

# GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AT THE UFZ – **WHAT CAN I DO?**

We all shape the environment at the UFZ with what we do and not do. How we influence and promote equal opportunities and inclusion through our behavior plays therefore an important role.

This means that everyone has - more or less - opportunities to change their behaviour and thus contribute to changing the UFZ environment. We all are the UFZ and we all shape the UFZ culture: it is our responsibility.

This brochure contains very concrete suggestions on how one's own behaviour can have an influence in certain situations and why this is important. The document focusses on gender issues but the bigger picture behind is to raise awareness for the concerns of different groups and to facilitate personal initiative and changes in behaviour.

Some possible actions are summarized below:

<b>1.</b>	<b>ANNOUNCEMENTS, APPLICATIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS –</b> What should I know? How should I act? .....	<b>2</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>WORK AND FAMILY –</b> How do I create good contitions for everyone? .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>AWARENESS, ENCOURAGEMENT, SUPPORT –</b> What can I do? .....	<b>5</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>RESPECTFUL INTERACTION –</b> How do we want to interact with each other?.....	<b>8</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>QUOTAS, REPRESENTATION, VISIBILTY –</b> Who is seen, who is not? .....	<b>9</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>LINK LIST</b> .....	<b>12</b>



# 1 ■ ANNOUNCEMENTS, APPLICATIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS – What should I know? How should I act?

## »» I pay attention to transparent and criteria-based decision-making processes

Decisions are influenced by a variety of factors and a large part of them we are not aware of. Structured procedures that make the decision-relevant criteria transparent and measurable reduce the influence of unconscious and potentially distorting factors (e.g. the tendency to prefer people who are similar to me, whom I see often or whose names I can easily pronounce). Transparent, criteria-based procedures have been shown to increase the likelihood of making good content-based decisions, especially in procedures for performance evaluation, personnel selection and quality assessment (e.g. project applications).

## »» I use databases for the systematic acquisition of female scientists

Since women are underrepresented in many academic fields, more thorough searches and applications must be made when filling vacancies and giving lectures in order to reach women who are willing. There are various online platforms and newsletters that can be used to address offers and invitations to academically and non-academically qualified women. This targeted approach can lead to a better gender balance in applications, so that qualified people can be drawn from a larger pool. The more women are listed in databases for female scientists and speakers, the easier it is to find female scientists via these platforms and to spread job advertisements as widely as possible. (For examples see [LINK LIST](#))

## »» I request applications without a photo

Certain references to a person's background influence the assumptions we make about that person. Our own background also (unconsciously) influences how we judge people. Applications without a photo are a measure to reduce the unconscious distortion of the assessment of application documents.



## » I know and use academic age

In contrast to biological age, academic age describes the time that people have actually spent on scientific research. There are various reasons for periods of inactivity in scientific research and for the fact that one person has spent less time in research than another. This becomes a disadvantage when key figures are considered in absolute terms. Therefore, indicators should be related to the time that someone has actually spent on research. This allows a fairer and more valid assessment of a person's potential and achievements.

Whenever academic key figures are required, you can refer to the academic age and thereby apply it in different contexts.

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## » As a woman I clearly show interest in leadership responsibility

People in management positions are still predominantly male. As a result, women who are eager to take on leadership responsibilities do not meet society's expectations and are therefore quickly overlooked or ignored. Therefore, communicate your ambitions clearly so that they are present and no one can say they did not know.

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## » In applications I differentiate between desired and necessary requirements

Women are less likely to engage in risky behaviour - and this also applies to application procedures. An application is often only considered when there is the certainty that all requirements will be met. In fact, people are often already sufficiently qualified when they meet 70% of the criteria given and are confident that they can expand their skills. If you advertise a position yourself, you can counter this situation by differentiating between necessary and desirable requirements in the text.

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## » As woman I inform myself and negotiate about salary and equipment

Women often underestimate the financial value of their work and their demands tend to be received more negatively. In order to enter into salary negotiations with confidence, it is helpful to practise these beforehand, in order to know reference salaries and to take advantage of further training. Wrong classifications also lead to wage differences even in jobs that are paid according to collective agreements. The Wage Transparency Act was enacted to identify and prevent wage inequalities between women and men. Further information for employees and employers is available online (see [LINK LIST](#)).



## 2. WORK AND FAMILY – How do I create good conditions for everyone?

### » I organise appointments in a family-friendly way

The simultaneity of family and career is often associated with a reduction of working time for at least one parent. This is also related to the fact that childcare hours at day-care centres and after-school care are often not easily reconciled with professional appointments. If these times are better coordinated, fewer hours may have to be reduced and career development is less affected by family responsibilities. Family-conscious scheduling can mean, for example, that appointments are made between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Further you can signal time flexibility, if possible, so that family tasks can also be planned more flexibly.

### » I support contract extensions for parental leave and care periods.

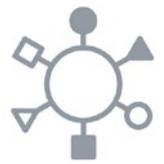
According to the Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz (WissZeitVG), the UFZ primarily limits employment contracts in science in such a way that the contract is extended by maternity/parental leave or care periods taken. If a fixed-term contract according to § 2 (1) WissZeitVG applies, this legal basis gives rights to extend the contract according to § 2 (5) WissZeitVG. If § 2 (1) WissZeitVG cannot be applied, however, there is no claim to this contract extension. If possible, therefore, you should strive for a fixed-term contract in accordance with § 2 (1) WissZeitVG.

### » I offer and enable employees on parental or nursing leave to participate in trainings and team events

Certain tasks may no longer be carried out by doctoral students during pregnancy. In order not to slow down the doctoral project unnecessarily, a student assistant can be assigned to these tasks. The UFZ already has some experience with this procedure – for more information ask the Family Support Office.

### » I encourage fathers to take on family and care responsibilities

A large part of the unequal career opportunities of men and women stems from the unequal sharing of care work (including household, care, supervision, support, education). Since it is the social norm that care work is performed by women, this is often assumed to be tacitly accepted. It is therefore essential that men feel responsible for these activities, deal with them self-confidently.



Ideally the executive creates the necessary professional freedom and encourages male colleagues to take over care responsibilities. Of course you should not interfere with the private organisation of your employees and colleagues. However, there are various ways of creating a framework that makes it easier for fathers to take on care and family responsibilities:

- Discuss parental leave/care leave not only with female but also with male colleagues.
- If you know that a colleague has children of kindergarten age, you can ask when making an appointment whether this is compatible with the drop-off and pick-up times.
- Do not tacitly assume that a female partner will take over these (and other) tasks or stays at home in case of illness of a child.
- If you, as the supervisor, have children yourself, you can set a good example.
- As a supervisor, consider student assistants to relieve the burden of parent/nursing time.

The family office offers support and advice for questions and problems.



## I offer and enable employees on parental or nursing leave to participate in trainings and team events

Parental or caregiving leave interrupts the career and often means losing touch with the workplace and the work environment for a period of time. These “gaps” cause disadvantages for people who take on care or nursing tasks. Voluntary participation in team events and further training during parental or caregiving leave can reduce the distance to the working environment and facilitate re-entry.

## 3. AWARENESS, ENCOURAGEMENT, SUPPORT – What can I do?



## I draw attention to the Family Office and the International Office

The Family Office provides a wide range of information on the compatibility of work and family life, as well as work and care - both within the UFZ and beyond. The International Office provides information, assistance, advice and expertise on how to get around your new job and place of residence in Germany. Both as an affected person and as a person with personnel responsibility, you can obtain information from these offices on how to reconcile family/care and career as well as questions of inclusion for yourself and in your department.



## » I develop an awareness of my prejudices

We are all prejudiced in our perceptions and judgements. Unconsciously we refer to what we see in our environment and have learned over many years in innumerable repetitions. As a result, we all have internalized unconscious or conscious assumptions and norms about the structure of our social world. We stumble mentally when the young woman is not the office worker but the head of the department, because we have seen it many thousands of times (in books, films, pictures, newspapers, biographies, conversations, encounters...) the other way around and have consequently internalised and therefor expected it. The more aware we are of the fact that our decisions are always subject to biased factors, the sooner we can question our behaviour and judgements and establish transparent and criteria-based procedures for important decisions.

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## » I address things I perceive as wrong

Say something if you notice something that you perceive as wrong. You can address it directly in the situation, seek an individual conversation or contact the equal opportunities commissioner, ombudspersons or other colleagues. Often enough, there is no harmful intent behind it, only an impulse from outside is needed. However, there are also situations in which it is obvious that people are intentionally treated badly. Try to find a way to do something about it and support the person - there is no such thing as not behaving! Support equal opportunities work and communicate disparities and misconduct, but also fields of action, ideas, suggestions and positive examples and role models. Among other things, an anonymous contact form is available for this purpose on the Equal Opportunities Officer's website.

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## » I network with female scientists

Contacts are one of the most important currencies in scientific work. How can excellent research be useful if nobody knows about it? And how can I have inspiring conversations if I am not at the places where they take place? If you have access to networks, you can help female scientists to find access to them as well. Of course, you can always create your own opportunities for scientists to exchange ideas, listen to each other and inquire things.

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## » I'm taking part in Boys- and Girls-Days

The Girls-Day and Boys-Day (information about it online - see [LINK LIST](#)) is about introducing boys and girls to professions that are often pursued by the opposite sex. In this way, gender stereotypes in the choice of profession are to be reduced. Girls can, for example, gain insights into the everyday working life of a chemist in research, boys insights into the everyday working life of a personnel officer in administration.

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## » I encourage female master students and doctoral students to do public presentations

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## » I encourage women to take on leadership responsibilities

Part of the under-representation of women in management positions is related to the fact that women more often than men feel unqualified for such positions and often do not aspire to such positions out of their own motivation, although they would be well suited for them. Encourage and enable women in your environment to take on personnel/project responsibility and/or educate themselves further. In particular, the ambitions of the employees should be questioned in personnel interviews in order to promote them through perspective personnel development.

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## » I encourage female doctoral students to take on supervisory tasks themselves

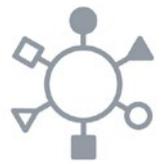
Supervising research projects is a good way to gain experience and to learn, recognize and prove your own leadership skills. In this way, female employees with leadership potential can be identified and then specifically promoted in the scientific field. Being in a consulting position is also a perspective that enables a more realistic self-assessment, as one's own abilities are also present and reflected.

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## » I coach young female scientists

There is no reason to believe that the performances of young female scientists are worse than those of their male colleagues. Nevertheless, the career paths are clearly different. Support women scientists in your environment in recognizing and consciously using their potential. Self-underestimation and conflicting role expectations make it more difficult for women in science to become visible. Additional addressing and support works against this fact.

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## »» II encourage female scientists to self-reflect without underestimation

Unfortunately, women often underestimate their achievements - this applies in principle and also in science. They often lack a self-confident, positive assessment of their own work. This results, for example, in taking fewer opportunities to present scientific results in public, or in not considering oneself capable of taking leading positions and project responsibility.

Mirror your colleagues' potential and counteract reductions of own performance.

## 4. RESPECTFUL INTERACTION – How do we want to interact with each other?

### »» I don't make certain jokes and I don't laugh about them

Sexism, racism and other degradations can be found in jokes in a socially (unfortunately!) very accepted form. Jokes that start with "A blonde..." or "A German, an African and a Chinese..." all reproduce racist and sexist clichés. But not only jokes in the conventional sense, also sayings like "women and technology" etc. are inappropriate and degrading. Don't make these or similar jokes and don't laugh about them, so that people who find such jokes funny are not given a stage. Make it explicit that certain jokes and comments are unacceptable, regardless of whether you belong to the group of people about whom the joke was made or not.

### »» Speech proportions and conversation behaviour

The different male and female socialisation also affects how we behave in conversations. For example, the high number of male role models in influential positions leads to a tendency to perceive men more competent and authoritarian. This presumption is often reflected in the way a group speaks: men have a higher share of speaking, repeat what has already been said more often and women are more regularly interrupted. All persons involved in a conversation can make their contribution by paying attention to their own speaking and listening behaviour in the conversation and, for example, avoiding unnecessary repetition.



## » I pay attention to the integration of international colleagues

The UFZ is an international employer. In working groups, committees and discussion groups it is therefore important to be sensitive to the different cultural backgrounds and language requirements of those involved. Make sure that you do not exclude anyone by talking in German and that the things being talked about are relatable for everyone who is present. Involve international colleagues actively in discussions and show interest in their perspective.

# 5. QUOTAS, REPRESENTATION, VISIBILITY – Who is seen, who is not?

## » I pay attention to gender-sensitive language

Language influences how we think to a large extent. The so-called generic masculine – i.e. the use of the male form as a neutral form – has been proven to produce mental images of male persons in people's heads. In addition, more and more women no longer feel addressed when the generic masculine form is used. Therefore, the UFZ has committed itself, according to the Equal Opportunities Plan, to use gender-sensitive language communication.

Compared to German language, English language has few gender indicators: the pronouns and possessives (he, she, her, his) and some nouns (e.g. policemen). But still, there are phrases that can easily be modified for a more inclusive language. Apart from listing both forms (e.g. stewards and stewardesses), the use of gender-neutral nouns (e.g. flight attendants, police officers) is a good and time-saving option to do so. With some practice, it becomes easy to replace familiar terms with others. Furthermore, the use of gender-specific pronouns and possessives can be replaced by the old English they and theirs.

More detailed information and examples can be found in the [LINK LIST](#).

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## » I pay attention to who is represented on boards and committees

A balanced representation of interests is best achieved when the interests are also represented in a balanced way in person. Diversity on boards and committees not only leads to more creative processes and solutions, but also improves the opportunities of those who are underrepresented in everyday work. Pay attention to the composition of the committees and boards of which you are a member. Make sure that the composition is balanced and address female colleagues specifically for participation.

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## »» I know the gender percentage of my group

To actively influence gender relations – if necessary – I first need an overview of how my group is positioned in this respect. As a decision-maker, this knowledge is particularly important. However, it is also good to know what position I myself and others take in my group.

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## »» I pay attention to who speaks at lectures and lecture series

If a lecture series is only given by men, this reinforces the impression that only men have gained relevant insights in this field. Since this is often enough not the case, it is important that the gender ratio of the lecturers is as balanced as possible.

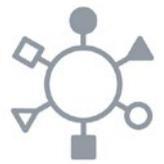
For example, the homepage [speakerinnen.org](http://speakerinnen.org) lists female speakers and moderators from all fields - academic and non-academic. Speakers can be found in databases for female scientists (examples in the [LINK LIST](#)).

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## »» I propose women for the Helmholtz Environmental Lecture

In recent years (since 2009), significantly more men than women have given lectures at the Helmholtz Environmental Lecture. It is important to increase the visibility of successful women. The lectures of the Helmholtz Environmental Lecture have a high publicity value and serve as an important example. The more women give lectures at high-ranking events, the more the image of the successful scientist, politician or manager becomes a habit for us. Here, too, databases in which (female) speakers are listed are helpful. (see [LINK LIST](#))

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## »» I suggest women for prizes

It is important to increase the visibility of successful women in science. A prize is effective in terms of publicity and serves as an important example. The more women are honoured for their scientific achievements, the more the image of the successful female scientist becomes a habit for us. This is particularly true of awards that honour research content, e.g. doctoral or research prizes.

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## »» I only take part in podiums if there are men and women represented

As a man or woman, I can help to set new standards in organizing multi-speaker lectures by not accepting invitations to events that are not diverse. This is especially true for men, who are often overrepresented on podiums.

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## »» For reviews I attach importance to diverse teams

Male scientists are disproportionately often asked to review submitted journal articles. Although the preparation of reviews is a time-consuming, often additional work, it does lead to reputation, visibility and knowledge growth for those who write a review. When submitting manuscripts, it is therefore recommended that women and men are nominated equally for the reviews or, as editors of journals, that they work towards gender-diverse teams for the reviews. Diverse teams are proven to come up with better solutions for complex tasks, because the cognitive diversity, i.e. the variety of perspectives and ways of thinking, is particularly high in these teams. Diversity benefits not only the team members but also the quality of the reviews.

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## 6. LINK LIST

### **Boys Day und Girls Day**

[www.girls-day.de](http://www.girls-day.de) und [www.boys-day.de](http://www.boys-day.de)

### **Wage Transparency Act**

[www.bmfsfj.de/entgelttransparenzgesetz](http://www.bmfsfj.de/entgelttransparenzgesetz) (german)

### **Helmholtz Advanced Mentoring Programm**

[www.helmholtz.de/karriere\\_talente/was\\_uns\\_ausmacht/mentoring](http://www.helmholtz.de/karriere_talente/was_uns_ausmacht/mentoring)

### **Guideline for gender-inclusive language**

United Nations (UN) Guidelines for gender-inclusive language

[www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/guidelines.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/guidelines.shtml)

### **Databases for Female Scientists (Selection)**

[www.speakerinnen.org/de](http://www.speakerinnen.org/de)

[www.gesis.org/femconsult](http://www.gesis.org/femconsult)

[www.academia-net.org](http://www.academia-net.org)

[www.epws.org](http://www.epws.org) (European Platform of Women Scientists)

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## CONTACT

Diversity and equal opportunities are dynamic issues. Therefore, this collection will be continuously adapted and improved.

For inspiration, feedback and critical remarks, please write to [diversity.equality@ufz.de](mailto:diversity.equality@ufz.de)

## IMPRINT

Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ

Permoserstr. 15 | 04318 Leipzig, Germany

Phone: (0341) 235-0 | [info@ufz.de](mailto:info@ufz.de) | [www.ufz.de](http://www.ufz.de)

Equal Opportunities Officer: Ines Thronicker, [ines.thronicker@ufz.de](mailto:ines.thronicker@ufz.de)

Author: Kristina Heller

Design: Susan Walter-Pantzer

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