

Gender Diversity on Panels

RECRUITMENT & SELECTION AND PROMOTION PANELS

BACKGROUND

1. In reviewing progress against the university's Equality & Diversity objectives, Athena SWAN action plan and in seeking to ensure best practice in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion, the Equality and Diversity Steering Group noted the following:
 - Across all recruitment, women applicants were less likely to be appointed than men in 2 out of 3 faculties¹
 - In some Faculties, recruitment panels often have no female members
 - Promotion panels sometimes have no female members
 - Data gathered on promotion over the last five years shows that female staff in STEMM areas are much less likely to apply for promotion².
 - Recruitment data also suggests that BME staff are less likely to be shortlisted than white staff³

REVISED POLICY

Principles

2. The university has a duty to ensure that applicants for jobs, or promotion are not subject to discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital/civil partnership status, trans-gender status, pregnancy, sexual orientation, race religion or belief, disability and age (Equality Act 2010)
3. Decisions on recruitment & selection and promotion should be based on objective criteria, and supporting evidence that the standard for each criteria has been met. The university seeks to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, and best practice in doing so.
4. The composition of a panel is an important factor affecting the fairness and equity of selection processes. A panel composed of members of identical social, cultural educational and/or employment backgrounds may be limited in its ability to fairly assess the experiences and qualities of applicants from backgrounds different to their own.
5. QMUL recognises that it is important for **all** those involved in panels, regardless of gender, to be fully aware of their responsibilities to ensure and promote equality, diversity and inclusion in our processes. It is vital to provide an environment where all candidates are assured that QMUL is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and will fairly apply its policies in all recruitment & selection and promotion decisions

6. The university takes the risk of gender bias in selection decisions seriously. We have a policy of ensuring representation of women and men on panels, and in relation to recruitment and selection, require all panel members to be trained. Only the staff who have completed the university's Recruitment and Interview selection training are 'licensed' to be on a recruitment panel. It is also mandatory that these staff also attend the Unconscious Bias training workshops.
7. In addition to QMUL's Recruitment Code, all panellists are advised to remind themselves of the provisions of the university's Equality Policies as appropriate.
8. It is recognised that this policy addresses only the issue of gender representation. Everyone involved in setting up panels should have regard to the other characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010, and seek to constitute as diverse a panel as is possible and practicable.

Implementation

9. This revised policy aims to ensure that all recruitment & selection and promotion panels with three or more members include **both** women and men.
10. In cases where panels have only two members, it will only be in exceptional cases that only one gender is represented, and this may only be with the approval of the relevant QMSE member responsible for the School/ Institute/ Department or their nominated Deputy eg. where it has not been possible to source the required expertise and all reasonable efforts have been exhausted (see paragraph 12 below).
11. It is recognised that where (senior) women and men are underrepresented in particular disciplines, it is likely that they will be exposed to an even greater level of demand for their involvement on panels, which could have consequences for their workloads. Rather than seek to create an arbitrary limit on the number of panels staff should sit on, everyone is reminded that colleagues in this position are free to decide the number of such commitments they undertake; and it is reasonable for them to seek to balance the number of career-enhancing and other obligations they are committed to when deciding whether to participate.
12. To minimise the risk that these (underrepresented) colleagues may become overburdened with requests to sit on panels, and to increase the pool of panellists to call upon to achieve fair gender representation, efforts should be made to draw on as broad a range of potential panellists as possible and appropriate from the 'underrepresented' gender. It is recommended that:
 - Staff from a range of grades are invited to participate in panels
 - Staff from other schools/universities are invited to participate in panels
13. It is noted that this policy may lead to an increased use of external panel members from some disciplines.

Monitoring

14. Schools/institutes/departments are responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy. HR will undertake random checks of panels.¹

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¹Recruitment statistics- QMUL Annual Equalities Monitoring Report 2012-13

²Athena SWAN Institutional Submission (Nov.2013)

³BME shortlisting (and success rates) – QMUL Annual Equalities Monitoring Report 2012-2013