

Initiative to foster diversity

CaixaBank and Microsoft Ibérica will award the best technical degree undergraduates through the WONNOW Awards

- **Candidacies can be submitted until the 16 June at the website www.wonnowawards.com.**
- **Last year, a total of 260 students from 59 Spanish universities took part in the first edition of the awards.**
- **11 prizes will be awarded: a cash prize to the student with the best academic record, who will receive a monetary award of 10,000 euros, and 10 students will receive access to a paid grant to work at CaixaBank and take part in a Microsoft mentoring programme.**

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CaixaBank and Microsoft Ibérica will award the best students of STEM degrees – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics – from 79 Spanish universities through the WONNOW Awards. In order to foster diversity and the presence of women in the field of technology and science from the outset of their career, both entities will launch the second annual edition of these awards.

Students who are studying one of these technical degrees can submit their candidacy to the awards until 16 June through the website www.wonnowawards.com. Last year, a total of 260 students from 59 Spanish universities took part in the first edition of the awards.

To select the award winners, personal experience will be assessed in addition to the student's academic record. Those interested in taking part should fill in a form, which includes questions to assess their achievements and discover their profile. Candidates should also attach their curriculum and the average grade of the first 180 credits passed.

A total of 11 awards will be distributed. On the one hand, the student with the best academic record will receive a monetary award of 10,000 euros, and on the other hand, 10 students will receive the prize of a paid grant to work at CaixaBank and take part in a Microsoft Ibérica mentoring programme.

For the Chief Executive Officer of CaixaBank, Gonzalo Gortázar, “the WONNOW Awards address two key matters for the bank: diversity and commitment to technology, which are essential for CaixaBank”. He also underlined “the importance of these awards that foster the presence and professional development of women in the area of technology. For the development of our society we need to help women to choose professions of the future”.

Furthermore, Pilar López, Chairwoman of Microsoft Ibérica, highlighted that “the full inclusion of women in the science-technical field is still a long way off. The presence of women in the Spanish technology sector is barely 37.4%. It is something we will continue to work on, with initiatives such as the WONNOW Awards. Technologies, such as AI, will help us to tackle the major challenges faced by humanity, empowering those who work to create a more sustainable and accessible world and facilitating breakthroughs in areas such as healthcare, farming, education and transportation. We must banish stereotypes and encourage young girls to be the stars of all these changes before us in the digital society”.

Companies committed to diversity

CaixaBank and Microsoft Ibérica support talent and they are committed to diversity. The values of social engagement, equality and excellence shared by these two companies can be seen in this initiative, which is to be held for the second consecutive year. The WONNOW Awards are designed to foster diversity in a key sector and reward the excellence of women studying STEM degrees. It is a transversal project which aims to highlight the effort and commitment of the women who choose these types of degrees.

According to the UNESCO report “Cracking the code: girls' and women's education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)”, currently only 28% of all the world's researchers are women. Gender differences in the participation in STEM studies to the detriment of girls is already appreciable in children's education and becomes more visible at higher education levels. In higher education, women represent only 35% of students enrolled in STEM-related areas.

Despite the fact that the European Commission indicates that reaching equality among men and women in the digital industry would enable the GDP of the European Union to increase by about 9 billion euros annually, its last study on women in the digital sector highlights that 24 out of every 1,000 women graduate in ICT studies, only 6 of whom work in the technology sector.

About CaixaBank

Social engagement is one of CaixaBank's values which aims to contribute to developing a fairer society with greater equal opportunities. Therefore, it fosters and implements various initiatives aimed at promoting diversity, such as the WONNOW Awards. The bank holds many national and international allegiances and initiatives in corporate responsibility, which are the cornerstone of its identity.

It is associated with various initiatives to foster gender equality, such as the Women's Empowerment Principles initiative, promoted by the United Nations; the voluntary agreement with the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality, called "More women, better companies", to secure a greater percentage of women in executive positions; the Diversity Charter, to promote equal opportunities and antidiscriminatory measures; and the Generation and Talent Observatory, with the aim of promoting the management of generational diversity.

Similarly, CaixaBank is included in the Bloomberg Gender-Equality Index for its commitment to promoting women.

Women currently fill 40.1% of CaixaBank's managerial positions and it has a specific line of action to promote gender diversity. The bank has an Equality Plan to contribute to effective equality between men and women. CaixaBank is the leader in retail banking in Spain, with a 29.3% share among individual customers. The bank has close to 16 million customers in the Iberian market and 5,000 branches.

About Microsoft Ibérica

Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT" @microsoft) drives digital transformation for the smart cloud and Intelligent Edge era. Its mission is to empower every person and every organisation on the planet to achieve more in their daily activity.

Microsoft is a diverse company in every respect. Beyond gender, it is something that the company has embraced in its culture. Its mission as a company is inherently inclusive: "to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more".

Internally, Microsoft promotes a culture that allows its employees to connect their energy and passion for technology with this mission. And for this, diversity is crucial: a diverse and inclusive environment fosters better ideas, better products and better results for customers.