



Career & Gender Factsheet – Gender Equality in Hiring Processes

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Introduction

This factsheet proposes suggestions and clarifies responsibilities of URPP-GCB hiring committees to improve gender equality when advertising and hiring for new positions. The Career and Gender committee prepared these suggestions with guidance by the University of Zurich (UZH) Gender Equality Office.

The Dean of the UZH Faculty of Math and Sciences is currently leading the project “Gender Equality in professorial appointments, Faculty of Science”, which will furnish new requirements for professorial appointments in spring 2014 and which will provide relevant information for all types of appointments. In order to avoid overlap with that project, this document thus focuses on best practices that be used for hiring at any level, and may be revised after the Gender Equality study is released in order to incorporate its findings.

Legal aspects of gender equality in hiring

Discrimination on grounds of gender is forbidden at the University of Zürich. The following acts provide details of gender in hiring practices at UZH:

- University Act (1998)
- University Statutes (1998)
- Personnel Ordinance (1999)

Links to these acts are available on the UZH Gender Equality Office website (www.gleichstellung.uzh.ch/politik.html), in addition to other relevant federal legislation and the Swiss federal constitution. (This page was as of August 2013 available only in German.)

Recommendations for gender equality on hiring practices

In order to encourage a more diverse pool of applicants and to improve the employment opportunities of minority candidates, we propose the following actions when advertising new posts and during the hiring process:



- **Advertising new posts:**
 - Carefully consider the wording of the job announcement. Send it to the URPP gender and career committee to ensure that the language is gender-neutral and that it appeals to rather than excludes minority applicants. Explicitly encourage female and minority candidates to apply.
 - Define a search strategy and distribution channels for new posts. Meet with colleagues to identify applicants who will be competitive in applying to expand the post's visibility and to target a diverse but strong applicant pool.
 - Make public flexible work options, family-friendly work hours, resources aimed at promoting better work-life balance, and options for two-career couples both at the advertising and hiring stages. (See section on "Resources available for gender and career assistance at UZH and in Switzerland" below.)

- **Interviewing applicants:**
 - Discuss unconscious bias with hiring committees before interviews. (See unconscious bias resources in reference section below.)
 - Diversify interview procedures to ensure that non-traditional applicants can demonstrate a variety of strengths. Spread interviews over two days or several sessions so that opinions are not restricted to first impressions or a single presentation.
 - Strive for a balanced and diverse interview committee, but be aware that senior-level women are often disproportionately burdened with administrative and service duties when there is not an equal gender ratio of faculty and staff.

- **Selection process:**
 - Consider time in academia (adjusted for percentage of employment and gaps in resumes that may have corresponding with family duties or other obligations) rather than actual age. Discuss with the hiring committee how such an applicant's capabilities or potential can be measured against other applicants without such gaps. Provide information on funding opportunities for researchers and academics returning after a career break.
 - Address the negative impact of short-term contracts, particularly on women.
 - Attempt to short-list at least one-quarter (25%) female or minority candidates for each position. Although final selection cannot be reserved for women or minority candidates, shortlisting those candidates allows them greater exposure and evaluation based on criteria that may have been undervalued in the initial paper-based application.¹

¹ Heilman (1980) identifies "a distinct tendency for women applicants to be evaluated more unfavorably when their representation in the applicant pool (*of 8 persons*) was minimal ($\leq 25\%$)." See also Moss-Racusin et al. 2012 and Valian 1999 in references section.



Links in Additional Information

University of Zurich Gender policies and reports:

- University of Zurich Gender Equality Office website:
http://www.gleichstellung.uzh.ch/index_en.html
- Gender Policy Code of Conduct:
http://www.uzh.ch/about/basics/genderpolicy_en.html
- UZH Career structures (prepared by Arbeitsgruppe *universitäre Laufbahnen*)
http://www.researchers.uzh.ch/juniorresearchers/Massnahmen_NWF_100427.pdf
- Equal Opportunities Office Monitoring report ('Gleichstellungs Monitoring') 2011 with statistics of employment by faculty at UZH:
http://www.gleichstellung.uzh.ch/politik/gleichstellungsmonitoring/2011_GLM_Bericht.pdf
- In June, 2011 The Rector Prof. Dr. Andreas Fischer wrote an information sheet ('Merkblatt') reminding professors of the decision after creating the 2005 Gender Policy code to grant the permission to request temporary reductions in employment for childcare reasons. (See <http://www.pa.uzh.ch/Vorgesetzte/ma2/mutterurlaub.html>). The 2011 Merkblatt expanded this discussion to care of other family care, for example aging parents. He communicated the decision of the university to remain open to all family-related employment reductions so long as they are communicated with the appropriate department. This website has been updated with additional details about maternity leave and family care.

Resources available for gender and career assistance at UZH and in Switzerland:

- Maternity leave and parental care employment reduction at UZH:
<http://www.pa.uzh.ch/Vorgesetzte/ma2/mutterurlaub.html>
- Childcare services through the UZH and ETH: http://www.kihz.ethz.ch/index_EN
- The Swiss National Foundation provides 120% family support grants for postdoctoral researchers with childcare duties who require a limited time period of more flexibility:
<http://www.snf.ch/E/funding/individuals/120-support-grant/Pages/default.aspx>
- Professional women's group of Zurich: <https://pwg.site-ym.com>

Suggested literature and reports on gender and career:

- Reports on gender issues in science:
 - Corinne A. Moss-Racusin, John F. Dovidio, Victoria L. Brescoll, Mark J. Graham, and Jo Handelsman. Science faculty's subtle gender biases favor male students. PNAS 2012 : 1211286109v1-201211286.
<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2012/09/14/1211286109.full.pdf+html>
 - Special issue of Nature about the gender gap in science:
"Science for All." Editorial. *Nature* 495, 5 (07 March 2013)
<http://www.nature.com/news/science-for-all-1.12535>



- **Comparing female and male performance:** An evaluation of how women typically underperform men even when exhibiting equal competencies or leadership behavior. It draws attention to how evaluations may be unconsciously biased when candidates exhibit gender stereotypes or counter-stereotypes in their behaviors:
 - Genat, A., R. Wood and V. Sojo. Evaluation Bias and Backlash: Dimensions, Predictors and Implications for Organisations. November 2012. University of Melbourne Business School Centre for Ethical Leadership.
http://www.mbs.edu/facultyresearch/ethicalleadership/Documents/CEL_Unconscious%20Bias%20Report_Briefing%20Note.pdf
 - Heilman, M.E. (1980). The impact of situational factors on personnel decisions concerning women: Varying the sex composition of the applicant pool. *Organizational behavior and human performance*, 26, 386-95.
 - Valian, Virginia. *Why so slow?* MIT Press. 1999. Summary of chapter 14:
<http://advance.cornell.edu/documents/Why-so-slow.pdf>

- **Unconscious gender bias:** a practical factsheet for recommendation letters:
 - National Center for Women & Information Technology. Avoiding Unintended Gender Bias in Letters of Recommendation.
<http://www.ncwit.org/sites/default/files/legacy/images/practicefiles/AvoidingUnintendedGenderBiasLettersRecommendation.pdf>

Additional reading materials and resources can be found on the URPP GCB dropbox folder > Operational Management > Career and Gender > Literature.