

Organising a Conference?

How to Make it Gender/Diversity Balanced – A Checklist

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When organising a conference, making it gender/diversity balanced is an issue. The better the balance is, the more you can make sure to benefit from the full potential of ideas and people in your field. There are a few points that will make a difference. We encourage you to pay attention to these points in order to make your conference more attractive and successful. Please let us know if we can be of any help: equal@ethz.ch

Conference Topics and Speakers

1. Conference topic
 - Define the theme of your conference as broadly as possible in order to expand the pool of researchers who get involved.
2. Gender/diversity policy
 - Make your organising committee gender/diversity balanced.
 - Think about and fix the desired representation shares of gender, ethnicity, topics etc.
 - Use gender/diversity friendly images and language when announcing the conference.
 - Make your gender/diversity policy visible by placing an initial statement in the conference announcements.
3. Gender/diversity balance in keynote speakers
 - Think about and fix the desired representation shares of gender, ethnicity, topics etc. and invite speakers accordingly.
 - Go beyond the names that immediately come to your mind in order to assure the desired gender/diversity balance. Ask other researchers in the field. Use a database on potential speakers like [AcademiaNet](#), [ResearchGate](#), [P3 of SNSF](#) etc.
 - If top female speakers decline the invitation, think about supporting arrangements for them or other (female) speakers.
4. Gender/diversity balance in paper presenters
 - Consider using a blind review process to minimise implicit bias when evaluating submissions.
 - Define clear criteria for ranking the papers before the review process starts, including how you will process these ratings afterwards to make your final selection (e.g. prioritising equally ranked papers according to gender/diversity characteristics).

Organisation

1. Timing of conference
 - Fix the time and date of the conference as early as possible.
 - Try to schedule the conference sessions in accordance with the schedule of an ordinary working day.
2. Attendees
 - Monitor the enrolments. Promote your Conference through «unusual» channels if the gender/ diversity balance of attendees is not in place.
3. Additional offers
 - Offer childcare services and/or a family room for parents. At ETH Zurich please contact www.kihz.uzh.ch →
 - Think about financial support for travel expenditures for young researchers.
 - Account for the respective costs of the aforementioned additional offers in your conference budget.

Further Readings

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Schroeder, J. et al. (2013): Fewer invited talks by women in evolutionary biology symposia. *Journal of Evolutionary Biology*. 26 (9). 2063–2069.

Sherman, E. (2015): A simple solution to all-male panels at tech conferences. *Fortune*. <http://fortune.com/2015/03/17/a-simple-solution-to-all-male-panels-at-tech-conferences/>, 08.06.2017.

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