



Pieces of advice against involuntary biases in recruitment and promotion panels

Research has shown that social and environmental factors (including involuntary biases) contribute to the under-representation of women in scientific domains. Involuntary biases in recommendation letters and reports have negative effects on the overall success and career progression of candidates. The Committee for Equal Opportunities and Gender Equality at Inria offers some pieces of advice so as to avoid such involuntary prejudice, from either women or men.

- ✓ Avoid the use of stereotypical adjectives when describing character and skills, especially when the candidate is a woman.
 - *E.g. especially for women, avoid words like kind, agreeable, sympathetic, compassionate, generous, caring, warm, maternal, etc.*
- ✓ Use 'stand-out' adjectives in the same way for men and for women.
 - *E.g. brilliant, original, outstanding, exceptional, excellent, ambitious, knowledgeable, with great potential etc.*
- ✓ Use the candidate's formal title and surname instead of her/his first name.
- ✓ Check that your letter does not unintentionally contain omissions, doubt-raising formulations, negative or weak statements, particularly when referring to a woman.
 - *E.g. "could possibly become a first-class specialist" versus "is a recognized first-class specialist".*
- ✓ When assessing the productivity of the candidate, take into account the career breaks due to maternity leaves, health conditions, sabbaticals in industry, etc.

Resources and information: [Committee for Equal Opportunities and Gender Equality](#)

On the initiative of the EOGC Committee in December 2017, Inria was the first research organization to sign the "[Convention](#) of Engagement for a Public Communication without Sex Stereotypes" of the High Council for Equality between Women and Men.