



Handbook

Gender-sensitive Design of Criteria and Recruitment,
Appointment and Promotion Processes in Academia



FESTA
Female Empowerment in
Science and Technology Academia



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01

Summary of Findings

Recruitment and appointment processes for senior academic positions or professorships differ among European countries. However, there are important topics which can enhance fairness in general and gender equality in particular. The most important ones are summarized here, including a comparison of the partners' findings.

In the beginning, the purpose of the work package "Monitoring Excellence in Hiring Processes" was to detect hidden gender biases and develop transparent and gender sensitive criteria of excellence to ensure gender sensitive hiring processes. While this issue is still on the agenda, a second issue emerged: the importance of transparent and gender sensitive processes in which the criteria can be applied. Gender sensitive recruitment and selection need both: a transparent and gender sensitive process and gender sensitive criteria. Both are interrelated. Well-designed processes can be undermined by gender biased criteria and gender sensitive criteria can be manipulated or ignored because of problematic processes.

The partners from Italy, Ireland, Germany, Turkey and Bulgaria identify and address several dimensions of criteria-related and process-related biases and make recommendations to address them, bearing in mind the findings which emerged from the empirical research conducted at the start of this work package.

In all partner universities, it was found that criteria can be gender biased. It is essential to check whether the criteria used have an inherent gender bias. If there is a bias, the specification of criteria should be reconsidered or less weight should be assigned to the criteria.

Also common across each partner institution is the dominance of men in most of the groups, boards or committees which make hiring decisions. At the same time, the non-transparent ways these committees are created is a significant factor across some partners. Some institutions also stress gender balance with respect to external reviewers on these committees. Other institutions raise the issue of the way the job is created, described and advertised.

Four institutions point out the job profile as a possibility to disproportionately reduce the number of possible female scientists. The narrowing of possible applicants also takes place when the job is not advertised broadly, a bias that is

stressed by four institutions. Contacting possible female candidates and encouraging them to apply is crucial in many systems. Systematic recruiting strategies that are implemented at the institutional level can support these efforts.

Efforts to raise the number of females in those decision making groups in high level positions are recommended by all partner organizations. The influence of the chairperson on the decision making process can enhance or eliminate biases. A meeting culture that allows open discussions and active involvement of every participant can support a fair process.

A further procedural bias that is identified by every partner is ignoring or manipulating criteria. Criteria have to be explicitly formulated, transparent, weighted in a standard way, and fixed for the entire process. It is important that only criteria agreed upon have an impact on the decision and are applied equally to every candidate. A change in criteria in the later process stages should be avoided as this facilitates committee members exercising explicit bias in the application of criteria.

Four institutions identify women's care obligations as a possible criterial bias. Unconscious biases that are unfavorable to females have an effect on the committee's evaluation of applicants, which is addressed by many partners. Gender awareness initiatives and trainings are further recommendations that are made by all partners to counteract these unconscious biases.

The handling of the interviews is also stressed as a possible bias. Some partner institutions also call attention to the fact that after the job has been offered to a candidate, the negotiations about working conditions, in particular salary issues, can have unequal outcomes for women and men.

In spite of the differences between partner countries, all institutions come to the conclusion that gender sensitive recruitment and evaluation criteria are crucial at all stages of an appointment process. However, all have also seen that different gender equality issues are relevant in every stage of the process, starting before the position is even announced and continuing after the selection process has been finished.

02

Introduction

Appointment processes are increasingly the subject of investigation as a key mechanism in fostering gender equality and increasing the proportion of women in academia, in particular as professors. This handbook is intended to support practitioners who are involved in hiring processes and stakeholders who can influence regulations. This handbook will also support applicants in understanding the formal processes, and to create awareness of the biases that can influence appointment processes and criteria. The aim is to ensure a fair process with equal opportunities for female and male researchers.

The perception of excellence in hiring processes has been the focus of work package 5.1 in the project “Female Empowerment in Science and Technology Academia” (FESTA), funded by the 7th EU Framework Program. Five research institutions and universities from Bulgaria, Germany, Ireland, Italy and Turkey analyzed the interconnections between the concept of excellence and gender. In all participating organizations, there are quantifiable criteria of excellence which include publications, research grants and citations, which are the official criteria for defining excellence. However, the research found that unquantifiable indicators, such as the perceived “fit of a person” also play a major role in the appointment process.

On one hand, the person’s fit as a member of the scientific community and his/her reputation are taken into account. On the other hand, local preferences, circumstances and the care ceiling (i.e. the limit to a career because of caring responsibilities) have been discovered as influencing the perceived fit as well. Soft skills – all skills that are not directly connected to scientific and technical skills, such as the ability to think in creative and innovative ways, or social and communication skills – might tip the balance in favor of a certain candidate. For further information, please refer to the report “Perceptions of Excellence in Hiring Processes – Results of mapping of the present situation in Bulgaria, Germany, Ireland, Italy and Turkey” (2013). Workshops were held in each institution to address gender biases in perceptions of excellence and career advancement.

The hiring processes described in this handbook refer to the appointment of external applicants. In general, there are three main stages: the initiating process of requesting or creating

a post, the recruiting process and the selection process. The focus of the analyses and recommendations are: the people who are involved in the process and their possible ways of influencing the appointment process; the decision making process itself; and the criteria that are applied.

The appointment process as well as the criteria can be biased by considerations of gender. The term “procedural bias” stresses that biases can result from the procedures for making appointments including the criteria that are established to assess candidates.

As appointment processes are conducted by individuals, there are opportunities for subjective biases to occur, as people involved in the processes can establish the criteria and the relative importance of the criteria, they can also manipulate or ignore regulations.

In this handbook, we identify these biases separately as procedural bias and criterial bias. Procedural bias relates to the appointment process itself, and the ways individuals can introduce bias to the process. Criterial bias refers to the ways criteria can be inherently gendered, e.g. international mobility, or can be applied in a gendered way. It is not always possible to make a clear distinction between them, because people implement process and there is overlap. The distinction facilitates recognition of the many areas where gender bias can creep in and reveals both conscious and unconscious biases at different stages of a particular process.

The handbook provides flow charts which illustrate the appointment processes in each partner institution. Each institution has developed a flowchart of the appointment process outlining where gender bias can creep into the process. Descriptions of these biases are given, together with recommendations to address these biases.

Finally, guidelines are included which aim to reduce or eliminate these biases and lead to gender equality. These guidelines and the handbook will be distributed in each partner organization, to eliminate gender bias in selection processes.

03

Reading Guide to the Handbook

The flow charts depict typical recruitment and appointment processes of each institution. Stages in the process where possible gender biases may influence the decision or process are marked by numbered circles. Orange circles mark biases that result from the processes itself, while red circles mark biases that affect the selection criteria and the committee's perception of candidates' ability. It should be noted that the numbering of each section starts with 1. Some gender biases can occur on different stages in the same process. They are marked with the same numbered circles, e.g. a red circle with number 7 can appear several times within the flow chart.

The tables explain the biases in the left hand column. The right hand columns offer recommendations to counteract them. The recommendations target people who are involved in the appointment process as decision makers or who have the power to change regulations. Further, the recommendations point out issues that can actually be changed.

In some countries appointment processes vary a lot when comparing the levels of the position that is to be appointed. This is true for Italy, Germany and Bulgaria. The appointment processes for the highest level positions are analyzed for these partners, as the perception of excellence is most crucial on those levels. The Italian organization is a research foundation with permanent positions at senior level as the highest level. At the German university, the appointment process for professorships is examined. In Bulgaria, appointments are made at associate professor and professor level. The appointment processes in the Irish and Turkish university have less variation concerning the different levels being appointed.

Gender identifies the social relations between men and women. It refers to the differences between men and women, boys and girls, and how these are socially constructed. Gender roles are dynamic and change over time.

Gender bias means different perceptions and valuations of men and women and/or different actions related to gender. The bias can be conscious or unconscious.

Gender awareness is an understanding that there are socially constructed differences between women and men based on learned behavior, which affect their ability to access power and to control resources. **Gender sensitivity** encompasses the ability to acknowledge and highlight existing gender differences, issues and inequalities and incorporate these into strategies and actions.

Gender mainstreaming [refers to the] integration of the gender perspective into all policies with a view to promoting equality between women and men.

All citations: European Commission "Gender equality – glossary" http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/glossary/index_en.htm (accessed 15 July 2015)

04

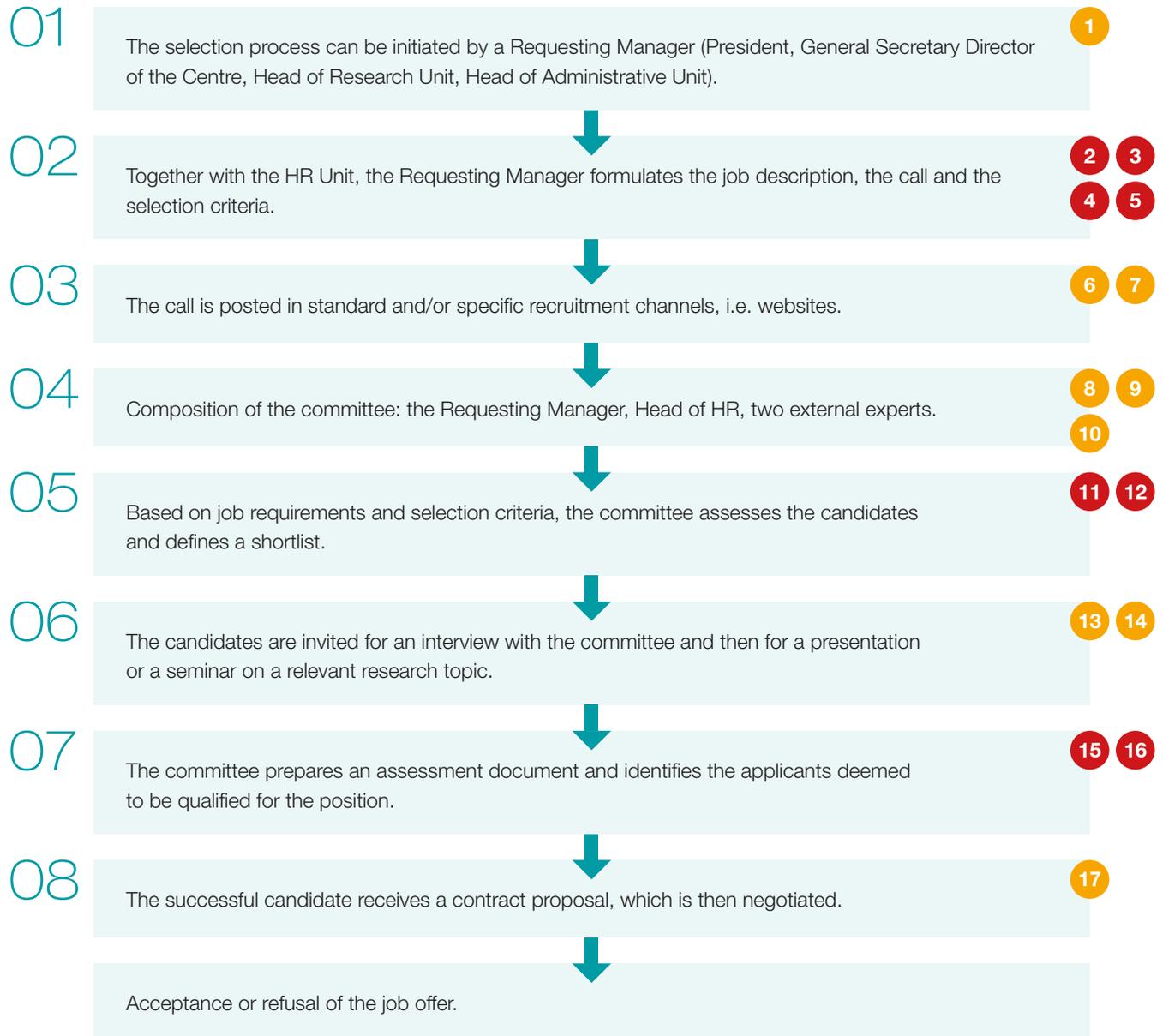
Recruitment and Appointment Processes

04.1

Bruno Kessler Foundation (FBK), Italy

The flow chart depicts the stages of a typical appointment process for permanent positions and for fixed-term research positions at senior levels in the Bruno Kessler Foundation (FBK). Unlike in the other partner institutions involved in FESTA, which are all universities, in FBK there are no professorships. The Bruno Kessler Foundation is a partly private research institution. The selection processes are regulated by internal selection guidelines, which are published on the FBK website and are based on FBK official documents concerning selection policies. The selection guidelines are inspired by a collective agreement for research foundations in the Autonomous Province of Trento, by the European Charter for Researchers and by the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. As regards gender equality in recruitment and promotion, FBK's guidelines refer to the Italian legal framework on gender equality, which is given by the National Code of Equal Opportunities between Women and Men (Legislative Decree 198, 2006).

Overview



● Orange circles mark biases that result from the processes itself.

● Red circles mark biases that affect the selection criteria.

01 Start of the selection process

All managers who can initiate a selection process are men.

1

Sensitize the managerial level of the research institution to gender issues relevant in the context of hiring processes. Moreover, aim at augmenting female participation at managerial levels.

02 Formulation of selection criteria and preparation of recruitment notice

The job requirements are tailored in a way that it is clear from the outset that only few potential applicants will be able to meet them.

2

In formulating the job requirements, it should be considered whether there is a critical mass of female and male researchers who meet the criteria. Moreover, consider explicitly discussing the tricky question of whether the requirements are tailored to one specific candidate.

All job requirements function as criteria, but their relative weight is not made transparent to the candidates. Instead, relative weights are internally negotiated by the committee members and applied ad hoc.

3

All relevant criteria should be made explicit and weighted in a standard way. Moreover, consider informing all candidates, shortlisted or not, about the evaluation grid and weighting used for the assessment.

The job requirements related to soft skills are underrated.

4

Relevant soft skills such as communication or diversity-sensitive leadership skills or the ability to integrate gender aspects into research and teaching, should be explicitly stated in the job description and weighted in a gender-balanced way.

In the job description insufficient attention is paid to stating features of the general work place that might encourage qualified women to apply (for instance, it is not explicitly stated that certain life/work balance policies like flexible hours etc. are in place).

5

Encourage women to apply by clearly stating work/life balance actions that are operative in the recruiting institution.

03 Publication of the call

For the most part, calls are published on established recruitment channels (for example: European websites such as Euraxess and Eures).

6

Make an effort to identify specific and informal channels of recruitment (for instance: blogs, websites, mailing-lists or associations) that expressly address an audience of female researchers and publish the calls on those channels as well.

The calls are published informally through consolidated mailing lists.

7

Encouraging the use of the channels mentioned above.

04 Composition of the selection committee

The committee includes two external experts in the relevant field. These experts are nominated by the head of the research unit or the director of the interested research centre. Generally, the external experts are chosen from consolidated, maledominated networks.

8

All members of the selection committee should be sensitized to the issue of gender bias. Moreover, inclusion of at

No equal opportunity officer/observer is included in the selection/appointment committee.

9

Consider training and appointing equal opportunity officers/observers who can then either be part of each selection committee or observers in an advisory role.

The committee is not always gender-balanced.

10

Gender balance could be made an explicit requirement in the formation of selection committees.

05 Shortlisting

The head of the respective research unit and the external experts of the selection committee assess the curricula and publication lists of the candidates. Any gender bias present in this assessment process will have significant influence on the outcome of the assessments.

11

sensitized to the issue of gender bias. Moreover, a gender-balanced evaluation of all candidates may be stated as an explicit requirement.

The criteria included in the job description are not applied equally to all candidates.

12

Only the agreed criteria should have an impact on the decision and should be weighted equally for every candidate.

06 Interviews, presentations, seminars

Legitimate individual needs are not considered when scheduling job interviews and seminars.

13

Different time schedules can be proposed for the interviews in order to match legitimate individual needs of the candidates.

The committee defines a format for the job interviews in each selection process. This format may incorporate structural and unintended gender biases.

14

The committee may be explicitly required to discuss the question of whether a proposed interview format contains gender bias. Moreover, an equal opportunity officer could be invited to take part in this discussion.

07 Assessment of interviews, presentations, seminars

A grid of evaluation criteria with inherent gender biases is used to assess the candidates.

15

The question of whether the proposed set of evaluation criteria is gender-balanced should be discussed, and the opinion of an equal opportunity officer on proposed sets of criteria could be invited.

In the evaluation process insufficient attention is paid to possible gender biases that can lead to unequal assessments of male and female candidates.

16

All committee members should be briefed on gender awareness and on how to formulate genderbalanced evaluations.

08 Contract proposal – Negotiation

Often, unequal salaries are allocated to men and women for equal job profiles.

17

The gender pay gap should be considered and levelled out.

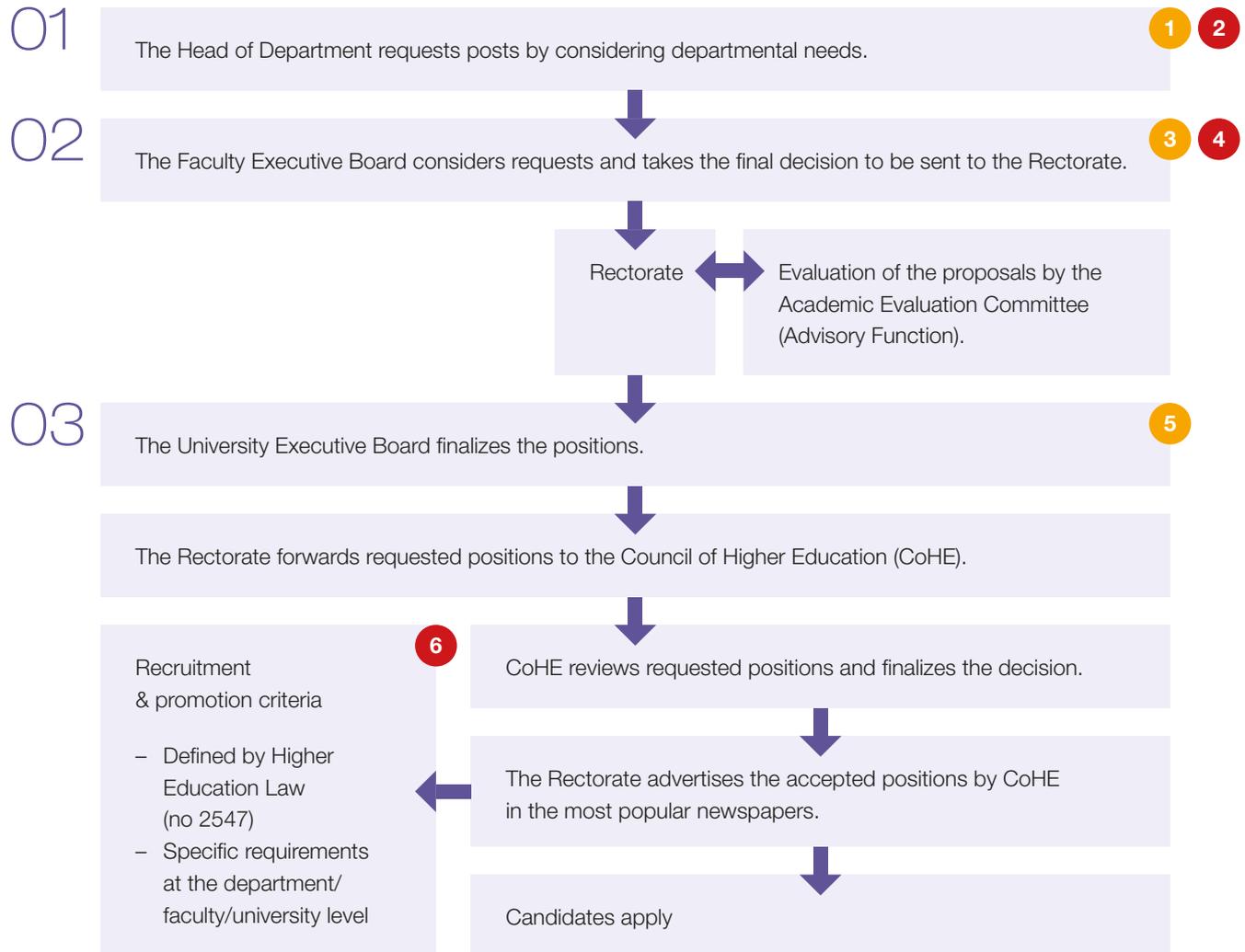
04.2

Istanbul Technical University (ITU), Turkey

The flow chart gives a general overview of typical recruitment and promotion processes at Istanbul Technical University (ITU) and gender biases, which can occur at different steps.

All recruitment and promotion processes are regulated by The Higher Education Law No. 2547, dated November 4, 1981 and which is the main law governs the higher education in Turkey. Recruitment to assistant professorship, associate professorship and professorship are defined in the capacity of the articles 23, 25 and 26, respectively. Recruitment of research assistants are defined within Article 33, which regulates the recruitment processes for all ancillary staff. It is also observed in Turkey that recruitment and promotion processes may differ in other universities from the structure presented below. Universities can prepare and announce their own regulations prepared in accordance with the Higher Education Law. With such regulations, universities may establish additional requirements and principles to Law No: 2547.

Overview



Overview



01 The Head of Department requests posts by considering departmental needs

At the stage of requesting new positions for the department, barriers for female academics can be created. There may be a female assistant professor, for instance, who is waiting for an associate professorship position whose criteria she fulfills. Her situation can be ignored by the department and no requests are made for the needed position.

1

As the department defines the needs in terms of human resources, fair and transparent decision-making mechanisms should be provided at the departmental level.

Detailed explanations on the requested positions should be available from the department.

Awareness raising and networking of female academics should be supported to sensitize women to carrier planning.

The development of the content of the position can be non-transparent and reduce the possible candidates in a way that the (relative) ratio of female scientists is decreased and it is less likely that a woman will be appointed.

Rules on who is involved in decisionmaking concerning departmental needs and position content should be maintained to support a transparent process.

Additional criteria requested by the department while specifying the needed positions may be subject to gender bias.

2

The rationale of the additional criteria should be made transparent and open to inquiries by department members.

02 The Faculty Board considers requests

Gender bias may influence the acceptance or rejection of the requested positions by the Faculty Executive Board.

3

Decisions of the Faculty Executive Board on requested department positions should be made transparent and open to inquiries by faculty members.

Gender balance of the faculty board should be encouraged.

Gender awareness of Faculty Board members should be raised and maintained.

Additional criteria, which may be subject to gender bias, can be added by the Faculty Executive Board based on departmental priorities. The additional criteria may be defined in a way that only one candidate or very few potential applicants meet them.

4

New criteria added by the Faculty Board should be free of gender bias. The number of male and female candidates who could meet these criteria should be compared.

03 The University Executive Board finalizes the positions

The University Executive Board finalizes the positions to be opened based on the report of the Academic Evaluation Committee. For each position, it is ensured that there is at least one potential candidate who fulfills the criteria of the position while finalizing the positions. This process may be affected by gender bias.

5

Gender Balance at the Executive Board level should be encouraged.

The current gender profile of all decisionmaking committees should be made visible.

Gender awareness of Executive Board members should be raised and maintained.

The university has already defined and announced the criteria that are valid and transparent for all positions. These criteria can be renewed from time to time according to changing conditions. Additional criteria can be proposed by the department or faculty as a part of formal processes. The University Executive Board does not add any other criteria at the finalization process; the evaluation by the Executive Board is based on concrete criteria that are very difficult to distort. Nevertheless there is always the possibility of informal decision making processes that are mainly practiced by male academics in the university to decide in favor of male candidates for the open positions.

6

Pre-defined criteria should be examined in terms of being free of gender bias.

In order to be equally eligible for the positions announced, a fair distribution of academic tasks and resources among male and female academicians should be aimed at.

Gender mainstreaming in the organization is also needed for ensuring gender biasfree criteria for recruitment or promotion at different levels.

04 Composition of Jury Members

Faculty Deans and the University Executive Board play a key role in the selection process of jury members; they may have a tendency to select male members rather than female ones.

The composition of the committees and boards is dominated by males who may tend to favor male jury members in the selection process.

7

Juries should be gender-balanced, which necessitates gender awareness at the Faculty Executive Board and University Executive Board levels, while maintaining the consistency and meritocracy in terms of subject areas.

Gender balance in all decision-making bodies should be encouraged.

05 Jury reports

The criteria may not be applied equally to all candidates.

Jury members may have a tendency to act under the influence of gender stereotypes in the evaluation of male and female candidates.

Acceptance of women's role as primary care givers may lead to an underestimation of female academic achievement and the perception of these women as non-conformists to traditional cultural patterns.

8

Faculty Executive Board and University Executive Board should check that criteria are applied equally to every applicant.

9

Gender awareness/gender bias briefing for all university members and/or gender mainstreaming should be adapted as a university policy. All the university members should be sensitized to work-life balance issues.

In order to give equal opportunities to male and female academics measures should be taken to establish work-life balance across the institution by designing guidelines, rules, procedures and also providing such facilities as care centers for children and elderly.

06 Finalization of the decision

The Faculty Executive Board or the University Executive Board members, who play the key roles in the recruitment/promotion processes, may have a tendency to act under the influence of gender stereotypes.

10

Gender awareness of Executive Board members should be raised and maintained.

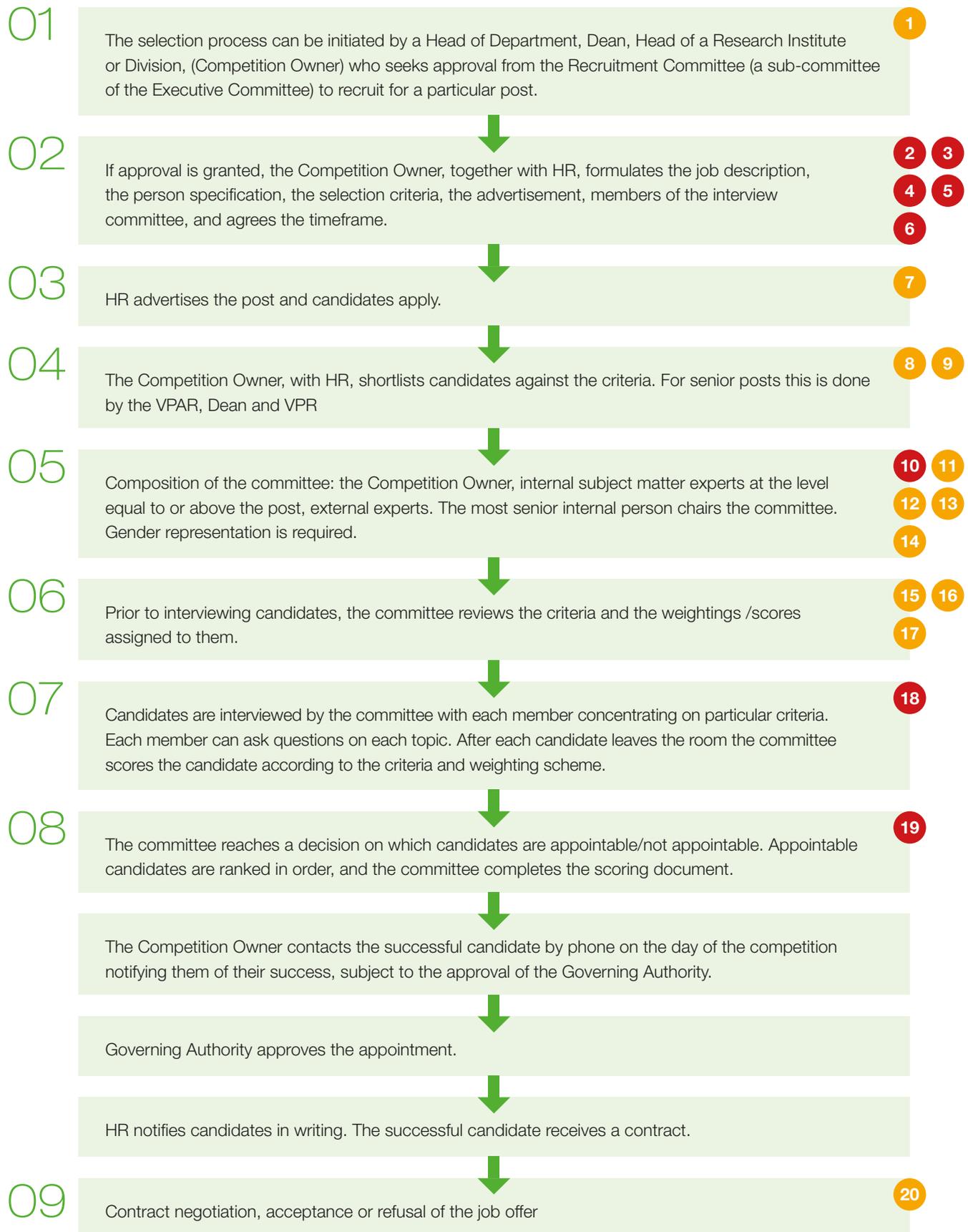
An independent gender equality watch group should be established to evaluate the processes and report to the Rectorate. The rights of the individuals to appeal to the court for the finalized decisions with regard to recruitment and promotions should also be supported by this group.

04.3

University of Limerick, Ireland (UL)

The flow chart depicts the stages of a typical appointment process for permanent and fixed-term posts in the University of Limerick. In Ireland the Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2008 prevent discrimination in recruitment and selection on nine grounds: gender, civil status, family status, age, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, membership of the Traveller community.

Overview



01 Request to recruit a post

The Competition Owner may have somebody identified for the role. This is possible but unlikely as the post has to be justified to the Dean and the Recruitment Committee.

1

Explicitly discuss the question of whether the post is designed for one specific candidate.

02 Formulation of the job description, the person specification, the selection criteria, members of the interview committee

The job description and person specification are written in a way that it is clear from the outset that only few potential applicants will be suitable.

2

In formulating job requirements, consider whether there is a critical mass of female and male applicants who could meet the criteria.

The selection criteria are decided by the Competition Owner with HR. These requirements may include criteria which lead to indirect discrimination against women, e.g. having worked internationally.

3

Minimum relevant criteria should be included so as to widen the potential pool of applicants who will apply.

Encourage women to apply by clearly stating that women are encouraged to apply and the organisation is an equal opportunities employer.

Criteria related to quantifiable indicators, e.g. number of publications, do not acknowledge leave taken for maternity, parental, caring.

4

Assessment of quantifiable indicators should discount leave periods.

The job requirements related to soft skills such as interpersonal skills, communications, suitability and potential are not rated.

5

Explicitly state soft skills requirements in the job description.

The competition owner suggests internal and external members of the committee. This provides potential for homosociability, with competition owners nominating males in their own networks.

6

A panel of internal and external experts, male and female should be established from which committees are selected.

All members of this panel should receive training in gender/unconscious bias before participating in a selection committee.

Details of the committee should be circulated to candidates, before the shortlisting process commences.

03 HR Advertises post and candidates apply

No women applicants.

7

All advertisements will contain wording to the effect that women are strongly encouraged and welcome to apply.

04 Shortlisting Process

The competition owner, with the Board and the HR officer shortlist candidates for interview. Any gender bias present in this assessment process will have significant influence on the outcome of the process. Such gender bias may manifest itself in overrating men and underrating women on the same achievements, competencies.

8

All competition owners, before selecting criteria, should be required to participate in gender awareness/unconscious bias training.

HR personnel also need to have a wider appreciation of gender than that contained in employment legislation, and participate in gender awareness/unconscious bias training.

Explicitly require a gender-balanced evaluation of all candidates.

The proportion of women shortlisted should reflect that of the applicant pool

The criteria included in the job description are not applied equally to all candidates.

9

Ensure that only the agreed criteria have an impact on the decision and are applied equally to every candidate.

05 Composition of the selection committee

The committee is seldom gender balanced. Gender representation means that usually only one woman is included in a committee of six/seven.

10

Make all committees gender balanced, no less than 40 per cent of either gender. It may be necessary to increase the number of externs, relax seniority rules or broaden the disciplines involved to achieve this.

11

No equality officer/gender observer is included in the selection/appointment committee.

12

A senior academic sits in as equality observer for all competitions, noting the quality, sensitivity and frequency of questions to male/female candidates and the observations of the committee, ensuring male and female candidates are evaluated equally against the criteria. The observer must make the panel aware of how its decisions were viewed in terms of bias prior to decision being taken.

The committee includes external experts in the relevant field. These experts are nominated by the Competition Owner.

13

Ensure the inclusion of at least one female external expert in the committee.

Generally, the external experts are chosen from consolidated, male-dominated networks. Internal experts are also selected by the Competition Owner from within the organisation.

The female expert is to be at least the same level as the most senior male.

Ensure internal experts are gender balanced.

Sensitise all members of the selection committee to the issue of gender bias.

The most senior internal person chairs the committee.

14

Chairs are influential in leading committees to decisions. All chairs should undergo gender awareness/gender bias training before chairing an appointment committee.

06 Re-evaluating criteria and weightings, prior to interviews

No equality officer/gender observer is included in the selection/appointment committee.

15

A senior academic sits in as equality observer for all competitions, noting the quality, sensitivity and frequency of questions to male/female candidates and the observations of the committee, ensuring male and female candidates are evaluated equally against the criteria. The observer must make the panel aware of how its decisions were viewed in terms of bias prior to decision being taken.

The criteria in the job description and the weightings originally assigned to them can be changed on the day, either before or after interviewing, after the committee has seen the applications, to suit particular shortlisted candidates.

16

This element of the process should be eliminated completely.

The competition owner and the chair can exert bias on the way the criteria are to be interpreted and influence other committee members, before the competition starts.

17

This element of the process should be eliminated completely.

The interview schedule/logistics

The presentation/interview schedule can favour some candidates over others.

Ensure that the under-represented gender is not to be scheduled first or last on the day.

07 Assessment of interviews

All committee members ask similar questions but are allowed ask further questions that depend on the answers provided and also on CV.

18

Equal quantity and quality of questions should be asked of all candidates.

Length of interview should be the same for male and female candidates.

The observer must make the panel aware of how its decisions were viewed in terms of bias prior to decision being taken.

08 The committee reaches a decision

Chair persons and Competition Owners can influence the outcome of the process, making the scores reflect their preferred candidate.

19

Chairs are influential in leading selection boards to decisions. All chairs should undergo gender awareness/gender bias training before chairing a selection board.

Where more than one candidate is deemed appointable, the proportion of the under-represented gender on that list should be proportionate to the number of applicants.

09 Contract proposal – Negotiation

Men may negotiate a higher starting salary on the scale than women.

20

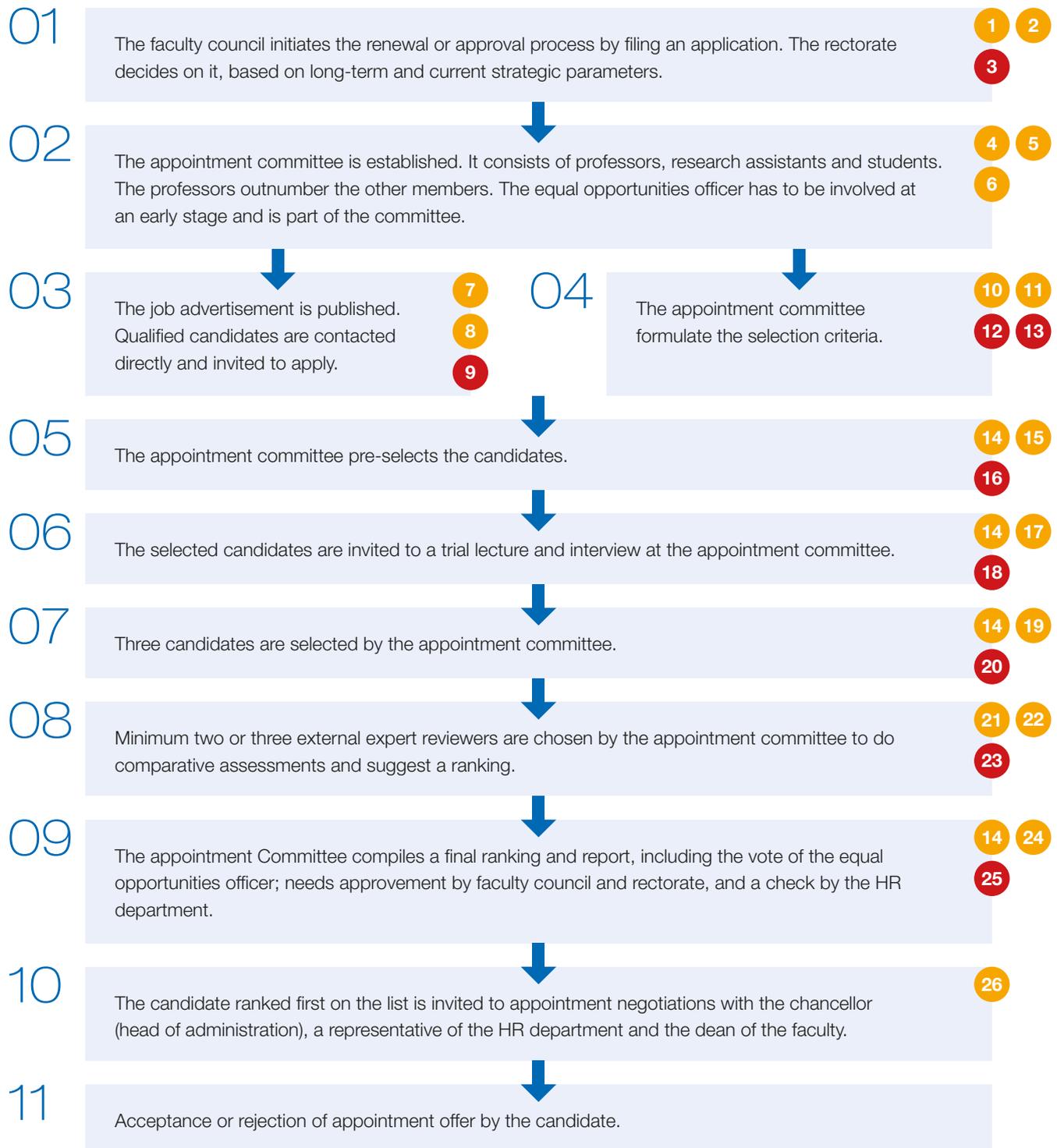
The starting salary has significance for the gender pay gap. The gender pay gap should be considered in the department/faculty, and measures taken to address it, by narrowing the gap between male/female mean salaries, when negotiating starting salaries after narrowing/eliminating the gap.

04.4

RWTH Aachen University, Germany

The flow chart gives a general overview of a typical appointment process for a full professorship at the RWTH Aachen University and on typical biases that may occur. Despite some specifications within the process in regard to the different federal states and universities, it gives a general overview of appointment processes in Germany. Important laws are the University Law, its specification in federal states, the General Equal Treatment Act and the laws on Gender Equality in each federal state. Legal standards, e.g. Disabled Persons Act have to be met but will not be addressed explicitly in the present handbook. The real processes may differ. Recommendations might be adjusted.

Overview



01 Renewal or approval process

The development of the professorship profile could be non-transparent and could reduce the possible candidates in a way that the (relative) frequency of female scientists decreases and makes it less likely to appoint a women

1

A necessity are rules on who is involved in the decision of the job profile which at same time supports a transparent process. The equal opportunity commissioner should be involved, as well as other stakeholders like the faculty council.

The number of possible applicants and their gender should be considered. Where it is applicable, gender studies can be added to the professorship profile.

2

Current and long-term strategic parameters define the university's focus on areas of research and teaching. This can have wide ranging consequences. It is easy to marginalize teaching and research issues as well as persons by these parameters.

The strategic parameters of the university should include gender equality issues.

3

The process of developing a professorship profile is interrelated with formulating criteria. Therefore, criterial biases can result from procedural biases.

Take your time to establish transparent processes and formulate criteria without implications leading to unconscious gender bias.

02 Creation of the Appointment Committee

Establishing the appointment committee is nontransparent and the number of female members is below 50 percent.

4

The composition of the committee could have a big impact on it's decisions. Quite often, interested potential members of the committee are not aware that the committee is being appointed. The head of faculty could reflect if there is a way to address more – and especially female – members of the faculty. Guidelines and awareness raising help to establish transparent processes of this kind of recruiting.

Consider including as many female members as males with a vote.

The chairperson must be able to ensure that the meeting culture allows everyone to speak for themselves.

5

The needs of gender equality are ignored.

Every committee member is responsible for addressing gender equality issues; this responsibility can't be delegated to a single member. A briefing of all members in the beginning, in particular for the chairperson, supports such a practice.

The chairperson is responsible for establishing and following rules. In the first meeting she/he should state the general working style, e.g. to make transparent decisions that are comprehensible to others or that the opinion of each person matters. A strategy how to handle problems that may occur in the later process would support a transparent process. Possible aspects could cover conflicts of interest or how to deal with the pressure to succeed in time. The committee could decide to invite all members of the faculty to the hearing to ensure more publicity and transparency.

Some members might feel uncomfortable to speak up and contribute their own opinion. One possible reason is dependency on other members.

6

The chairperson should explicitly acknowledge divergent opinions.

In trainings, members can learn about their roles as committee members and their rights within the committee. This can be an important contribution for empowerment, in particular if they depend on other members.

03 Advertisement and recruitment

The advertisement is only spread in a small part of the scientific community.

7

To post the advertisement in relevant newspapers, journals, mailing lists or newsletters of expert societies or special networks of female scientists etc. ensures a greater publicity.

Female scientists are less often contacted directly and encouraged to apply.

8

Active recruitment can take place to identify possible female applicants by using public databases like "femconsult" in Germany. Further possibilities would be to ask scientists from different institutions or from expert societies. Explicitly encourage women to apply. An internal recruiter or external agencies could be asked for support at some universities. Guidelines could ensure systematic active recruitment.

The university's commitment to recruit female scientists should be pointed out in the advertisement.

The active recruitment of scientists can be biased by a person's fit in the scientific community. This means that mutual recognition in networks and shared rules and behaviors (illusio) can influence the criteria used to identify who should be recruited actively.

9

The committee should try to identify more scientists who meet the criteria but have less well established networks. If other scientists or expert societies are asked to identify possible candidates, the committee should explicitly ask them to identify not only the especially wellknown scientists.

04 Formulation of the selection criteria

The criteria are defined in a way that only one candidate or very few potential applicants can meet them.

10

The committee could consider if there is a significant number of female and male scientists who could meet the criteria. It could also consider if all criteria are appropriate.

Not all criteria are listed or weighted in transparent ways. Later on, this can allow for ad hoc-additions or changing of criteria and their relative importance, in order to favor a certain candidate.

11

There are legally required minimum criteria that can be interpreted widely. These should be made clearer and less up to interpretation. Additional criteria can be made up by the committee as a part of the formal process at this stage.

The criteria form the basis for decision. All relevant criteria need to be listed and weighted. Apart from scientific achievements, soft skills like managerial, communication or gendersensitive leadership skills or the ability to integrate gender and diversity aspects into research and teaching can be included as relevant criteria. These criteria should be specified as well. The committee should be required to stick to these weighted criteria at each stage in the process. Later, ad hoc changes should not be allowed.

The acknowledgement of achievements by the scientific community is influenced by important scientists who function as gatekeepers. This can lead to more key note speeches at important conferences, involvement in prestigious projects and intense networks to well-established scientists. There's a tendency that female scientists are excluded from these networks because of different working conditions or the tendency of (male dominated) groups.

12

The committee may discuss the weight of criteria that are based on the listed acknowledgements.

As some mothers are still struggling with an unequal distribution of family duties, this can result in biased criteria like publications and international mobility.

13

When formulating the criteria, the committee could consider ways to take the personal background into account. For example the criterion "internationality" could be broadened, e.g. including working in international projects. This allows for the selection of applicants with restrictions in international mobility.

05 Pre-selection of the candidates

The criteria are not taken into account for every applicant or new criteria are created.

14

The chairperson has to ensure that only the agreed criteria influence the decision and that they count equally for everyone. A matrix of the agreed criteria that is completed for each applicant may support this. This bias may occur at other stages as well: the interview and trial lecture, the selection of three candidates, the compilation of the final ranking and the approval by other stakeholders.

The process of pre-selection is non-transparent and results in unequal treatment. This can happen if the application documents of all applicants are not evaluated by every committee member or the synopsis to compare the applicants is completed differently.

15

The time schedule should plan enough time for this step to make it possible for every committee member to decide on every application. If this is impossible the committee should ensure that the decision is made by coincidence. The applicants must be evaluated in the same way.

There should be an agreed mode for completing the synopsis which allows for objective comparability.

There should be enough time for reasoning and discussion on every applicant in the meetings. It should be checked if rationales include a conscious or unconscious gender bias.

The scientific achievements and qualifications of women and men could be judged differently because of an unconscious bias. For example the performance of a female scientist might be attributed to male scientists when working on the same publication/project, while the acknowledgment of the publication/project itself may raise if there are male scientists working on them. The phenomenon that applicants who are perceived as similar to oneself (homosocial cooptation) are overrated could influence the decision as well.

16

Every member should have enough time to read all applications carefully. The chairperson should emphasize that unconscious biases and homosocial cooptation can have an effect. A statistical check if women are selected less often can foster gender-awareness.

Each member should take enough time to take a close look and self-reflect on one's own decision process.

06 Interview with the appointment committee

The applicants don't have the same opportunity to show off if they get less information or different questions, e.g. on personal issues. It could be influenced by unconscious gender bias who receives more information or is asked questions that makes it possible to present more of one's own merits.

17

All candidates should get the same information and have the same conditions and process at the interview. Standards for this may support the equal comparable conditions.

Questions on family or marital status are not allowed to ask. However, questions on personal background that is related to the job, such as the willingness to move if the new job is located in a different city, are allowed and should be standardized and posted to every candidate to avoid bias.

The way female and male scientists present themselves could be judged differently, due to unconscious biases which disfavor women who apply for leading positions like professorships. Different styles of presentation and communication may result in fewer acknowledgements of the scientific contributions of female scientists during/ at the interview.

18

The way scientist present themselves influences the decisions on an unconscious level. An explicit decision if self-presentation should be evaluated helps to make this more conscious. The gender awareness training should give information on the way self-presentation unconsciously influences one's perception.

Selection of three candidates

07

While the decision should be made up individually and independently, members are influenced by other's opinions. This likely happens if there is much time between the hearing and the final decision on who is selected.

19

The time interval between the hearing and the decision should be kept short as possible.

The perceived fit of the person with the specific culture of a local community can be biased, e.g. being perceived as a scientist who works long hours could influence the perception of being an excellent scientist.

20

When criteria are formulated, the appointment committee should find ways on how to check soft skills, such as being a project leader of a research project with a successful conclusion.

Soft skills like leadership skills or being creative, pleasant and a good communicator or different kinds of self-presentation may influence the perception of a scientist in a biased way, although they are not fixed as criteria. Informal parts like dinners raise the importance of those informal criteria even more.

The committee should decide if activities like dinners that are added to the formal appointment process are really necessary to judge the excellence of a scientist, because this leads to a greater risk of homosocial cooptation.

08 Minimum two or three external reviewers suggest a ranking and create a report

The selection of the reviewers is interconnected with criterial biases like the perceptions of achievements or the fit in the scientific community. At the same time, these criterial biases have an influence on the reviewers' ranking decision.

21

The reviewers have a big influence on the result. Select gender-aware reviewers that are independent from applicants and the appointment committee in a transparent process with transparent reasons. Consider appointing both female and male reviewers.

Scientists with conflicts of interest are not allowed as reviewers. If the national scientific community seems to be too small to meet this criterion, the appointment committee should consider selecting international reviewers or reviewers of related areas of research.

Different information lead to different evaluations that may result in less comparable reviews. This can bias the decision on the final ranking.

22

The reviewers should get standardized information about the applicants and the criteria. They could be informed about the gender equality strategy of the university as well.

The fit of the selected applicants in the scientific community and the recognition of their achievements can influence the reviewers' decision.

23

It is important to stress that the criteria made up by the committee should be met and no other criteria should be taken into account.

09 Committee makes a final ranking and report / approval by faculty council, rectorate and HR department

New criteria could be taken into account and bias the decision.

24

The faculty council, HR department and the rectorate have to check if the decision is transparent and comprehensible and if all criteria are considered equally, in particular if equal opportunity issues are met. If no female scientist is ranked, the committee must explain why active recruitment was not successful.

The perception of scientific merits can be biased unconsciously and disfavor female scientists, caused by less well established networks or less acknowledgement by well-known members of the scientific community. The perception of the fit of a scientist in the local university can be influenced by homosocial cooptation.

25

Gender awareness trainings for all people who are involved should stress these biases.

10 Appointment negotiations

Resources can be unequally distributed by gender as a result of the negotiation.

26

Female and male scientists are ought to get equal resources and wages. Statistical measurements can be used to identify differences. Guidelines on gender sensitive negotiations can support gender equality as well.

04.5

South-West University “Neofit Rilski” (SWU), Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

The current flow chart presents the recruitment and promotion process for the senior academic positions – Associate Professor and Professor. All Bulgarian universities apply almost the same process and similar evaluation criteria as those at the South-West University. There are a few important documents which establish the legal framework: Higher Education Act, The Act for the Promotion of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (in effect since the end of 2010), the Regulations on Applying the Act and the Institutional Rules and Procedures for Recruitment and Promotion.

It should be noted that gender has never been a part of the academic discourse, nor an issue of concern in institutional practices. Another essential feature of academic life is its “elective culture” – all important decisions and academic posts are taken by overt or covert voting. This creates interdependencies, inner circles, and interplay between personal and group interests where biases could easily flourish and affect people’s behavior, thus leading to unfair and unequal treatment. The third important characteristic of the system is that senior academic positions are all permanent.

Overview



01 Decisions on requesting posts for academic positions – departmental level

The department or chair (a subdivision of a faculty) is the primary academic unit responsible for teaching and research in one or a number of subject areas. Appointment and promotion processes start at that level. Decisions on requesting posts for permanent academic positions as well as promotion of the present staff members are taken by voting. Usually the Head has strong influencing power on the decisions, having various instruments for gaining a majority of voters. Since heads and the majority of department staff are predominantly men (in the STEM fields) the female members could be subject to unequal or unfair treatment due to unintended or deliberate biases in terms of promotion.

1

Well elaborated and convincing explanations about the merits and achievements of each candidate could be presented during the promotion discussions. In case of disregard or unjust treatment the explanation could be presented to the Dean, the respective Vicerektor, the University Hiring Commission and/or the Faculty Council. A female Vice-Dean, Vice-Rector or other executive member could be invited to take part in the discussions prior to the departmental decision on promoting. Gender awareness initiatives could be undertaken by department members with the support by gender change agents from the university or outside. Encourage women to apply.

When discussing the qualities and the output of a candidate for a position or the professional requirements for a certain senior academic post, gender relevant issues could affect the profile description (e.g. development of a professorship profile tailored to a preferred male candidate; etc.).

2

While discussing and deciding on a position to be opened, a gender-neutral profile should be created. The position description should be free of any (even implicit) gender bias. It should be open to inquiries by a wider community of people, including people outside of the university.

The evaluation criteria should be defined in a way which prevents loose or biased interpretation.

02 Reporting the position / promotion requests to the University Hiring Commission

The Dean has a key role at this stage. He/she could refuse to progress any of the requests to the University Hiring Commission. Moreover, he/she is rightfully a member of the Commission and has a very strong say in its final decisions on acceptance or rejection of faculty requests. Deans usually are men (in the STEM fields) and the majority of them tend to (unconsciously or consciously) favor or prefer male candidates.

3

A written justification for rejections could be required and in case it is unjustified, a petition could be posed appealing to the Rector or Minister of Education and Science with respect to the unjust treatment.

There is a need for systematic awareness raising efforts regarding “women in science” issues, gender equality in academic environment, etc. aiming to engage the Dean, Vice-Deans, etc. and to change perceptions and attitudes.

The refusal or rejection could be based on biased interpretation and application of the established criteria when judging the output of a female candidate. Specific criteria might be imposed in addition to the official ones defined in the University Promotion Procedures and Standards.

4

A rationale of such specific criteria could be requested as well as concrete information about whether they are/have been applied equally to all candidates (male and female).

All appointment and promotion criteria – general (institutionally established) and specific (faculty or subject field established) should be officially announced at a Faculty Council meeting at the beginning of the academic year.

03 Acceptance/rejection of the posts requests by the University Hiring Commission

of a Vice-Rector, Deans and some other administrative executives and implements the overall university staff policy. It is maledominated because usually men occupy middle and top managerial positions. In such an environment gender biases could occur in tending to predominantly favor male candidates for promotion or accepting position requests more appropriate to male applicants.

5

Gender awareness of the Hiring Commission members should be maintained appropriately through a number of initiatives (e.g. engaging the Vice-Rector who chairs the Commission as well as members with strong influence in it; inviting external observers, for example, representatives of the academic staff syndicates; distribution of gender relevant information around the university; engaging key members in gender awareness events; briefing the members before the session; etc.).

The recruitment and promotion criteria as well as their proper weightings are defined in detail in the Career Advancement Rules adopted by the Academic Council. The Commission takes the decisions on accepting or rejecting each candidate according to his/her total score against pre-defined (gender neutral) levels. Maternity leave, caring duties as well as any other disadvantages affecting the career progress of women are not taken into account. Thus achievements of female academics are less acknowledged.

6

Discussions about gender and evaluation of research output could be initiated on different levels (departmental, faculty, university) aiming at improving the scoring system, thus ensuring better acknowledgement of female researchers' achievements (e.g. accounting the time frame/period for the achievements; the intensity of work; etc.).

04 Progressing the accepted requests to the Academic Council

The decision on moving forward the accepted recruitment/promotion requests is taken by the Faculty Council. It is quite rare that the Faculty Council terminates the process at this stage but it has the right to do so. The decision is taken by voting of all members present at the meeting.

7

Since cultural stereotypes regarding gender roles still exist (mostly unconscious) systematic initiatives for gender awareness raising is recommended on departmental and faculty levels. They should aim at higher gender sensitivity regarding career advancement and creating more favorable environments for female researchers.

05 Decision on the commencing of the appointment / promotion procedure

The decision on commencing an official procedure for a new recruitment or promotion (which is equal for both) is taken by the Academic Council. The role of the Academic Council in career progress is manifold. It adopts the Rules, Procedures and Criteria for Appointments and Promotions; takes various decisions on human resources; etc. The decision on commencing the process is published (obligatory) in the State Gazette and one popular national newspaper as well as on the university website. Well established gender stereotypes (due to cultural and sociopolitical reasons) have effects on female career advancement in the operation of the Academic Council.

8

A wide awareness raising campaign regarding gender in academia should be organized through variety of means since it has never been a matter of discussion. In order to have a stronger impact certain measures should be institutionalized – i.e. it is necessary to establish an office, center, unit, etc. or at least a regular meeting forum for a group of people concerned with gender issues.

Discussions and initiatives for improving the university procedures and criteria should be carried out in order to create gender sensitive environments more disposed for acknowledging female researchers and their achievements.

Information about the positions announced by the University should be circulated via social networks and professional links around the country in order to reach more women.

9

The Academic Council discusses and adopts the standards and criteria which should be applied in evaluating and ranking all applications for an academic position. They have different weights and are defined in detail in the University Promotion Rules and Procedures. There are also standard minimal levels of the total score in order to qualify for a procedure. The evaluation criteria are said to be equal for men and women and do not even mention any gender aspect.

Since the current evaluation and ranking system is insensitive to gender, it is recommended that the experience of other European universities are studied and improvements to the Academic Council are put forward.

Systematic recruitment of female researchers for membership in the Academic Council.

06 Selection of the Jury members by the Departmental Council

10

This is one of the key stages during the process. The Jury consists of five or seven members. Their names, qualifications and experiences are discussed in the Department Council and the final selection is made by voting of all members. Again, the head of the department and senior staff with administrative and/or symbolic power have strong influence on the decisions taken. As the department heads and members are predominantly male, decisions might be gender-biased.

A well elaborated rationale about the selection of peers and the composition of the jury (also in terms of gender balance) should be obligatory and submitted to the Faculty Council. In case of irrelevant or unjustified composition of the jury, it should be possible to present a petition with appropriate arguments to the Dean and/or the members of the Faculty Council.

A female Vice-Dean, Vice-Rector or other executive member could be invited to take part in the discussions prior to the departmental decision on the jury.

Inviting acknowledged and respected female researchers as members of the jury is highly recommended.

11

There are not explicitly established criteria for the selection/composition of the jury (except a few formal ones). It is a major responsibility of the Department Council to make a decision and suggest it to the Faculty Council for improvement. Thus, at this important stage various gender biases could occur and influence. The final decision, especially when the department is male-dominated.

Appropriate criteria for selection and composition of the jury could be proposed (to be adopted at the departmental or faculty level).

Gender balance of the jury should be encouraged. It is recommended, that gender sensitive academic are invited to be members of the jury.

07 Approval of the Jury by the Faculty Council and processing to the Rector

12

Although this is a formal procedure and the Faculty Council usually approves the proposed Jury without any discussion, it has the authority to reject the proposal and sends it back to the department for reconsideration. The Dean and the members with administrative and/or symbolic power could influence the final decision due to unintended as well as intentional biases and stereotypes, including gender ones.

Since cultural stereotypes regarding gender roles still exist (stronger on unconscious level), systematic initiatives to raise gender awareness on departmental and faculty levels are strongly recommended. They should aim at higher gender sensitivity regarding career advancement and creating more favorable environments for the female researchers.

08 Appointment of the Jury members by the Rector

The Rector can sign an order to officially appoint the Jury members or he/she sends the proposal back to the Faculty Council for reconsideration. Within 14 days the Rector should receive the new proposal; now he/she is obliged to appoint the Jury. This is a quite formal procedure and a rejection is fairly rare. Nevertheless, the Rector with his/her power is able to influence the final composition of the Jury. The decision might be gender-biased.

13

Gender awareness initiatives could be undertaken at top university level engaging the Rectorship. Prominent (national or international) female academics and/or researchers could be invited to take part in university events serving as role models, and to talk to the Rector about women in science. Comparative information and appropriate statistics, facts and cases about gender and academia could be presented to the Rector in appropriate forms.

09 Evaluation of the applicants' output and ranking of the candidates by the Jury

The Jury composed of five or seven (internal as well as external) members evaluates the applicants' output (presented on paper) according to the criteria settled in detail in the University Rules and Regulations with their respective weightings. The Jury members meet twice. At their first meeting they elect a Chairperson to lead the procedure. At the second meeting each member presents a written and oral statement of his/her assessment and announces his/her final opinion with a "yes" or "no" vote. All written statements are uploaded to the university website and are made available to the wide public. A candidate is successful if he/she has gained the majority of positive votes. Thus gender biases could occur mainly in the interpretation and application of the evaluation criteria to the applicants output.

14

Since unspoken criteria and considerations still influence the assessments and opinions of Jury members (e.g., who is the applicant; how much is he/she acknowledged in the academic community; his/her personal characteristics; etc.), various initiatives could be organized to make the general level of functioning more gender sensitive especially in applying evaluation criteria (i.e., to assess the applicant's output more objectively and comprehensively. Also the extent of correspondence included in the grounds for assessments should be limited to the formal criteria only). Equal assessment approaches should be applied to all candidates. The ranking of the candidates should be reasonably and convincingly grounded.

10 The Chairperson of the Jury and the Faculty Council

11

The Chairperson of the Jury reports the results of the evaluation to the Faculty Council and suggests a candidate to be appointed. The Council takes the final decision on suggesting (or rejecting) the successful candidate to the Rector for appointment. The decision is taken by voting after prior discussion. This is also a quite formal procedure and it very rarely happens, that the successful candidate is rejected at this stage. Nevertheless, the Faculty Council has such an authority and influential members could impose such a negative resolution, possibly due to gender biases.

15

Systematic efforts are necessary to get influential people engaged in gender initiatives so as to make them more gender-sensitive.

Awareness raising initiatives about gender sensitive issues could be regularly undertaken (e.g. regular circulation of data, information or materials from gender studies, especially in comparative perspective, could be established).

05

A Guideline to Gender-sensitive Recruitment and Appointment Processes

The guideline provides suggestions how recruitment and appointment processes can be made more gender-sensitive. It addresses topics that are important for many countries. For a more detailed assessment please use the above recommendations that take specific contexts into account.

- It is important that female scientists do not stop doing research. Female scientists should be encouraged to pursue careers in academia.
- Is there a systematic focus on the recruiting of female scientists? Is there a defined recruitment process that specifies how females can be identified and contacted? Are they encouraged to apply?
- The job profile can narrow the number of potential candidates. Does the job profile encourage applications from a sufficiently large number of both female and male researchers?
- Unconscious biases may disadvantage female scientists in the evaluation process. Are there gender awareness initiatives or briefings in place for appointment commission members, in particular for influential persons? Is every person involved in the process aware of gender equality issues?
- Persons with strong positional and/or symbolic power can easily influence the decision making process. Is there a strategy to ensure a meeting culture that allows open discussions and involvement of every participant?
- Certain decisions are made within groups. Are these groups gender-balanced?
- Are the criteria explicit, transparent and weighted in a standard way? Are they fixed for the entire process?
- Are the criteria assessed with respect to potential inherent biases? When defining the criteria in the beginning, are procedures in place that allow to define criteria in a new, unbiased way? If this is impossible, is the commission willing to give biased criteria a smaller weight?
- It is important that only the criteria agreed upon have an impact on the decision and are applied equally to every candidate. Is there a routine process to ensure this?

