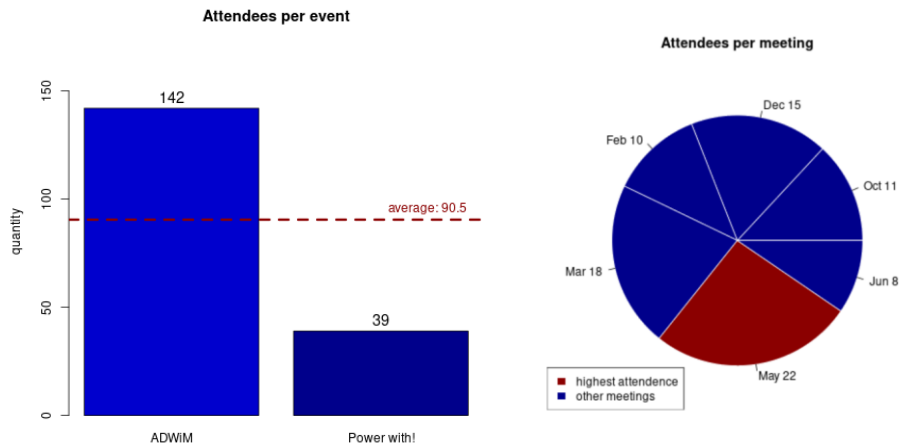
Our new initiative "student connect" is aiming mostly towards early-semester students and to help them find a community. Especially since only a third of all new students are female*. That way we want to help decrease the number of dropouts and encourage young female* scientists to connect and let them know that there are indeed other women* going through the same thing as them.

Our year in numbers

Since our members are highly integrated in the working world of the TU Wien, we started off with having our famous lunch meetings where we would provide Pizza for our members while we were discussing fem*MA's next steps. Looking at our records, we had a total of 84 attendees at our meetings throughout the year. Having had people skipping on Pizza and still designating their precious time to helping other female* scientists it concluded in 0,93 pizzas per person.



Over the past year, fem*MA organized two major events – the Austrian Day of Women in Mathematics and the “Power with!” workshop with Deborah Ruggieri – apart from six regular, intern meetings. Let alone with the two events organized by members of our network we reached a total of 181 individuals. The two events attracted markedly different audiences, with 142 attendees at the first event and 39 at the second, resulting in an average attendance of approximately 90.5 participants per event. Among the regular meetings, the number of attendees varied across the year, with the highest participation recorded in May, when 22 people attended. These figures reflect both consistent engagement in the regular meetings and strong outreach through larger events, highlighting the network’s ability to foster community and involvement at multiple levels.



Thank you

First, we need to address the two women without whom fem*MA might have never been founded – Gabriela Schranz-Kirlinger and Sandra Müller. These women put so much love and dedication into the growth of this network that it should not go unnoticed in this annual report. But of course, a network also relies on every single piece of support that it can get. Therefore, we must give another warm thank you to all the institutes that support us financially every year and that see the importance of supporting women* in mathematics.

A very special thanks goes to Sabine Cirtek, who has been part of fem*MA's journey from the very first meeting. Due to her increased workload and a newly established position in the Dean's office, Sabine will step back from her active role in fem*MA next year. We are delighted to have Lena Wallner slipping into her new work environment in which she will take on Sabine's responsibilities and continue her important work within the network. Sabine's dedication and contributions have been invaluable, and we are deeply grateful for her commitment.

It shall also not be unmentioned that we are grateful for whoever else's paths have crossed with fem*MA and who are now off in other cities or even countries, pursuing their academic career further. We are insanely happy to be on this ongoing journey with all of you and to grow from and with each other. To all the years and development that is yet to come!

Cheers!

fem*MA