

Promotion of Gender Equality at ECU - A Gender Bias Busting Checklist *

ECU’s participation in Australia’s first Pilot of the Athena SWAN Charter is about breaking down barriers faced by women and gender diverse groups in the workplace. A part of this is about being aware of the decisions we make every day. While bias in decision making can be based on many varied forms of bias (e.g. age, culture, religion), this is a gender-bias-specific resource, a ‘checklist’, which can support you in counterprogramming the day to day biases and mental short cuts we all do. When marketing, consider your audience and imagine what you may feel like in a marginalised or stereotyped group.

Impact area	Questions to ask
<p>Job Adverts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruitment ▪ Promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Look for gender bias in images in adverts - do you see equal men and women profiled? ▪ Could the language in adverts be perceived as stereotypically masculine, inadvertently deterring women or gender diverse people from applying? ▪ Is the language in the advert stereotyping women in ‘women’s work’ roles? ▪ Does the description of working conditions deter those with parenting responsibilities (e.g. reference to “tight deadlines with multiple priorities” or “requiring decision making in a fast-paced environment”)? ▪ Is flexibility in the workplace evident in adverts? ▪ Is a work-life balance portrayed as a pre-requisite for successfully attracting and retaining talented employees? ▪ Consider working patterns and breaks related to parental leave, caring responsibilities and study breaks when writing selection criteria. ▪ Are words with a masculine or feminine connotation used in the position description (e.g. male = decisive, competitive, challenging, independent, lead; female = committed, connected, interpersonal, trust, supportive)?
<p>Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Articles ▪ Media ▪ Promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are men and women referred to in the same way? Use full titles for staff of all genders (e.g. women tend to be noted as ‘female scientists’ whereas men tend to be referred to as just ‘scientists’). ▪ Avoid gendered nouns like policeman/policewoman, steward/stewardess, actor/actress and use gender-neutral nouns like police officer, flight attendant, actor. ▪ Don’t assume someone’s gender, especially in online communications. Use gender-neutral pronouns. ▪ Refer to staff appropriately in professional settings, avoid terms such as ‘Hello girls’/’ladies’ or ‘One of the boys’. ▪ Take into account the different experiences of all genders in examples, articles and case studies.
<p>Visual images</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pictures ▪ Posters ▪ Photos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remember that gender stereotypes are mental shortcuts – it is particularly critical to represent seniority and leadership through a diversity of staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Challenge images of a traditional career in academia at ECU (e.g. the older male professor in the white lab coat). ▪ Is there gender balance in our images? ▪ Is gender diversity visible? Promote a gender balance at all events in terms of the line-up of speakers (and make sure women are given equal presence in media and articles). ▪ Ensure websites, newsletters, marketing materials and global communications reflect and cater to a diverse audience. ▪ Avoid marketing items that are based on physical appearance and the sexualisation of a subject to make it more ‘eye-catching’.
<p>Titles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Events ▪ Labelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase visibility of female and gender diverse role models in male dominated professions through the naming of buildings and events. ▪ Is gender neutral language used to introduce events?
<p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Locations ▪ Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the physical working environment show consideration to the needs of all staff? Are environments conducive to career progression for parents (e.g. parenting facilities). ▪ Is workplace flexibility facilitated through a conducive work setting (e.g. location to parking and child care facilities)? ▪ Does the local work unit accommodate home-based work where appropriate? ▪ How do men and women perceive psychological and physical safety in their work environment?

Impact area	Questions to ask
Education ■ <i>Awareness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gender biases contribute to segregation in the workplace. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is important to learn what it means not only to be gender sensitive but to be gender competent. Promote gender awareness training offerings. ○ Attend ECU’s Unconscious Bias training program? Enrol now. ■ Join forces on gender equality matters – networks, sponsorships and collaborations. ■ Share ECU achievements in gender equality through all communication channels.
Social media ■ <i>Online forum i.e. Facebook/ Twitter</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Promote articles that are important to gender diverse groups and/or are relevant to the promotion of gender equality in higher education using social media. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Networks such as Twitter show that men are followed at higher rates than women. Consider inclusivity in the online community when sharing material. ■ Avoid any gender biased comments or using stereotypical images on social media.
Achievement ■ <i>Reward</i> ■ <i>Recognition</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Celebrate staff of all genders who have progressed in their studies and/or careers or have returned to the workforce after breaks or leave. ■ When recognising achievements, always ensure that achievements are considered relative to opportunity, whether it be recruitment, promotion, awards. ■ Are there women you work with who have not applied for opportunities or recognition who could benefit from sponsorship? If so, alert the team at athenaswanaustralia@ecu.edu.au. ■ Is there a fair representation of females and gender diverse staff/students in ECU’s achievements? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider this when developing scheme criteria or assessment guidelines. The breadth of our talent at ECU is wide – promote inclusivity. ○ Are reward metrics based on outcomes which promote a healthy work-life balance as opposed to long hours and over-time work?
Promoting role models ■ <i>Male champions</i> ■ <i>Female exemplars</i> ■ <i>Mentoring</i> ■ <i>Sponsorship</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If you’re in a management or leadership role and have the opportunity to appoint someone to act in your role, whilst a specific acting opportunity should be allocated on merit irrespective of gender, be alert to the longer term patterns of same gender appointments and how merit is being defined. E.g. chairing roles. ■ Profile staff and students from a diverse range of backgrounds – everyone needs to be inspired – “If they can do it, so can I ...”. ■ Are there visible ECU male champions supporting gender equality? This is not about fixing the women, nor a woman’s issue. Male champions should be recognised for their support. ■ Profile role models who have achieved career progression to inspire people of all genders. ■ Proactively seek out women and gender diverse groups for interviews, panels, quotes, articles and events as subject matter experts.
Calling bias & redressing inequalities in a respectful way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remember if you walk past behaviour that is discriminatory or biased keep in mind; what you ignore, you permit. What you permit, you condone. Try interventions like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “When you treat x that way, e.g. dismiss her views, I feel that you’re diminishing the value she adds”. ○ “X makes a very good point”. ■ Stop yourself starting off with self-deprecating comments, and privately alert others who do so also (e.g. “I’m no expert but ...”; “can I just say something ...”).

* The focus of this checklist is gender bias however we acknowledge that bias in decision making can be based on many varied forms of bias.

The full reference list for this Checklist can be found [here](#).

For more information on how you can play a role in the Athena SWAN Charter initiative at ECU, [visit the website](#) or contact us at athenaswanaustralia@ecu.edu.au if you would like to consult on future marketing materials.