



CAASTRO Guidelines for recruitment **February 2018**

Workplace gender equality is achieved when people are able to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities regardless of gender. In order to ensure that the CAASTRO recruitment process is fair and unbiased, we have developed the following recruitment guidelines to assist you.

1. Language

- Words are powerful. How we speak to and about each other impacts how we treat each other and influences workplace culture. When it comes to recruitment, words can either encourage or discourage women, and men, from applying for jobs or seeking out promotional opportunities.
- Focusing on language that is inclusive and respectful of everyone is an easy way to encourage a broader field of applicants. It also helps to reduce unconscious bias in recruitment practices.
- The Technical University of Munich found that the wording of advertisements affected the likelihood of women applying for positions. Women were less likely to apply for positions that sounded 'male' such as 'determined' or 'assertive' due to the association of these words with male or masculine stereotypes. For male participants in the study, whether the wording was stereotypically masculine or feminine made no difference to the likelihood they would apply.¹

2. Creating the position

- Job evaluation is a key human resource process that looks at the ranking and hierarchy of jobs within an organisation. There is a significant opportunity when conducting a job evaluation to include an investigation of gender bias within the system of positions with regard to the nature and value of work.
- When creating the position do a thorough job evaluation and consider the ability to be flexible with the level. You should also consider whether the role can be done part-time or with flexible hours.
- Consider creating a target for what an acceptable % of female applicants are for the role, and your goals for short listing female applicants. The goal should be 50% female applicants if this is possible. Through-out the process you can then monitor these goals, and take corrective action before the closing date of applications if this is required.

3. Advertising the jobⁱ

- Job advertisements need to be written in a 'gender neutral' way, ensuring you use inclusive language. Research shows that a lack of gender inclusive wording has significant implications when targeting women, as some words and phrases are stereotypically masculine and this can put women off applying.
- Ensure you place the job advertisement on websites and in publications that women are likely to access or view.

¹ <https://www.tum.de/en/about-tum/news/press-releases/detail/article/31438/>

- Proactively encourage applicants from diverse backgrounds to apply for your position. This may involve approaching individuals directly and asking them to consider applying.
- Make flexible working arrangements obvious in all your job advertisements. Women who have young families or caring duties outside work may be more likely to apply if they can see that your organisation offers flexible ways of working.
- Other tools to consider:
 - Words at Work: the Diversity Council of Australia have released a guide to inclusive language. <https://www.dca.org.au/inclusive-language-0>
 - Gender decoder: a free online tool to check whether a job advert includes subtle male language that discourages women applicants. <http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/>
 - Guidelines for writing and publishing recruitment advertisements: The Australian Human Rights Commission guide for employers, recruitment and employment agencies and those who publish or display job ads to help them develop gender inclusive advertisements. <https://www.dca.org.au/inclusive-language-0>
 - 'Blind' recruitment Blind recruitment practices involve the removal of bias against applicants based on their gender, race or cultural background from the entirety of the recruitment process. <https://www.fastcompany.com/3057631/how-blind-recruitment-works-and-why-you-should-consider>
 - Frequently asked questions could also be provided to candidates on family friendly work practices, workplace flexibility, 457 Visas, child care and support for the "two body problem".

4. After closing of position but prior to short-listingⁱⁱ

- Ensure your selection committee has appropriate female representation on the panel. The goal should be 50% where possible.
- Compare gender ratio of applicants for the position to national gender ratios and your previously set gender targets.
- If the gender ratio in applicants is less than the national ratio, then undertake a further search for female applicants before short listing.
- The selection committee should agree to a mechanism of taking into account achievement relative to opportunity. This should take into account periods of maternity or parental leave, carer's leave and part-time employment.
- The selection committee should agree to include at least one female applicant in the preliminary short-list for whom letters are requested or agree to undertake further action to find more female applicants, should this turn out not to be possible.

5. Before Interviewing

- Selection committee members should be aware of female and male differences in how individuals present themselves. The Chair should ensure that no candidate is disadvantaged by their visit to the University, meetings with staff or related activities.² One way to do this is to designate a female departmental contact for each short-listed female candidate.³
- The selection committee should be informed about questions and issues that may concern female candidates in particular, but which may be unusual to be asked for this position. For example, the candidate may ask about family friendly

² London Mathematical Society Good Practice Scheme <http://www.lms.ac.uk/women/good-practice-scheme>

³ Queen's University Belfast Athena Swan Gold Award application <http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofBiologicalSciences/AthenaSWAN/Docs/Fileupload,395454,en.pdf>

policies, flexible working hours, or whether a position could be possible for a partner. The selection committee should be instructed not to let such questions influence judgment of the candidate during the interview. The Chair should inform the selection committee what the likely answers are prior to the interview, and may indicate they will speak directly with the candidate afterwards if required.

6. Interviewing

- There should be a clear set of questions formulated and agreed to by the selection committee prior to the interview.
- The questions should allow for the opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate aptitude for collaborative and collegial work.

7. Reference letters⁴

- When receiving letters of recommendation for women for jobs it is important to be aware of the language used, and not be influenced by this.
- Adjectives used to describe potential candidates can clearly influence perceptions about that person.
- There have been a number of studies which show that recommendation letter writers often conform to traditional gender schemas when describing candidates, with female candidates are described in more communal (social or emotive) terms while male candidates in more agentic (active or assertive) terms. Letters of recommendation for men are typically longer, with more ability, standout, and research words; while letters for women are shorter and contain more teaching and grindstone words, in addition to references to personal attributes. Examples include the studies by Madera et al. (2009) and Schmader et al. (2007) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2572075/#APP1>
- Below is a list of adjectives that fall into each of the categories discussed in Schmader et al. (2007):

Male-associated

- Standout words: excellen*, superb, outstanding, unique, exceptional, unparalleled, *est, most, wonderful, terrific*, fabulous, magnificent, remarkable, estraordinar*, amazing, supreme*, unmatched
- Ability words: talent*, intell*, smart*, skill*, ability, genius, brilliant*, bright*, brain*, aptitude, gift*, capacity, propensity, innate, flair, knack, clever*, expert*, proficient*, capable, adept*, able, competent, natural*, inherent*, instinct*, adroit*, creative*, insight*, analytical
- Research words: research*, data, study, studies, experiment*, scholarship, test*, result*, finding*, publication*, publish*, vita*, method*, scien*, grant*, fund*, manuscript*, project*, journal*, theor*, discover*, contribution*

Female-associated

- Grindstone words: hardworking, conscientious, depend*, meticulous, thorough, diligen*, dedicate, careful, reliab*, effort*, assiduous, trust*, responsib*, methodical, industrious, busy, work*, persist*, organiz*, disciplin
- Teaching words: teach, instruct, educat*, train*, mentor, supervis*, adviser, counselor, syllabus, syllabus, course*, class, service, colleague, citizen, communicate*, lectur*, student*, present*, rapport

*Note: * indicates that any word containing the letter string that precedes or follows the asterisk should be counted.*

⁴ <https://asawomeninastronomy.org/action/recommendations/>

8. Feedback to unsuccessful candidates

- Phone all candidates who were interviewed to provide them with feedback. Treating each candidate with respects is important.
- Be aware that sometimes your number two candidate may become your preferred candidate in time, so manage this relationship carefully.
- Correlate your feedback with the job description, job posting, and job analysis that you created for the position. When you keep the feedback directly related to the job, you most effectively help the candidate.

9. Ask for feedback

- Ask your female staff for feedback on how you are doing as far as being a gender inclusive organisation. Ask what you could do better, and in which areas.

ⁱ https://www.officeforwomen.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/48112/DCSI-929-OFW-Gender-Neutral-Bklet_Update_JUNE17_v2.2.pdf

ⁱⁱ University of Sydney, School of Mathematics