Guidelines for the implementation of gender-sensitive recruiting procedures at the University of Luxembourg

2 July 2012
Gender Mainstreaming Committee
Christel Baltes-Löhr
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Introduction

Recruitment procedures are increasingly perceived as emblematic of university culture, and as such as a mark of a university’s quality. Professional recruitment procedures not only result in higher quality candidates; they also provide fairer and more gender-sensitive methods of dealing with candidates, as well as insights into a university’s culture and the way it seeks to represent itself.

Recruitment procedures play an important role in managing the focus of faculties and interdisciplinary centres. As a result, they also influence the development of the main emphasis of internal research and teaching at the university.

The importance of complying with equality standards and ensuring that gender-sensitive aspects are fully considered during recruitment procedures becomes particularly clear whenever universities attempt to establish new, democratic cultures of gender.

The University of Luxembourg has begun implementing its second four-year plan. The current plan concentrates on the period between 2010 and 2013 and aims to increase the number of women in the university’s academic staff to 23%.

This guide is aimed at providing support to members of appointments committees in the development of gender-sensitive recruitment procedures. It focuses specifically on gender issues in recruitment and consequently should not be understood as a general guide to recruitment procedures. The guidelines set out here are based on those developed by universities in the UK, US, Austria and Germany (See Appendix 1 A and B).

Looking beyond our own horizons

This guide is aimed at contributing towards the development of a democratic culture of gender equality at the University of Luxembourg. It not only aims to improve quantitative aspects in terms of ensuring that equal numbers of women and men constitute the academic teaching staff; it also aims to develop more democratic, equal and non-discriminatory gender relations.

If we are to end stereotypical relations between genders, it is essential that women and men are no longer interpreted along the lines of stereotypes, such as ‘passive women’ or ‘macho men’. Instead, individual personality profiles must be properly taken into account.

However, discernible gender differences do still exist, and these are particularly evident in recruiting procedures. Consequently, the University of Hagen’s guidelines stipulate that the rector and the chancellor must ensure that women are not disadvantaged in terms of conditions and performance-related pay. The University of Hagen’s guidelines emphasise that “Women negotiate differently – mainly to their detriment. Whereas men are more demanding, and as such they are provided with more (such as in terms of job placements.)”.

Still applicable!

Livholts’ study of gender justice in Scandinavia is still applicable to the academic landscape in Luxembourg.¹ The study found that general tendencies in Scandinavia towards gender justice were not leading to increased representation or to a reduction in discrimination at the academic level. Instead, the study showed that traditional stereotypes seem to have a certain ‘shelf life’ in academic fields. Women who argue are often interpreted as lacking certain skills; in contrast, when men engage in controversial disputes and debates, this is considered an indication of their general academic competences. Thus, similar forms of behaviour are interpreted differently, depending on the gender of the person in question.

As such, stereotypes and stereotyping still exist. Although it is not always as direct or openly discriminatory as perhaps 50 years ago, it is still effective even if it is expressed on a more subtle level.

“Potential barriers include the criteria for promotion and career progression favouring those who have not taken a career break, a lack of flexibility around working hours, a shortage of ‘family-friendly’ workplaces, little opportunity for part-time working or job sharing, the perceived ‘macho’ culture of workplaces, and a poor management style.”³

Tfyanny meets Einstein

On 19 September 1946, Tfyanny, a student who was in contact with Albert Einstein, wrote the following letter to him – the ideas expressed here are still relevant today:

“I forgot to tell you, in my last letter, that I was a girl. I mean I am a girl. I have always regretted this a great deal, but by now I have become more or less resigned to the fact. Anyway, I hate dresses and dances and all the kind of rot girls usually like. I much prefer horses and riding. Long ago, before I wanted to become a scientist, I wanted to be a jockey and ride horses in races. But that was ages ago, now. I hope you will not think any the less of me for being a girl!”

Between September and October 1946, Einstein answered: “I do not mind that you are a girl, but the main thing is that you yourself do not mind. There is no reason for it.”⁴

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In good company – gender stop-gaps – immediate action on gender

Qualitative and quantitative gender justice is an important international issue: “Women are still underrepresented in academic science, and universities are struggling to do something about it. But there are efforts afoot.”

Increasing numbers of gender policies are currently being put in place, which means the calls by Alicia Carriquira, a US statistics professor, are finally being taken into account. She appeals to people involved in recruitment processes to “Think about how you recruit”. In her report based on a study for the National Research Council she came to the following conclusion about US recruitment procedures: “You post announcements everywhere, and then you call all your friends and say, ‘if you have any good students, send them my way’.” If the recruiters are all male, they may unintentionally attract a male pool. Similarly, women are more likely to have female friends, and those friends may recommend more female candidates.” Alongside the concepts of ‘networks and cliques there are also numerous other ways of increasing the number of women applying for university positions.

Fig 1: Increased gender diversity among applications. Source: US National Research Council.

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6 Carriquira, Alicia: cited in: Mejia, Robin; see footnote 5.
7 The category ‘other measures’ would have been particularly interesting, but no further details were provided.
The situation at the University of Luxembourg

Women are underrepresented in the University of Luxembourg’s academic staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Hommes Corps Acадélique</th>
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<th>31.10.2007</th>
<th>31.10.2011</th>
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<tr>
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<td>92.7</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>87.5</td>
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<td>78.1</td>
<td>68.2</td>
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<td>H - Chargé(e) d’enseignement</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Femmes Corps Académique</th>
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<th>31.10.2007</th>
<th>31.10.2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F - Prof.</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>F - Ass.Prof.</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>31.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>F - Chargé(e) de cours</td>
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<td>26.5</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F - Chargé(e) d’enseignement</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total % Femmes Corps Académique</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 2: The percentage of women and men as part of the academic staff (corps académique).

By 31 October 2011 the target of 23% had almost been reached.

However, if we look at the distribution of women according to the various categories of staff, there is a strong trend towards fewer numbers of women in the most important academic positions. This phenomenon is often referred to as the ‘glass ceiling’ or the ‘gender gap’, terms which refer to the way in which – despite increasing improvements in women’s levels of qualifications – a ‘magic hand’ seems to be preventing women from reaching the top decision-making levels.
The situation at the University of Luxembourg is as follows:

**Fig 3:** The percentage distribution of women and men as full professors.

**Fig 4:** The percentage distribution of women and men as associate professors.

**Fig 5:** The percentage distribution of women and men as lecturers.

The significant differences between the numbers of women and men in the highest academic positions are also reproduced at the international level.
An international comparison

Fig. 6: The percentage distribution of women and men from students to full professors (Grade A).

The gender gap is particularly clear at this level, especially as almost equal numbers of women and men enter university. However, there is a clear gender imbalance among positions for full professors. This phenomenon is often described as the ‘leaky pipeline’, and it needs to be analysed and resolved with policies specifically developed for the task.

This guide is aimed at helping reduce this imbalance.

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8 It is also important to note here that there are also large disparities between genders in certain subjects; interestingly these disparities disappear when the figures are taken as averages.
The aim of this guide

This guide aims to:
increase the percentage of women in the academic staff from 18% in 2008 to 23% by the year 2013;³

• guarantee a gender-sensitive recruitment procedure;
• strengthen gender-sensitivity at all university levels.

The different stages of the recruitment procedure

The following sets out how equality between women and men is to be taken into account at all stages of the recruitment process.

Advertising the position

Job descriptions must appeal equally to women and men. If positions are referred to differently according to the gender of the person taking up the position, both terms are to be used in the job description. The qualifications needed for the post are to be properly stated as part of the job description, these qualifications cannot be changed during the recruitment process. Job descriptions should appeal to and encourage qualified women to apply for the post.

The gender delegate is to be sent copies of all job descriptions. The gender delegate has the right to specifically invite qualified women to apply. As such, the gender delegate can distribute information about available positions to subject-specific and interdisciplinary gender-sensitive networks.¹⁰ The gender delegate can ask the dean to provide a list of women who are specialists in a specific field in order to inform them of new openings.

Setting up an appointments committee

Preferably, women should be nominated to the appointment committee. When deciding who will take up the two internal positions on the appointments committee, female university professors from the appropriate field should be considered.

The chair of the appointments committee is responsible for ensuring that one of the five committee members takes on the task of guaranteeing that the recruitment process is undertaken in a gender-sensitive manner and adheres to the criteria stated below. Furthermore, this member takes on the role of ‘gender sensitive process owner’ and is responsible for ensuring a gender-sensitive recruitment procedure.

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³ Second Four-Year-Plan of the University of Luxembourg (2010—2013); Point 6: “Indicateurs de performances”, p. 42.

¹⁰ At the current time (July 2012), the networks included in Appendix 2 are informed about new appointments; the networks contacted depend on discipline in question, but information about all new appointments are always sent to the interdisciplinary networks.
If no members of the committee are prepared to take on this role, a further expert is to be found who is able to take on this role during all phases of the recruitment process. The chair of the committee is to contact the gender delegate in order to appoint this person.

**Reviewing application documents – selection criteria – invitations to trial lectures**

The appointments committee is to determine the selection criteria and the way in which criteria are to be individually weighted at the beginning of the recruitment procedure.

It is essential to ensure that selection criteria do not automatically favour men’s traditional career paths, but instead also take women’s career paths into account, which due to structural conditions, often take less direct paths than those of men. Consequently, skills and expertise that can be gained in the context of a more innovative career path\(^\text{11}\) should also form part of the selection criteria and be properly considered.

*The following criteria, as well as other similar criteria should not adversely affect the assessment of academic qualifications:*

- Care work that has led to the following:
  - career breaks
  - reductions in working hours
  - delays in completing a qualification.
- Consequences of caring, including:
  - a lower number of publications
  - less third-party funding
  - less research experience
  - less teaching experience.
- Time commitments to look after children or other people in need of care.
- The intention to work fewer hours.

After the selection criteria have been developed, the following questions are to be used to ensure candidates have been chosen appropriately:

- Do the qualifications of the candidates on the shortlist correspond with those set out in the job description?
- What importance has been placed on the requirements set out in the job description?
- What is important, what is desirable?
- Are there any additional criteria, such as the Lise Meitner scholarship?
- Has the assessment of applicants’ qualifications been properly explained? Simply stating that a candidate does or does not meet the relevant requirements is not enough; a precise reason behind a judgement needs to be provided.
- Have the same number of women and men been invited, and have all the women who fulfilled the formal requirements been invited?
- Have the various phases of family life and other innovative career paths been properly taken into account during the assessment of applicants’ career paths?
- In assessing the applicants’ level of qualification, has consideration been given to a positive or negative construction of facts?
- How have assumptions about future performances been developed? What is the basis of these assumptions? Who is assumed to have a good reputation, and why?
- It is essential to ensure that gender-specific interpretations are made visible with respect to criteria such as motivation, ability to work under pressure and assertiveness. An appropriate means of doing so would be to ask questions such as: ‘What makes you think that a female applicant is less able to work under pressure?’
- The same applies to the assessment of an applicant’s presumed match with the future team.

The reasoning behind the choice of candidates who remain part of the recruitment procedure is to be set out in a detailed manner and in a form that justifies the decision. This is to be done for every candidate, but particularly for candidates selected for further consideration.

In principle, all women who meet the formal qualifications should be invited to a trial lecture. If the large number of applicants means this is impractical, then at the very least, the same number of women should be invited to interviews as men.
Trial lectures and interviewing

The questions, their aims and the evaluation criteria to be used by the appointments committee are to be established in advance.

Every job description must include the criterion ‘gender aspects’, and this criterion should be properly considered. The appointments committee can use the following questions to shed light on each candidate’s ‘gender aspects’ during the final round of interviewing. The questions apply to all applicants regardless of their gender:

- The job description stipulated that candidates should properly take gender aspects into account with respect to their particular field. In your opinion, which gender aspects need to be taken into account in relation to teaching and research in your field?
- What is the percentage of women and men studying in the faculty? What contribution would you make to increase the proportion of students from the underrepresented gender?
- How do you aim to help achieve gender equality in your future work and responsibilities with respect to:
  - the distribution of tasks;
  - the distribution of responsibility;
  - meeting times;
  - improving the compatibility of work and private life?
- How many men and women have graduated under your supervision?
- How many male and female employees do you have at the current time?
- Would you like to bring some of your male or female staff with you?

Questions should also be set about the context in which the applicants’ achievements were made, including about:

- the extent of previous positions;
- the financial situation of previous positions;
- academic work that was undertaken at the same time, or concurrent work for supervisors;
- experience in working alone and as part of a team;
- family situation and work undertaken in the family (particularly education and care);
- questions about creative breaks in an applicant’s CV;
- changes to an applicant’s research field;
- experience with interdisciplinary approaches.

These questions must be posed to all candidates equally to ensure that their answers can be properly compared.
It is essential that gender-specific aspects be taken into account by the appointments committee during the assessment of a candidate’s performance. Some empirical analyses have shown that women act reservedly and tend to highlight their own lack of qualifications during interviews, whereas men tend to present their own qualifications and characteristics in a far more positive manner.12

**Ranking and making decisions about candidates**

After the trial lectures have been completed, the criteria used to assess candidates tend to be more subjective. *It is during this stage that gender-based prejudices and expectations may act to the detriment of women.* Characteristics and aspects that are understood as demonstrative of professionalism and competence in men may be interpreted as dominance and pretentiousness in women.

Women are to be favoured on recruitment lists when they are equally suitable and have the same skills and professional experience.

If there are no women on recruitment lists for professors, and women are underrepresented as professors, the faculty should ensure suitably qualified candidates are found. The faculty is particularly expected to strive towards filling such posts with female academics.

Reports must be carefully reviewed for hidden discriminatory practices. Have women alone been rated negatively? Were the criteria set out in the job description properly applied? The personal and professional experience of all female candidates must be properly acknowledged.

**A proposal for the recruitment procedure**

The appointments commission should begin by putting together a proposal for recruitment (a candidate list). The dean should then pass on the complete report to the rectorate. The ‘gender sensitive process owner’ – the member of the appointments commission responsible for ensuring a gender-sensitive recruitment procedure – should then provide a written statement on how to ensure the recruitment procedure complies with these guidelines.

**Accompanying measures**

- The gender delegate should organise a workshop for the members of the appointments committee in order to guarantee that these guidelines are implemented. The workshop would be particularly important for members who have taken on the role of ‘gender sensitive process owner’ and thus of ensuring a gender-sensitive recruitment procedure.

- These guidelines as well as supplementary literature are to be provided to all new members of the academic staff.

- The gender delegate is to evaluate the implementation and results of these guidelines.

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Appendix 1 A: Guidelines and appointment procedures / Best Practice Universities

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Universität Flensburg, Auf dem Campus 1, D-24943 Flensburg
Fon:+49 (0) 4 61- 805 2762, e-mail: lea.junghans@uni-flensburg.de

Sammlung Leitfäden / Best Practice Universitäten1

Berufungsverfahren

RWTH Aachen
http://www.rwth-aachen.de/global/show_document.asp?id=aaaaaaaaaabxkly

FU Berlin
http://www.bcp.fu-berlin.de/service/forms/docs/berufungen/Berufungsleitfaden.pdf

HU Berlin
http://www.hu-berlin.de/berufung/

U Bielefeld
http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/gender/pdf/Handreichung_Berufungsverfahren.pdf

RU Bochum

TU Braunschweig

U Bremen
http://www.intern.tu-darmstadt.de/media/dez_vii/infosaz/berufungsleitfaden.pdf

TU Dresden
http://tu-dresden.de/die_tu_dresden/portrait/uni_mit_kind/dokumente/berufungsverfahren.pdf

U Duisburg-Essen
http://www.uni-duesseldorf.de/genderport/mainstreaming_hochschulentwicklung_berufung.shtml

U Erlangen
http://www.uni-erlangen.de/einrichtungen/personalabteilung/handbuch-personal/berufungsverfahren/

UK Göttingen
http://www.med.uni-goettingen.de/media/global/dekanat_diverse/LEITFADEN.pdf

U Heidelberg
http://www.zuv.uni-heidelberg.de/md/zuv/personal/rundschreiben/berufungsleitfaden.pdf

HS Heilbronn
http://www.hs-heilbronn.de/1646870/20100501_leitfaden_berufungsverfahren.pdf

U Marburg
http://www.uni-marburg.de/qq/projekte/leitfaden-berufungsverfahren

U Paderborn
http://www2.uni-paderborn.de/verwaltung/dokumente/leitfaden_f%C3%BCr_Berufungsverfahren.pdf

U Stuttgart
http://www.uni-stuttgart.de/zv/organisation/dezernat1/struktur/berufungsverfahren/leitfaden.pdf
In dieser Auflistung finden sich nur Beispiele von frei zugänglichen Leitfäden; einige Universitäten machen ihre Exemplare – insbesondere für die Stellenbesetzungsverfahren – nur im internen Verwaltungsnetz zugänglich.
Appendix 1 B: Guidelines and similar for appointment committees

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## Appendix 2 - Gender-networks (distribution list for academic job descriptions at the University of Luxembourg (June 2012))

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<td>BPW Germany: Business and Professional Women (Wirtschaft und Jura)</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:info@bpw-germany.de">info@bpw-germany.de</a></td>
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<td>Frauen in Naturwissenschaften und Technik e.V.</td>
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<td><a href="http://nut.de">http://nut.de</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:geschaeftsstelle@nut.de">geschaeftsstelle@nut.de</a></td>
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<td>Netzwerk Frauen.Innovation. Technik Baden-Württemberg</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:info@lnv.nl">info@lnv.nl</a></td>
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<td>Database of women scientist &amp; professionals</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.cgiar.org">http://www.cgiar.org</a></td>
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