



Equal Opportunities Guidelines for Seminar Organisers

These guidelines were drafted by members of the Athena Swan Committee, Faculty of Biological Sciences (Hannah Dugdale, Keith Hamer, Sue Whittle). The Committee is responsible for communicating best practice guidelines to seminar organisers.

The guidelines are to aid seminar organisers ensure equal opportunities in the selection of speakers. Bias in the selection of invited speakers is not usually intentional; rather it usually results from subtler mechanisms, such as implicit bias. A pro-active approach can reduce these biases and facilitate diversity. The Athena Swan team therefore promote the following guidelines:

Seminar organisers are responsible for ensuring that:

- 1) Invited speakers are diverse, i.e. that:
 - A balance of gender and ethnicity is obtained
 - A wide-range of topics is covered
 - Speakers span career stages, such that work from early career to established researchers is promoted
- 2) Venues are accessible for people with disabilities
- 3) Seminars run during core working hours (i.e. 10–4)
- 4) Data are collected on the diversity of invited speakers & provided to the Athena Swan Committee.

Tips to ensure diversity:

- 1) Create a list of potential speakers before approaching speakers, and ensure that the list is diverse. To improve diversity, consider consulting databases of potential speakers such as the EMBO WILS database of women in science (<http://www.embo.org/science-policy/women-in-science/wils-database-of-women-in-life-sciences/>) and when requesting suggestions from colleagues include a statement to remind colleagues of the need to attract a diverse range of speakers
- 2) Ensure there are more women candidates on your list than baseline populations, given that women are twice as likely to decline invited speaker requests than men (Schroeder et al., 2013)
- 3) Provide as much time as possible between a request to speak and the talk date
- 4) Avoid inviting the same old speakers
- 5) Read this paper with 10 simple rules for gender balance (Martin, 2014)

References

- Martin, J. L. (2014). Ten Simple Rules to Achieve Conference Speaker Gender Balance. *PLoS Computational Biology*, 10(11), e1003903. <http://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1003903>
- Schroeder, J., Dugdale, H. L., Radersma, R., Hinsch, M., Buehler, D. M., Saul, J., et al. (2013). Fewer invited talks by women in evolutionary biology symposia. *Journal of Evolutionary Biology*, 26(9), 2063–2069. <http://doi.org/10.1111/jeb.12198>