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<u>Author</u>	Committee on Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities
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<u>Re.</u>	<b>Charter on gender equality and equal opportunities for recruitment and promotion selection panels</b>
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## Introduction

The purpose of this note is to draw the attention of the members of recruitment and promotion selection panels to the need to ensure gender equality and equal opportunities between candidates. It sets out some points requiring vigilance and how to deal with them in a panel in charge of examining career-related questions (recruitment, promotion, bonuses).

## 1. Monitoring

***The panel chair will ensure that the basic principles of gender equality and equal opportunities for all are respected at every stage of the selection process. The panel chair will appoint two members as "gender equality and equal opportunities leads", hereinafter "GEO leads" to help with this task.***

As soon as the panel is formed, the chair will draw its members' attention to the existence of societal bias and stereotypes (that often operate unconsciously) which could be detrimental to gender equality and equal opportunities between the candidates. To make these points, the chair may use reference documents.<sup>[1,2]</sup>

Before the panel's first meeting, the chair will appoint two GEO (gender equality and equal opportunities) leads, ideally a man and a woman. Their role will be to ensure that the basic principles of gender equality and equal opportunities are respected at every stage of the selection process.

The GEO leads will systematically review the proportions of the different candidate profiles at each stage of the selection process (for example: preselection, admissibility, admission). The aim is, in particular, to avoid the phenomenon of "line loss", that is to say a reduction in the proportion of certain profiles (e.g. women, foreigners) as the process progresses. If a certain proportion of female candidates are eligible at the outset, a non-biased process should see a similar proportion go through each phase - preselection, admissibility and admission - although the account should be taken of the numbers concerned at each stage. Where necessary, any reduction in this proportion should be able to be justified based on the files.

## 2. Diversity of profiles

***The selection panel will take care to respect, without bias, the diversity of the professional and personal profiles of the candidates selected at the different stages of the selection process.***

The panel will ensure that there is no bias favoring certain profiles deemed to be prestigious on the basis of a restricted number of characteristics ("halo effect"). The panel will also ensure that non-standard applications and backgrounds are considered fairly, taking into account their specific characteristics. Particular attention will be paid to women's and/or atypical applications (studies abroad, career interruptions, non-research positions held before or after the PhD, etc.), which must not be subject to unfavorable bias ("solo effect").

More generally, double standard-type mechanisms must be avoided, ensuring the requirements are equally demanding for every application and that they are assessed on the basis of identical criteria and characteristics. For example, to compare applications fairly, the notion of "length of career in higher education and research since the PhD" will be preferred to the age criterion. Likewise, for foreign candidates, information on their academic background must be provided. Finally, it must not be forgotten that foreign candidates may well be unfamiliar with the French system and practices, and their presentation style may therefore differ substantially from French standards.

The GEO leads will alert the panel whenever they notice bias of this kind in the evaluation of application files.

## 3. Career breaks

***The panel will take account of career breaks apparent in applications, for example for parental leave, health reasons, other personal reasons.***

The panel will take into account that the impact of career interruptions often lasts beyond the actual duration of the break. For example, the ERC considers that each time a mother has a child it puts her 18 months behind in her career, while for a father the delay is only equivalent to the period actually taken off work.

As a general rule, it must be ensured that if career interruptions are mentioned it is to the benefit of the candidate and does not adversely affect their eligibility and legitimacy.

The GEO leads will ensure that such career breaks are mentioned in the written reports and discussed at all the stages of the process (e.g. preselection, admissibility, admission).

## 4. Presentation

***The panel will be fair in its consideration of all applications, irrespective of presentation style and candidate profile (gender, age, nationality).***

Applications and oral presentations may be perceived differently according to candidates' profiles. In particular, certain clichés can - consciously or unconsciously - come into play depending on whether the candidate is male or female.[3] For example, an aggressive style, either in writing or speaking can be perceived differently according to gender (ambition for men, arrogance for women). Conversely, an activity can be over or under-evaluated by different candidates (certain people can be more inclined towards self-promotion or more attentive to "counting" all their activities). In addition, non native speakers are objectively at disadvantage in their presentations. Finally, belonging to a minority profile (atypical, under-represented gender, foreigner) can lead to counter-performances, in particular during oral presentations.

Although it is difficult to change everyone's perceptions, the panel has a duty to mitigate the effects by ensuring that character traits and or presentation styles are not appreciated differently according to the candidates' profiles.

The GEO leads will ensure that comments and conclusions about oral presentations are fair.

## 5. Recommendation letters and reference

***The panel will be vigilant in its examination of recommendation letters and references provided by superiors, putting letters that reveal bias into perspective.***

Recommendation letters and references provided by superiors can also suffer from involuntary bias and present differences in style or tone according to the candidates' profiles.<sup>[4]</sup> For example, the expressions and adjectives used to support candidates may vary according to gender: leadership, excellence, potential for a man, serious, competent, kindness for a woman.

These differences in treatment, often involuntary but indicative of deeply ingrained stereotypes can induce discrimination, in particular towards women. The panel must therefore be vigilant when examining these letters and references. One must not hesitate to moderate the importance of letters that show bias, in particular when the referees have been alerted to this issue, as is the case in the Inria competitive recruitment procedure.

The GEO leads will pay close attention to how references are used to support applications.

## 6. Expression of panel member's opinions

***The panel chair must ensure that the panel's discussions give every member the chance to express their opinions.***

Differences in the way the members of the panel themselves speak can also lead to bias in the selection process. The opinion of each member must be considered with the same attention, whatever their gender, age, level of experience or scientific stature. One of the means that could be employed, if the recruitment process allows it, is to regularly conduct roundtables where each person can speak in turn.

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<sup>[1]</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g978T58gELo>

<sup>[2]</sup> [https://parite.inria.fr/files/2018/07/Biais\\_concours.pdf](https://parite.inria.fr/files/2018/07/Biais_concours.pdf)

<sup>[3]</sup> <https://www.aauw.org/research/why-so-few/>

<sup>[4]</sup> <https://www.inria.fr/content/download/111282/1860353/version/3/file/Conseils+du+comité+Parité-Egalité.pdf>