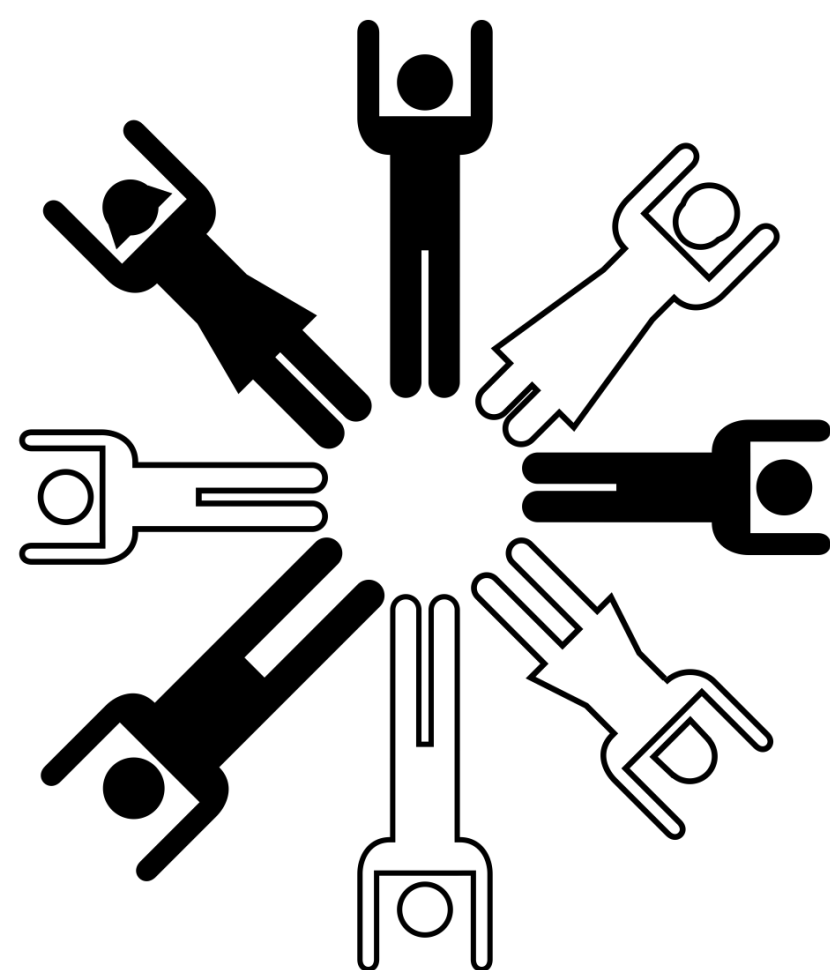


# Good Practices throughout Academic Careers: from PhD to Professor

Steve Kremer  
Inria Nancy (France)



## Inria's Committee on Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities

created in 2015

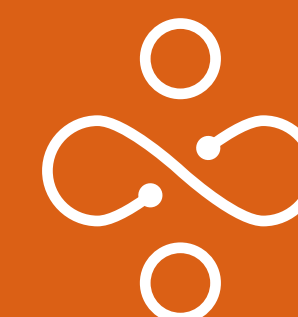
<http://parite.inria.fr/en/>

## European Network For Gender Balance in Informatics

COST ACTION CA19122

WG 3: From PhD to Professor

Booklet on best practices from PhD to Professor  
(available at <https://eugain.eu/>)



EUGAIN

# Diversity of scientific profiles, what is at stake ?

*« Gender equality and diversity are important for the quality of the research. »*

## **Wealth of choice**

No reason to dismiss 50% of the talents.

## **Attractivity**

The more diverse the people, the more attractive the institute is.

## **Be more representative of society**

Avoid mistrust of a « scientific elite ».

## **Improve well-being at work**

Limits caricatural behaviour.



# Good practices at all career stages

- Recruitment
- Application evaluation (hiring and promotion)
- Retaining talents
- Promoting women

# Recruiting



# Stereotypes and bias....



*Bias against women operates in recruitment and selection processes, affecting recruitment advertisements, the composition and working methods of selection committees, and the language used in evaluations*

*(Gvozdanovic and Maes 2018)*

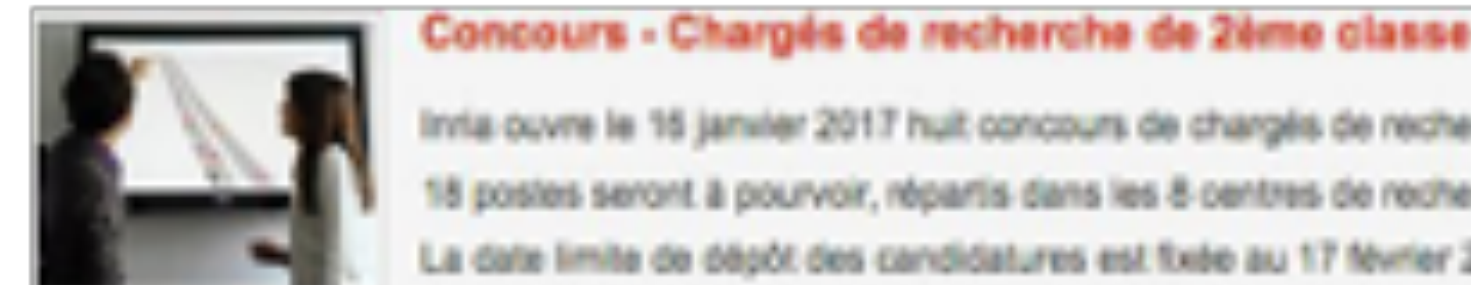
## Mind your language!

- Use inclusive language
- State equal opportunity employer
- State flexible working conditions in ads

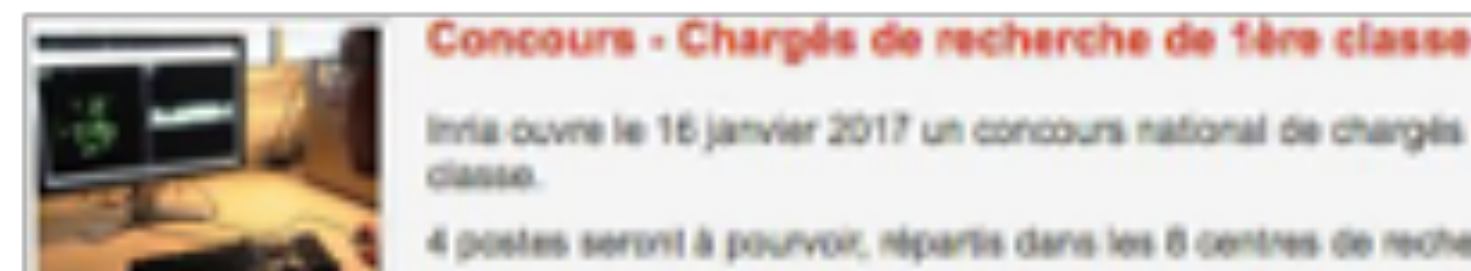
## Example in pictures: (Former Inria website advertising positions)



postdocs: **1 woman**



assistant profs: **1 man + 1 woman**



associate profs: **1 man**



full profs: **2 men**

# Spread the word

- Advertise on time
- Approach candidates directly + indirectly
- Consider the use of dedicated channels (e.g. send ad to national women in tech network)

# Not enough female applicants?

- What are the actions if not enough suitable women apply?
- Set up quotas and/or dedicated positions

*A Cascade Model*

*Used in several German research institutions,  
including Helmholtz Association.*

*Flexible quotas: percentage for level  $n$  depends on  
actual percentage of level  $n-1$*



# **Application evaluation and interviews**

# Are we biased when interviewing?

- Gender bias in an evaluation process is **very difficult to prove**
  - Yet demonstrated in a study by Goldin and Rouse in 2000
    - male-dominated context of prestigious symphony orchestras
    - the use of blind auditions significantly increased the number of women being hired
- Do not doubt that we are biased! Be aware and think what to do about it.
- Organise unconscious / implicit gender bias training (in advance) for panel members.

# How to act in a committee to avoid bias

Charter on gender equality and equal opportunities @Inria

## Chair of the committee (set up)

### Raising awareness before

- Recall the existence of societal biases and stereotypes;
- Draw attention to documents and resources (e.g. on the Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities website) that detail these biases;
- Suggest to view the **video of ERC panels (8:00)**

### Monitoring

- Appoint to gender equality and equal opportunities (GEO) leads **before** the first stage of the hiring process;
- Maintain statistics (GEO leads).

### Prepare the documents

- Prepare review templates containing : seniority, number of children, career breaks;
- Send the file evaluation summaries before the meetings to enable the files to be re-read.

# How to act in a committee to avoid bias

Charter on gender equality and equal opportunities @Inria

## Jury members (avoid bias)

### Before opening the files

- Watch this video : [ERC video \(8min\)](#)

### When summarising files (at each stage)

- **Recall the candidate's background and career:**  
E.g.: maternity leave  $\neq$  a few weeks' leave; much longer impact on a career (ERC rule: count 18 months).
- **Take care to avoid bias when recalling the files and during hearings.**  
These biases can influence:  
Our judgements (halo/solo effects, double standard);  
The (written/oral) presentation of candidates (threat of stereotyping, solo effect, letters of recommendation,...).

# Bias in recommendation letters

Charter on gender equality and equal opportunities@Inria

*Trix and Psenka studied over 300 recommendation letters at a large medical school and have shown that the length, wording, and style significantly differ for male and female applicants.*

*Trix, F & Psenka, C. . Discourse & Society, 2003*

Expressions and adjectives used to support candidates may vary according to gender:

leadership, excellence,  
ambition, potential

VS

serious, competent,  
generous, caring,  
kindness

*“is a recognized first-class specialist”*

*“could possibly become a first-class specialist”*

**E-mail sent to recommenders by HR with pieces of advice**

# Retaining talents

# The working environment

*The culture of an organisation or a department, or the views of the manager/director, can have a **direct impact on whether women stay with an organisation or leave** for something better that answers their needs*

*Gürer and Camp 2002; Sanzari, Dennis, and Moss-Racusin 2021; Shi et al. 2018*

- Family compatible meeting schedules and right to disconnect
- Promote an inclusive working environment (and provide a budget for these initiatives)
- Acknowledge and credit time spent on gender balance initiatives (this is not done on your spare time!)
- Take harassment seriously! (And communicate about it.)

# Childcare at conferences

## The example of Schloss Dagstuhl

- Schloss Dagstuhl supports parents who would otherwise not be able to attend the events due to a lack of childcare opportunities at home
  - Bring a caregiver of their choice (free room and board)
  - Schloss Dagstuhl nanny

<https://www.dagstuhl.de/en/program/childcare-at-schloss-dagstuhl/>



**Promoting women**

# Leaky pipeline & glass ceiling

- Improvements in gender balance at PhD level and early-stage research positions
- ... but no significant progress in research leading positions
  - ensure positive representation of women in Decision Making Positions
  - ensure female representation for invited speakers / program committees
  - run a mentoring program

# Changing the paradigm

Promotion @UCL, UK

- Switch from an “opt in” to an “opt out” default

suggested in Joyce C. He, Sonia K. Kang, and Nicola Lacetera, PNAS'21

- Implemented at CS Department at UCL
  - All non-professorial members of staff submit a CV every year
  - Identify candidates for promotion

**Conclusion**

- No silver bullet
- Not all good practices fit every system
- Still a long way to go: more is needed
- We just addressed part of the problem

Attract more girls in scientific studies/careers at the first place (see other WGs of EUGAIN)

**Thank you!**