



IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL
An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn

Irish Research Council policies and practice to
promote gender equality and the integration of
gender analysis in research

Progress Update
June 2016



**#LoveIrish
Research**

Introduction

This document has been issued to coincide with the release of the Higher Education Authority's (HEA) National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions on June 27. The HEA National Review was commissioned to pursue the promotion of gender-balance among students and staff in Irish institutions and the attainment of equality of opportunity, as enshrined in higher education legislation. An Expert Group, which undertook the review, engaged widely with stakeholders across higher education, the government, state agencies, and others, including the 4,800 respondents to an online survey. The review calls on higher education institutions and other stakeholders, such as research funding agencies, to take a range of informed actions as part of a collective, participatory national project to realise a vision for true gender equality in the sector.

Section 1 of this document provides details of progress on the Council's promotion of gender equality and the integration of gender analysis in research (also known as IGAR), in line with the Council's Gender Strategy and Action Plan, 2013-2020. Section 2 outlines the recommendations for research funding agencies as set out in the national gender review, and how the Council is contributing or will contribute to their full implementation. Section 3 of the document includes the full text of the Council Gender Strategy and Action Plan.

SECTION 1

Update on progress

1.1 Leading nationally

The Irish Research Council was the first research funding agency in Ireland to publish a gender strategy (see Section 3 for full text). Among the actions already implemented are the following:

- ‘Gender-blinding’ of applications for evaluation so as to mitigate any gender bias in the assessment of excellence, whether conscious or unconscious. Further detail on the impact of gender-blinding is below.
- Minimum gender balance in Council international assessment panels (the members of which assess applications for Council awards). Since 2013, just under 60% of Council panels have comprised a minimum of 40% female representation.

In addition, the Council was the first research funding agency in Ireland to integrate requirements on the sex/gender dimension into applications to its funding programmes. Since 2014, applicants for awards under the Council’s core programmes have been required to indicate if there is a sex/gender dimension to the research being proposed and how such dimensions will be appropriately addressed in the conduct of the research. Applicants who submit that there is no sex/gender dimension are required to explain why not.

Why is the integration of sex/gender analysis in research important?

There are many examples from the literature of the ‘real-life’ ramifications of research which failed to take appropriate or even cursory account of the sex or gender dimension. The following is just one example, set out by LERU in its recent advice paper on Gendered Research and Innovation¹

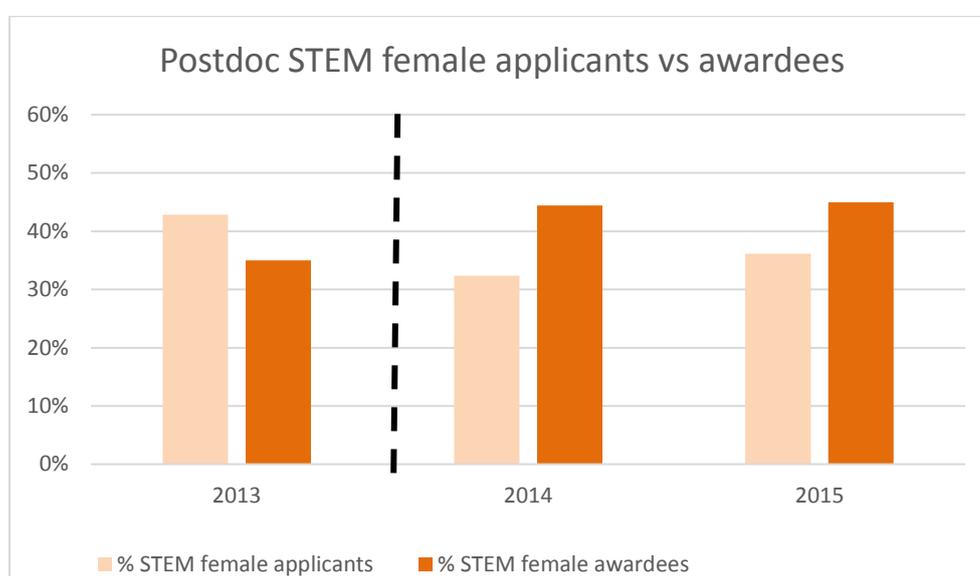
Myocardial infarction (MI) has long been believed to be primarily a disease of men, to a large degree because research was primarily carried out in men. It has a slightly lower prevalence in women than men, but because women on average live longer than men, the numbers of men and women suffering from MI are roughly the same (Anand et al., 2008). A large number of recent studies found that men and women present with different symptoms, which can influence diagnosis and treatment. Men are more likely to exhibit symptoms of chest pain, while women more frequently exhibit nausea, general weakness, sweating, and a larger variety of symptoms (Regitz-Zagrosek, 2012). Men and their doctors are more likely to attribute chest pain to heart disease than women and their doctors to attribute their symptoms to heart disease. As a result, the so-called door-to-needle time in women who are admitting and subsequently diagnosed, is significantly longer than that of men (Dey et al., 2009).

¹ Gendered Research and Innovation: Integrating Sex and Gender Analysis into the Research Process (LERU) Advice Paper No. 18, 2015). See this paper for the full references in the medical example above.

1.2 Positive impact of ‘gender-blinding’ of applicants

The Council introduced gender-proof criteria for assessment purposes to ensure that there is no implicit gender bias, disadvantage or deterrent in the language or criteria. The Council has also introduced gender blind assessment procedures: its assessors review applications that are anonymous and free from pronouns or other words that would identify the applicant’s gender.

Data on the relative proportion of female STEM awardees before and after the implementation of this policy demonstrate the impact of gender-blinding, as the graphic below shows. While women made up only 35% of STEM Postdoctoral awards in 2013, this number rose to 44% in 2014 and 45% in 2015. Also notable is the fact that in 2013, female STEM researchers submitted 43% of postdoctoral applications and won only 35% of the awards. Following the implementation of gender-blinding, these figures were almost reversed: women applying for 2014 STEM postdoctoral fellowships submitted 32% of applications and won 44%.



1.3 Gender data – early stage research career awards

The Council is the recognised national research funder with responsibility for cultivating the research leaders of the future. Council policies supporting gender equality among its early career stage awardees are showing strong results. Over the period 2013-2015 female applicants to the Council won:

- 60% of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) Government of Ireland postgraduate (GOI) awards
- 41% of GOI Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) postgraduate awards
- 47% of GOI AHSS postdoctoral awards
- 44% of GOI STEM postdoctoral awards

1.4 Support for the development of international track record

In the implementation of its early-stage career programmes, underpinned by strong gender equality policies, the Council is supporting equal gender outcomes in the development of internationally competitive research leaders. Since the commencement of Horizon2020, female recipients of prestigious, highly-competitive European Research Council² Starting Grants that have previously been funded by the IRC ('our Alumni') have outnumbered the Council's male Alumni recipients.

The Council funds national AHSS and interdisciplinary project awards for senior researchers, with two recent competitive cycles (2013 and 2015). As well as funding important peer-reviewed research, these awards also contribute to the individual track record of the awardees. The outcome by sex for the two cycles is very encouraging, with female Principal Investigators winning:

- 55% of 2013 research project awards
- 47% of 2015 research project awards

1.5 Leading on Gender in Europe

The Irish Research Council is leading not only nationally, but internationally, and many research funding agencies in Europe and beyond are looking to the Council's gender policies as a model of good practice that can be replicated. The Council is a member of the FP7-funded GENDER-NET consortium, which aims to improve policy and practice on a transnational basis in relation to gender equality and the integration of sex/gender in research contents. The Chair of the Council, Professor Jane Ohlmeyer was a keynote speaker at a recent strategic seminar convened by GENDER-NET, comprising high-level policy and decision-makers from the European Research Area. Professor Ohlmeyer addressed the audience on the Council's Gender Strategy and Action Plan and leading practice in relation to the integration of sex/gender analysis.

What Is GENDER-NET?

The IRC is a partner in GENDER-NET, a pilot transnational research policy initiative funded by the European Commission under the [Science in Society](#) work programme of the seventh Framework Programme (FP7). The project is designed to address the common challenges still facing European research institutions in achieving gender equality in research and innovation. The three-year GENDER-NET project brings together 13 partners from 12 countries in Europe and North America, sharing a commitment to the promotion of gender equality in research institutions and/or to improving the integration of the gender dimension in research contents and programmes. More information on GENDER-NET can be found here: <http://www.gender-net.eu/>

² <http://erc.europa.eu/>

1.6 Dignity in the Conduct of Research

The Council is launching a Statement on Dignity in the Conduct of Research, the first such statement to be adopted by an Irish funding agency. The Statement has been agreed by Council in order to make absolutely explicit its expectations for the professional environment within which its awardees work, whether young postgraduate students or experienced principal investigators, male or female.

Council Statement on Dignity in the Conduct of Research

The Irish Research Council (IRC) supports a research system in which individual researchers are enabled to reach their full potential, at all stages of their career.

At the heart of research is people, and respect for the dignity of the person, whether a student or a member of staff, is a principle that all stakeholders have a collective responsibility to safeguard.

Students, their supervisors & mentors, and research staff are entitled to carry out their research free from any form of harassment, victimisation, or bullying. Host institutions have a responsibility to ensure an appropriate work environment and to deal with any complaints or issues speedily, in line with agreed grievance procedures. The IRC encourages IRC-funded researchers and students to hold colleagues accountable to the highest standards with regard to dignity in the research environment and to alert their institutions to violations. We must lead the way in the face of any conduct which might potentially damage the fabric of our research community.

The Council draws the attention of institutions and all parties to the provisions of the Equal Status Acts 2000-2012 and the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2012. Host institutions are subject to the provisions of the Acts in their dual capacity of educational service providers and employers. The legislation prohibits discrimination on any of nine grounds, including gender, sexual orientation, age, race and religion. In addition, the Employment Equality Acts specifically prohibit harassment, sexual harassment or victimisation in the workplace. The IRC reserves the right to withdraw funding from any institution which has been found to be in contravention of the Acts.

Irish Research Council
May 2016

1.7 Promotion of the achievements of women in science and research

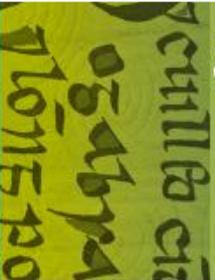
The Council has included within its highly successful *#LoveIrishResearch* campaign opportunities to promote the achievement of female researchers in Ireland, past and present. Among the steps taken include the issuing of a press release ahead of International Womens Day on March 8³ and the publication of the unique infographic below *Women in Irish Research*.

³ http://www.research.ie/intro_slide/focus-irish-women-research-international-women%E2%80%99s-day-2015

Women in Irish Research

Charlotte Brooke
1750/60-1793

Pioneer of Irish literature in English and hailed as a forerunner to the Irish literary revival and Gaelic League



Anne Jellicoe
1823-1880

Educationalist, statistician, and pioneer in the nascent field of Irish social science research



Margaret Lindsay Huggins
1848-1915

With her husband William, Margaret developed the dry gelatine photographic plate, laying foundations for the development of astrophysics



Matilda Knowles
1864-1933

Founder of modern research into Irish lichens who wrote the widely hailed 'The Lichens of Ireland' in 1929



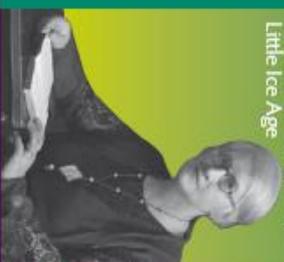
Maude Jane Delap
1866-1953

Marine biologist who was the first person to elucidate the complex life cycle of jellyfish



Ammie Scott Dill Russell Maunder
1868-1947

Renowned observer and photographer of solar eclipses who is credited with the discovery of the Little Ice Age



Dame Anne Louise McLroy
1872-1968

First female medical professor in Ireland and Britain who conducted research in the field of Obstetrics and Gynaecology



Helena Concannon
1878-1952

Early historian of the role of women in Ireland's past who conducted new research in the archives of convents and religious orders



Alicia Boole Stott
1880-1940

Internationally-renowned mathematician who coined the word "polytope" and produced 4-dimensional polytope models



Dorothy Stopford Price
1890-1954

Introduced the BCG vaccine into Ireland and made a pioneering contribution to social medicine



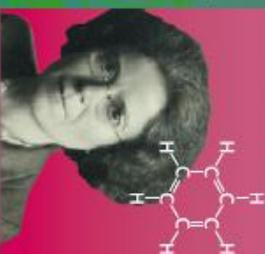
Phyllis Clinch
1901-1984

Made a major contribution to our understanding of degenerative plant viruses, especially in potato plants



Kathleen Lonsdale
1903-1971

World-class researcher in the field of X-ray crystallography who discovered that the benzene ring is flat



Kay McNulty Mauchly Antonelli
1921-2006

Member of the all-woman Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer team that, during World War II, programmed the first digital computer



Maire Delaney
1945-2002

Pioneer in the field of osteoarchaeology in Ireland who became a leading expert in bog body investigations



SECTION 2

Recommendations (research funders) of the National Review of Gender Equality in Irish HEIs

The Gender Review Expert Group recognises the leading contribution that the Irish Research Council has made in the area of gender, noting among other measures that it was the first funding agency to require applicants to indicate whether and how gender would be integrated into their research. The Council welcomes the review's recommendations. Below is a summary of recommendations specifically for research funding agencies and the current status and/or planned response of the Council.

Ref.	Objective	Recommendation	Status / Plans
3.1	Ensure scientific excellence, the stimulation of new knowledge leading to technological innovations, by improving the integration of gender analysis into all phases of basic and applied research	As a pre-requisite for funding, research funding agencies will require applicants to demonstrate that they have given full consideration to whether there is a potential gender dimension to their proposed research.	In place
3.2	To foster gender balance within research teams and PIs across the HEI	The fostering of gender-balance within research teams, with the aim of ensuring that, at an institutional level, research teams and PIs are comprised of at least 40% women and 40% men.	Will integrate into funding programmes where applicable
3.3	Minimise the effect of bias on research funding outcomes, and to ensure that women and men have similar success rates in funding calls	Gender-balance on all assessment panels, advisory groups, management boards, key committees, workshops, and focus-groups, with each comprising at least 40% of each gender	In place: Gender balance on Council; 60% success rate on gender balance in assessment panels since 2013; Onus on Council awardees to ensure gender balance on

			discussion/conference panels;
3.4		All agencies will provide face-to-face unconscious bias training for assessment panel members.	Initial phase of training completed for evaluators; Council will implement new round of training, working with other research funders
3.5		The production of annual gender-disaggregated statistics, and the monitoring and analysis of the gender-balance of applicants and awardees to inform the development of targeted gender-initiatives.	Data systematically collected. Will be published periodically going forward
3.6	To foster gender equality in the research arena	Research-funding agencies will develop and implement gender strategies and action plans.	In place
3.7	To improve the evidence-base for addressing gender inequality.	Funding streams will be established to support research on gender equality	In place: Council has committed funds to a forthcoming ERAnet COFUND on gender equality and gender in research
3.8	To support HEIs to mainstream gender equality, improving the environment within which research is undertaken.	Within 3 years research-funding agencies will require HEIs to have attained an Athena SWAN Bronze Institutional award to be eligible for funding.	Council to pursue implementation
		Within 7 years research-funding agencies will require HEIs to have attained an Athena SWAN silver institutional award to be eligible for funding.	Council to pursue implementation

SECTION 3

Irish Research Council
Gender Strategy & Action Plan
2013 – 2020

Ensuring excellence and maximising creativity and
innovation in Irish Research

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INTRODUCTION

Due to under-representation by gender, Ireland, like other countries, is currently underutilising a significant population of highly talented researchers who could be vital assets in maximising collective research intelligence and optimising creativity and innovation potential. Studies have demonstrated that collective intelligence increases when there is a balance with neither women nor men in the majority⁴.

There is also a gender dimension to the definition of research projects. While there are research projects in which sex and/or gender may not be relevant in terms of the research content, it is well established that, where relevant, not integrating sex and gender analysis into the design, implementation, evaluation and dissemination of the research can lead to poor results and missed opportunities.

The Irish Research Council Gender Strategy and Action Plan address these two main issues in regard to gender in research.

The strategy and action plan include *both sexes*, and aims to provide *equal outcomes* to both men and women so that Ireland can attract and retain the most talented, creative and innovative researchers thereby maximising its collective research intelligence.

The Council will also only fund excellent research, and excellent research fully considers whether a potential sex and/or gender dimension is relevant to the research content and fully integrates sex/gender analysis where relevant, thereby ensuring maximum impact, societal benefit and optimising innovation in Irish research.

There has already been much work focusing on these issues internationally, with the European context of most relevance to Ireland. The Irish Research Council will be informed by international best practice and seek to contribute to advancing international best practice in this regard.

Underutilisation of talented researchers

Women accounted for just 33% of European researchers in 2009². In addition to the general under-representation of women in research, a 'leaky pipeline' phenomenon exists. Although the overall ratio between men and women is often balanced at doctoral level (in 2010, 46% of all PhD graduates were women), there is considerable loss of intellectual capacity after this point with only 15.5% of the heads of European higher education organisations being women⁵.

This career progression pattern exists also in Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEI). The number of women in academic and research positions decreases as the seniority of the positions increases, and just 18% of professors in Ireland are female⁶.

⁴ Woolley Anita W. et al., *Science*, Vol. 330, pp. 686-688, 2010

⁵ *She Figures 2012* "Gender in Research and Innovation – Statistics and Indicators"

⁶ Recommendations for Actions towards Gender Equality in Academic and Research Careers in the Higher Education Sector, *Ireland, November 2012*

It is also well documented that on average there is an imbalance in the level of men choosing to take up certain subjects such as psychology, humanities and education and women choosing to take up the sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Integration of sex/gender dimension into research content

Whereas researchers in some fields, particularly in humanities and social sciences, are well practised at considering whether there may be a potential sex/gender dimension to their research, this is less true of some other fields. This is despite the fact that there are many examples that also show the importance of integrating sex/gender analysis across a range of fields including health and medical research, engineering, environmental research, and in the development of new technologies⁷.

A conscious decision to focus solely on one sex, or not to take into account gender issues, is a valid research approach as long as this is clearly stated in the project and the results are evaluated and disseminated as such. A problem only arises when the researcher has consciously ignored sex and/or gender as a valid variable or has not realised that a sex and/or gender dimension is relevant to their research. In this instance, extrapolation of the results to the population as a whole, when they actually only apply to half the population, is misleading and could have serious implications.

CURRENT SITUATION [2013]

European gender equality initiatives

The European Commission (EC) adopted a gender mainstreaming approach in 1996 and all policies since have included an integrated gender equality objective.

The EC European Research Area (ERA) reform agenda focuses on five key priorities, one of which is gender equality and gender mainstreaming in research⁸. EU organisations, including the League of European Research Universities (LERU)⁹ and Science Europe¹⁰ (of which the Irish Research Council is a part), have signed up to delivering on the ERA (July 2012) and are undertaking their own actions to achieve structural change through implementation of gender strategies or action plans. The EU2020 Strategy includes seven flagship initiatives, one of which is on new skills and jobs, including the aim to encourage gender equality¹¹.

Ireland is participating in a new type of European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) initiative, a Targeted Network on Gender, Science, Technology

⁷ <http://genderedinnovations.stanford.edu/>

⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/era_communication_en.htm

⁹ http://www.leru.org/files/publications/LERU_Paper_Women_universities_and_research.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.scienceeurope.org/policy/working-groups>

¹¹ http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/eu2020/em0028_en.htm

and Environment (genderSTE)¹² which aims to advance knowledge on implementation of gender-focused policy measures for structural change in science and technology institutions.

The three-year GENDER-NET ERA-NET project has recently been funded to address the common challenges still facing European research institutions in achieving gender equality and integrating the gender dimension in research and innovation, and to help Member States and Associated countries join forces to achieve the European Research Area (ERA)¹³. The Irish Research Council is a partner in this project.

Gender has prominent focus in Horizon 2020, with the European Parliament and Council stating that ‘Horizon 2020 shall ensure the effective promotion of gender equality and the gender dimension in research and innovation content¹⁴’. In order that this is realised, gender balance in teams and the integration of the gender dimension in research content will play a part in funding decisions under Horizon 2020¹⁵¹⁶.

Irish gender equality initiatives

Irish involvement in European initiatives targeting institutional transformation in gender equality is impressive: the University of Limerick is a partner in FESTA (2012-2017)¹⁷; University College Cork is a consortium partner in GENOVATE (2013-2016)¹⁸; and Trinity College Dublin, through WiSER, is involved in INTEGER (2011-2015)¹⁹. All of these projects are funded under the EU Commission’s Science in Society programme as part of the Seventh Framework Programme.

Significant momentum on this front can be felt nationally, with the establishment of a National Network for Gender Equality in Academic and Research Careers. The network has arisen out of work carried out under the “Through the Glass Ceiling: Career Progression Programme and Strategy for Female Academics and Researchers” project based in University College Cork²⁰. In November 2012 ‘Recommendations for Actions towards Gender Equality in Academic and Research Careers in the Higher Education Sector’ were published²¹. The recommendations set out formalise a system of national collaboration to drive forward structural change.

¹² http://www.cost.eu/about_cost/governance/genderste

¹³ ‘Promoting gender equality in research institutions and the integration of the gender dimension in research contents’, *Grant Agreement n°618124 – GENDER-NET*, FP7-ERANET 2013-RTD, SiS-2013-2.1.1-2

¹⁴ Article 15, HORIZON 2020 Framework proposal. *In: Regulations of the European parliament and of the Council, Establishing Horizon 2020 - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 2014 - 2020*

¹⁵ *Research Europe*, 18 July 2013, Pg 4.

¹⁶ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-1085_en.htm

¹⁷ <http://www.festa-europa.eu/>

¹⁸ <http://www.genovate.eu/>

¹⁹ <http://www.tcd.ie/wiser/integer/>

²⁰ <http://www.ucc.ie/en/iss21/recentresearchprojects/glassceiling/>

²¹ Recommendations for Actions towards Gender Equality in Academic and Research Careers in the Higher Education Sector, *Ireland, November 2012*

European integration of sex/gender analysis in research content

The EU Commission funded the production of a ‘Toolkit on Gender in EU-funded Research’²² in 2009, as a means to provide a number of concrete examples on how to introduce the gender dimension in research projects in different thematic scientific areas.

The EU-US “Gendered Innovations” project²³ indicated that gender can be a critical aspect of research and innovation, in areas ranging from pharmaceuticals to transportation. This peer-reviewed project develops practical methods of sex and gender analysis for scientists and engineers and provides case studies – in science, health, medicine, engineering and environment – as concrete illustrations of how integrating the gender dimension in research can lead to better research and innovation. The new European COST initiative genderSTE²⁴ will advance knowledge on implementation of the integration of sex and gender dimensions in the content of science and technology by dissemination existing research on the topic, i.e. the EU-US Gendered Innovations project.

The GENDER-NET ERA-NET project²⁵ (of which the Irish Research Council is a partner) has a particular focus on utilising lessons learned and best practise internationally in regard to the integration of the sex/gender dimension in research programmes and contents. An output of the project will be the development of tools to enable research organisations to do this more effectively.

Gender equality is a cross-cutting issue in Horizon 2020 and shall be implemented across all priorities. This will extend to promoting the gender dimension in research and innovation content²⁶. Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn is seeking a consistent system where gender balance and the gender dimension are followed up throughout the research cycle: from the conception of Work Programmes, through proposal submission and evaluation, to reporting and monitoring.

Irish integration of sex/gender analysis in research content

The Irish Research Council requires all applicants to demonstrate that they have given full consideration to whether there is a potential sex and/or gender dimension in their proposed research. In 2013, the Council hosted workshops with international gender experts on how to identify whether a sex and/or gender dimension was relevant and, if so, how to fully integrate sex/gender analysis into the design, implementation, evaluation, dissemination of the research.

²² http://www.yellowwindow.be/genderinresearch/downloads/YW2009_GenderToolKit_Module1.pdf

²³ <http://genderedinnovations.stanford.edu/>

²⁴ http://www.cost.eu/about_cost/governance/genderste

²⁵ ‘Promoting gender equality in research institutions and the integration of the gender dimension in research contents’, *Grant Agreement n°618124 – GENDER-NET, FP7-ERANET 2013-RTD, SiS-2013-2.1.1-2*

²⁶ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-1085_en.htm

IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL GENDER STRATEGY

The Council has a social responsibility to ensure that it actively works to maximise collective research intelligence, creativity and innovation, and to only fund excellent research which has maximum impact and societal benefit, thus ensuring the quality of the Irish research system.

The Council Gender Strategy includes *both sexes*, and aims to provide *equal outcomes* to both men and women so that Ireland can attract and retain the most talented, creative and innovative researchers thereby maximising its collective research intelligence.

The Council will systematically and consciously work to address gender challenges by:

- encouraging more equal gender representation in the research population, for example by showcasing relevant role models;
- acknowledging unconscious gender bias may exist and taking steps to limit any effect on internal processes and procedures to deliver an level playing field for all applicants;
- supporting the development of national initiatives to remove gender related structural constraints and barriers in the recruitment, advancement, retention and mobility of all researchers in the Irish research system;
- increasing awareness of the need to consider whether a potential sex and/or gender dimension is relevant in a research proposal and, where relevant, requiring integration of sex/gender analysis into the design, implementation, evaluation and dissemination of the research.

IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL GENDER ACTION PLAN

Supporting Gender Equality in Researcher Careers

Objective

The Council will encourage and implement initiatives which promote equality between women and men at all stages of the researcher career.

The Irish Research Council will:

- continue to support the development and roll-out of national initiatives focusing on gender equality in research careers;
- raise awareness about the Council gender strategy and action plan among potential applicants and work to improve the balance among researchers submitting applications in all research fields;
- showcase Council success stories, thereby providing role models in underrepresented groups and areas;
- investigate mentoring programme and targeted initiatives to support men and women awardees in under-represented research areas;
- partner with international organisations in GENDER-NET²⁷ to utilise lessons learned and international best practise for gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

Integration of sex/gender analysis in research content

Objective

The Council will ensure that researchers have fully considered whether their research contains a sex and/or gender dimension and, if so, that they have fully integrated it into the research content.

The Irish Research Council will:

- require all applicants to indicate whether a potential sex and/or gender dimension may be present or could arise in the course of their proposed research:
 - and, if so, outline how sex/gender analysis will be integrated in the design, implementation, evaluation, interpretation and dissemination of the results of the research proposal;
 - if not, outline why it is not relevant to the research proposal;
- facilitate researchers to correctly identify and recognise whether or not there is a potential sex and/or gender dimension in their proposed research through the provision of reference materials and training sessions;
- provide guidance and training for Irish based researchers targeting international funding programmes where the sex/gender dimension is a review criterion;
- provide guidance and training for Council peer-review assessors in evaluating whether a potential sex and/or gender dimension is present in the proposed research and if so, how well the sex/gender analysis has been integrated into the research content;
- include review of the sex and/or gender dimension in the ongoing monitoring and review process of funded research proposals where these have been identified as relevant variables.

²⁷ 'Promoting gender equality in research institutions and the integration of the gender dimension in research contents', *Proposal 618124 – GENDER-NET*, FP7-ERANET 2013-RTD, SiS-2013-2.1.1-2

- partner with international organisations in the GENDER-NET²⁸ to share lessons learned and utilise best practice in the development of future initiatives to ensure the integration of sex/gender analysis in research content.

Internal Gender Proofing

Objective

All efforts related to gender equality and inclusion of sex/gender analysis in research content will be a shared, overall task for the organisation as a whole.

The Irish Research Council will

- carry out an assessment of existing policies and processes in relation to gender equality in research careers and integration of sex/gender analysis in research content;
- implement training measures to enhance competence within the Council on gender equality and the integration of sex/gender analysis in research content;
- gender-proof criteria for assessment processes to ensure that there is no implicit gender bias, disadvantage or deterrent in the language or criteria and investigate utilising blind assessment procedures;
- aim for balance²⁹ in the membership of all assessment, advisory and management boards, committees, workshops, focus groups, etc;
- produce annual statistics with sex-disaggregated data;
- monitor and analyse the patterns of awards to better assess trends and inform the development of targeted gender initiatives;
- consult with Irish representatives of national and international groups that are working to advance gender equality and integration of sex/gender analysis in research content.

²⁸ 'Promoting gender equality in research institutions and the integration of the gender dimension in research contents', *Proposal 618124 – GENDER-NET*, FP7-ERANET 2013-RTD, SiS-2013-2.1.1-2

²⁹ at least 40% of each gender to be represented.

