

Quality Standard for Gender Equitable Appointment Procedures in the Helmholtz Association

Recommendations of the Equal Opportunities Officers
of the Research Centres of the Helmholtz Association

Appointments are key for recruiting the best scientists, and thus, contribute significantly to the achievement of science strategy and gender equality policy goals. The quality standards are an instrument that also promotes the implementation of the Helmholtz Diversity Guideline and the achievement of the cascade goals at W2/W3 level.

Therefore, and in appreciation of the applicants, it is important to the Helmholtz Association to conduct transparent and excellent appointment procedures.

The Quality Standards for Gender Equitable Appointment Procedures are **recommendations of the Equal Opportunities Officers of the research centers of the Helmholtz Association** and address all actors involved in an appointment procedure on the part of the Helmholtz Association. The legally binding regulations of the universities remain unaffected. However, these quality standards can be taken into account when negotiating cooperation agreements with universities.

The aim of the recommendations is to ensure equal opportunities in the procedures. To this end, they structure the phases of appointment procedures and provide all actors with detailed information on the design and involvement of equal opportunities officers at each step of the procedure. The quality standards offer equal opportunities officers detailed orientation for participation, documentation and commenting on the procedures.

Phase 1: Initiation

Job Planning/Structure Commission

Appointment Committee

Phase 2: Work of the Committee

Active recruitment

Selection of applicants

Presentations to the appointment committee

Obtaining expert opinions

Appointment proposal

Phase 3: Appointment

Committee decisions

Issue the call

Negotiations

Phase 1: Initiation

Planning of the Position/Structure Commission

- Has the Equal Opportunities Officer been involved in the work of the commission(s) that plan the appointment?
- Was the structure paper presented to the Equal Opportunities Officer?
- Did the Equal Opportunities Officer approve the structure paper?
- Have potential female applicants been identified prior to denomination??

Work of the Committee

Nomination of the appointment committee

- Has the appointment committee been staffed with gender parity among the voting members, or at least with two female professors?
- Is the Equal Opportunities officer a member of the appointment committee?
- Is the Equal Opportunities Officer involved in the composition of the appointment committee? -> University rules
- Have committee members been made aware of the research institution's gender equality goals?
- Did any training take place for committee members on gender competence, unconscious bias, or objective personnel selection?
- Were the criteria also respected in the reappointment of the committee?

Phase 3: Berufung

Phase 1: Initiation

Advertisement

- ☐ Was the Equal Opportunities Officer involved in the preparation of the advertisement?
- ☐ Have selection criteria been defined aiming at (a) professional, (b) leadership, (c) gender/diversity and talent development competencies?
- ☐ Have criteria been avoided that are exclusionary, stereotype-reproducing or very specific (narrowing)?
- ☐ Have the criteria been weighted?
- ☐ Was gender-appropriate visual and textual language used throughout?
- ☐ Was care taken to avoid a masculine associated tone when writing the text?
- ☐ Was the call for applications published at least in English?
- ☐ Was care taken to ask for the application without a photo? Was it requested to state the academic age?
- ☐ Have inviting and promotional phrases been included?
- ☐ Have contact persons for the topic of equality been named in the text with contact details?
- ☐ Has reference been made to measures and opportunities at the research organization that contribute to a good work-life balance?
- ☐ Have potential female applicants been identified before the advertisement?
- ☐ Did the Equal Opportunities Officer approve the advertisement before its publication?

Phase 2: Work of the Committee

Active Recruitment

- ☐ Have potential female applicants been identified, actively approached and invited to apply?
- ☐ Has a committee member been appointed to be responsible for and document active recruitment?
- ☐ Has the call for applications been published in special networks and distribution lists in which female scientists are specifically addressed?
- ☐ Have the gender equality goals been reflected and achieved during the application phase?
- ☐ Did the Equal Opportunities Officer receive the documentation of active recruitment activities?

Phase 3: Appointment

Phase 1: Initiation

Selection of Applicants

- ☐ Has the synopsis been prepared along the selection criteria?
- ☐ Has care been taken in the preparation of the synopsis to ensure that it does justice to the academic biographies of all genders? Has academic age been used?
- ☐ During the selection process, was attention paid to the criteria defined in the call for applications and their weighting?
- ☐ Were possible effects of the pandemic taken into account when reviewing the applications?
- ☐ Has it been ensured that the synopsis does not include pictures or marital status information?
- ☐ Have all members been sensitized to possible gender bias in the selection process?
- ☐ Has the gender ratio among the applicants been actively reflected?
- ☐ Has the Equal Opportunities Officer been actively involved in the evaluation and selection of applicants?

Phase 2: Work of the Committee

Presentations to the appointment committee

Invitation

- ☐ Were the presenters asked to submit a written concept for the promotion of young talent in advance, with special attention to equal opportunities?
- ☐ Were all applicants invited in a timely manner so that they could make participation possible?
- ☐ Were the applicants already informed about funding measures or pointed to contact and information points when they were invited?

Phase 3: Appointment

Phase 1: Initiation

Presentations to the appointment committee

Presentations and interviews

- ☐ Have all commission members been made aware of the selection criteria before the presentations and interviews?
- ☐ Were guiding questions defined beforehand and were they applied?
- ☐ Has sufficient time been allocated so that all applicants can be evaluated fairly and under equal conditions?
- ☐ Were questions (if possible, from different commission members) asked about leadership regarding equal opportunities and about gender in research?
- ☐ Was it made sure that topics such as dual careers and a family-friendly environment could be addressed?
- ☐ Was attention paid to appreciative communication during the interviews?
- ☐ Did the Equal Opportunities Officer take an active part in the presentations and interviews?

Phase 2: Work of the Committee

Obtaining expert opinions

- ☐ Was gender parity taken into account when selecting the external reviewers?
- ☐ Was care taken to ensure that all external reviewers had the same information? This includes the selection criteria.
- ☐ Were comparative expert opinions requested?
- ☐ Have the external reviewers been made aware of the research organisation's gender equality objectives?

Phase 3: Appointment

Appointment proposal (list ranking)

- ☐ Was attention paid to possible bias in the evaluation of the applicants' performance and of the expert opinions?
- ☐ How were the selection criteria related to each other/weighted?
- ☐ Is the statement of the Equal Opportunities officer on file?
- ☐ Was the selection process well documented?

Phase 1: Initiation

Board Decisions

- ☐ Does the Equal Opportunities Officer have the possibility to contribute views and assessments?
- ☐ Is the Equal Opportunities Officer's statement part of the documents that go to the decision-making bodies?

Phase 2: Work of the Committee

Issue the Call

- ☐ Are all applicants informed about the status of the procedure?

Negotiations

- ☐ Were non-discriminatory offers made compared to other appointment negotiations?
- ☐ Was attention paid to making equal/fair offers in both salary and equipment negotiations?
- ☐ Was advice provided on request on topics such as dual career or family friendliness?
- ☐ Has advice by the Equal Opportunities Officer been offered?

Phase 3: Appointment

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