

Gender Equality: A Core Value and a Means towards Departmental Excellence

Management Team, December 2018

Department strategy and Gender Equality

At the Department of Political Science and Public Management, we pride ourselves in taking some of society's chief challenges as our starting point and strive to produce and communicate original ideas through high-quality and pioneering research. To fulfil this ambition, we need to excel our ability to identify, nurture and retain talent, especially female talent. For us, however, gender equality is not merely a means to an end – it is also an intrinsic value. We believe that equality is just; we believe that the embrace of human diversity breeds innovation, and we know that substantial representation of both genders cultivates a thriving working environment. For these reasons, we wish to be a department of excellence in terms of gender equality, and this document outlines our main goals as well as a range of concrete actions we intend to implement in a keen effort to meet the goals.

Main goals

Equal representation of both genders is the ideal, and we set 40% representation as the minimum benchmark. If the share of either men or women drops below 30%, it is considered critical as ample evidence suggests that this level ensures critical mass – and without critical mass, representatives of the underrepresented gender often become the “token” one, which is problematic for everyone. The benchmarks mentioned apply horizontally (across sections) and vertically (across staff categories) within the department. Our goals are ambitious, and they can only be met through a gradual process and at a different pace across the organization. However, ambitious goals are a prerequisite for change and defined on the basis of the turnaround during the past years, we are able to meet our goals by employing an equal number of men and women in the years to come. We set the following concrete goals which are to be reviewed and possibly revised every second year (Spring '19 and '21):

- We have equally – and highly – satisfied men and women as measured by the Working Environment Survey from 2017 and onwards.
- We have representation of both genders in all official departmental committees (including search, assessment and hiring committees) and working groups from 2017 and onwards. Exemptions can be given by the HoD, but only in extraordinary situations, and specific reasons must be stated and advertised publically.
- The total share of short-listed female candidates for academic positions is at least 30% in 2019.
- The share of female academic staff is at least 40% in 2021 (by September 2016 the share was 25%).
- The share of female academic staff is at least 30% in all sections and in all staff categories by 2023.

Focus areas and actions

Recruitment policy: Hiring more women is the only way we can fulfil our goals. Since we do not apply simple quota – we always hire in true competition, regardless of gender – it is of crucial importance to design all phases in the recruitment process in a way that ensures diversity and counteracts unconscious gender bias.

We will take the following actions in this regard:

- From 2017 and onwards, section-based search committees must be formed for all openings above the PhD level. Search committees are obliged to identify and encourage potential candidates to apply, even if we have promising internal candidates. Committees must make explicit efforts to encourage female scholars to apply for open positions. A plan for the search committee's work should be drafted and approved by the HoD in due time before a call is published.
- From 2017 and onwards, open positions can only be filled if the pool of qualified candidates allows us to invited both male and female candidates for job interviews. Exemptions can be given by the HoD, but only in extraordinary situations and specific reasons must be stated and advertised publically.
- From 2017 and onwards, the HoD is responsible for providing continuously updated and public gender statistics (e.g. female shares of employees, applicants, qualified applicants, and committee members).

Talent development: In order for the department to retain and promote our own talents – of both genders – we need to work strategically with talent development. Talent takes many forms, and human potential thus has to be nurtured in different ways in order to bring a person's full potential into play. We take the following actions in this regard:

- From 2017 and onwards, we will engage in individual career planning and mentoring and we will consider the distribution of administrative and academic tasks (this will be coupled with a new format of the MUS and a formalized interaction between section heads and junior faculty).
- In the spring of 2017, we will update the existing career advancement criteria in order to illuminate how different profiles of excellence are of equal value to the department.
- In the fall of 2017, we will develop a format for evaluation of PhD supervision.

Transparency: Ensuring gender equality entails open competition, but true competition is only feasible if decisions and decision-making processes are transparent and guided by known policies. The alternative is informal processes, unconscious bias, and decision making which reproduces established culture and norms.

We will take the following actions to ensure transparency:

- In the spring of 2017, we will update the existing career advancement criteria in order to illuminate how different profiles of excellence are of value to the department – and we will adhere to these criteria when hiring and promoting.
- In the spring of 2017, we will formulate a recruitment policy making the process known to everybody.
- From 2017 and onwards, we strive to make decisions publicly known either orally via meetings in e.g. sections or written, e.g. via the newsletter or sdunet.dk.

Ensuring implementation: In order to implement these actions, it is important to develop mechanisms that help us monitor, adjust and encourage the preferred behaviour. We do so by:

- Acknowledging that realization of the goals requires a common effort and active participation from all employees and sections, but especially from informal leaders, e.g. PhD supervisors, professors and project owners. Heads of Sections will address the subject in relation to MUS with these informal leaders and all formal and informal leaders should take active measures to counter unconscious bias (e.g. enrol in training programmes).
- Establishing an ombudsman (at the department or the faculty level) to whom potential inequality or any other working environment issue could be reported. The HoD must meet regularly with the ombudsman to discuss current issues.
- Making collective (i.e. sections, research collectives, centres and project teams) promotion of gender equality count on par with other strategic objectives when distributing departmental means (e.g. seed money, pre-grant, support for new strategic initiatives, co-funding of projects and positions). Thus, all applications sent to the management team must address gender equality.
- Assessment committees must consider parental leave when assessing applicants' academic merit and progress. This is especially important when assessing early career scholars. Following the guidelines of the Independent Research Fund Denmark, periods of parental leave reduce PhD age with a factor two. The Head of Department is responsible to advertise this principle in calls for applicants and the chair of the assessment committee is obligated to instruct the committee to consider the principle its conclusion.