Good inclusive practices

practices

in video-conferences

and video-panel

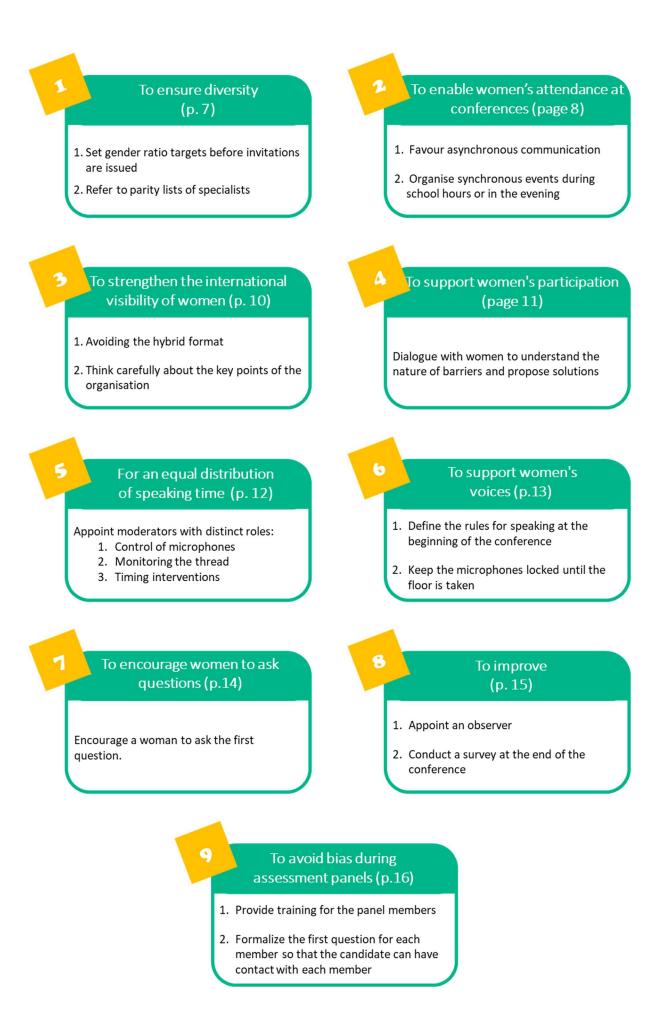Société Française
de Physique

F & Φ

Foreword

The health crisis that the world has been going through since the end of 2019 has imposed a profound transformation of communication modes. Video-conferencing has become a tool of our daily life with a multitude of different software. Over the past year, we have had time to familiarize ourselves with these techniques and it is time to question our practices.

If the format of video-conferences is different from that of traditional conferences, gender bias is still present but expressed differently. Therefore, we thought it would be useful to combine the charter for gender fairness in conferences with a specific practical guide.

The aim of this guide is to raise awareness of certain biases and to propose solutions so that practices change before they become habits.

Bibliography:

- The charter for gender fairness in conferences is available by following this link: https://www.sfpnet.fr/charte-de-parite-pour-les-conferences-scientifiques

1 To ensure diversity (p. 7)

1. Set gender ratio targets before invitations are issued
2. Refer to parity lists of specialists

2 To enable women's attendance at conferences (page 8)

1. Favour asynchronous communication
2. Organise synchronous events during school hours or in the evening

3 To strengthen the international visibility of women (p. 10)

1. Avoiding the hybrid format
2. Think carefully about the key points of the organisation

4 To support women's participation (page 11)

Dialogue with women to understand the nature of barriers and propose solutions

5 For an equal distribution of speaking time (p. 12)

Appoint moderators with distinct roles:
1. Control of microphones
2. Monitoring the thread
3. Timing interventions

6 To support women's voices (p.13)

1. Define the rules for speaking at the beginning of the conference
2. Keep the microphones locked until the floor is taken

7 To encourage women to ask questions (p.14)

Encourage a woman to ask the first question.

8 To improve (p. 15)

1. Appoint an observer
2. Conduct a survey at the end of the conference

9 To avoid bias during assessment panels (p.16)

1. Provide training for the panel members
2. Formalize the first question for each member so that the candidate can have contact with each member

1. To ensure diversity

Considering the question of parity from the beginning of the construction of the scientific program of the event is a necessary condition to reach a fair representation (see Appendix page 17) of women among the invited speakers. Therefore, the female speakers identified in the tentative program should first be invited, and if some decline, the board will revise the panel of invited speakers until the set objective is reached.

> *Example:*
> If, in a conference, the scientific board identifies 15 themes for the plenary sessions and wants one third women, then it identifies female speakers A, B, C, D, and E for themes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. If the female speaker A, who had been identified for theme 1, declines, it is possible that a woman is not the most appropriate replacement for her on theme 1. The board, which has not yet contacted the male speakers, may then decide to invite a man for theme 1, and a woman for theme 6, for example, whose speaker has not yet been invited.

The fair representation of women on evaluation panels is now mandatory, and most conference organizing committees are also often very attentive to this. To avoid always asking the same women to sit on these panels or committees, it is important to ensure that there are equal lists of experts. Some organizations (such as the CNRS) have such lists. It is also possible to contact the Femmes & Sciences association, learned societies (the Women and Physics Commission of the French Society of Physics has a list of women speakers by discipline) or to consult the website https://expertes.fr.

Bibliography:
- In France, the 18th article of the order of 25 May 2016 of the Education and Research Code sets out the national framework for training and the procedures leading to the award of the national doctoral degree. It stipulates that the composition of the panel "must allow a balanced representation of women and men.
  https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/article_lc/LEGIARTI000032588141/2016-09-18/

2. To enable women to attend conferences

It has been shown that when women work from home, they have less access than men to a private workspace and find it more difficult to escape from family constraints. Care should therefore be taken with the timing of video conferences.

If these meetings are to be held synchronously, then school hours should be preferred (8.30am - 4.30 pm in France).

If possible, asynchronous meetings should be organized. For example, for conferences, it is possible to ask speakers to record their speech. A Q&A session can be organized synchronously, taking care to ask the questions that have been sent in beforehand.

The synchronous conference sessions can be organized either during school time or in the evening if a strict lockdown is taking place. For reasons of fatigue and the organization of workspaces at home, programs on half days may be preferred to full days.

Testimony:

"I attended an asynchronous conference where the Q&A session was from 10 to 11pm, I forced myself to attend and was delighted. This schedule allowed people from all over the world to participate and I was able to isolate myself in my studio where I live with my partner"

Johanna Binnewitt
@jbinnewitt

#coling2020 about dealing with an asynchronous conference: How did you prefer to watch the videos in advance? For me, it was best to watch the videos on the same day as the Q&A to find a better start into discussion. What are your experiences?

Traduire le Tweet

6:44 PM · 11 déc. 2020 · Twitter Web App

Knud Jahnke
@KnudJahnke

One of the most interesting new #astronomy #workshop formats is going on right now: @cosmofromhome is an asynchronous #cosmology conference with #prerecorded #talks for #asynchronous viewing and #realtime Q&A sessions.

I'm really interested in the lessons learned!

@just_shaun

Traduire le Tweet

8:04 PM · 25 août 2020 · Twitter Web App

The hybrid mode (audience split between face-to-face and remote) should be avoided. Firstly, it creates two levels of meetings and therefore a form of discrimination. Secondly, it has been shown that women travel less than men to traditional conference formats. A hybrid mode could lead to an increase in this imbalance.

Bibliography:

- "No one escaped COVID's impacts, but big fall in tertiary enrolments was 80% women. Why?"
  Brendan Churchill, the conversation (2020)
  https://theconversation.com/no-one-escaped-covids-impacts-but-big-fall-in-tertiary-enrolments-was-80-women-why-149994
- " Women and burnout in the context of a pandemic"
  M. Aldossari, S. Chaudhry, Gender, work & organization (2020)
  https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/gwao.12567

3. To strengthen the women's international visibility - the hybrid format

The hybrid format (audience shared between face-to-face and distance learning) may have some advantages in its simplest form (face-to-face audience and a multitude of individual connections) or in a "cluster" form (one connection is shared by a group in the same location). However, it also presents a strong risk of discrimination. Firstly, it creates two levels of meetings. Above all, it has been shown that women travel less than men to conferences in the traditional format. A hybrid mode could lead to an increase in this imbalance and to the appearance of conferences with most of the male audience in person and most of the female audience at a distance.

For these reasons, the hybrid format is not recommended. However, if a conference is to be held in a hybrid format, the organisation must take particular care with the following points:

- **Selection criteria:** the proportion of women in the room should correspond to that of the discipline.
- **Chairing:** separate and coordinated chairing for the room and for the online conversation should be favoured.
- **Poster session:** posters should be visible to the remote audience and the possibility should be given to ask questions to those who present them.
- **Social events:** ensure that both audiences can meet at social events and during breaks.

Example:

Recent conferences have:

- Organised speed dating (some video conferencing platforms offer this possibility).
- Sent aperitif boxes to each participant so that everyone could share the same food.
- Asked professional hosts to animate certain moments (in the form of a radio show or a game to encourage networking)
- Created virtual rooms with a limited number of participants for the coffee breaks. A chairperson was in charge of breaking the ice. To form sociably compatible groups the participants can be asked to fill a form about their interests and hobbies.

Some platforms are more suitable for remote and parallel social interaction. It is also possible to use collaborative communication platforms that allow for thematic or individual discussion channels.

4. To support women's participation

In the specific case of videoconferencing, it has been shown that women more than men do not have access to a personal workspace at home, and have additional household or family tasks. It is important to discuss with the invited speaker during the first contact and to anticipate these obstacles by proposing solutions.

> **Example:**
> - The organizing committee can be flexible in choosing the date and time of the speech.
> - Providing or even requiring the use of a common background image for all speakers helps to smooth out differences in the environments
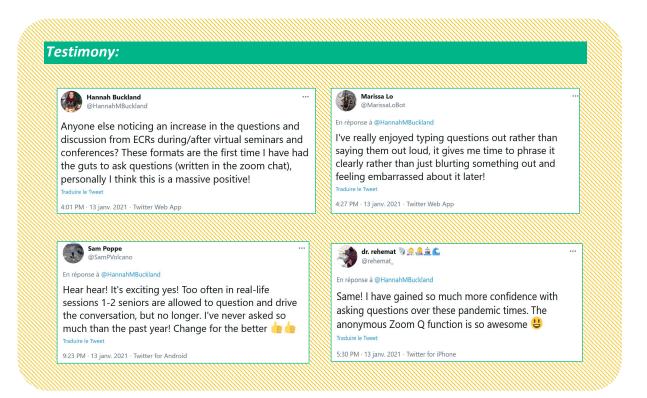
Bibliography:
- *"Impact of covid-19 on academic mothers"*
  F. Staniscuaski et al., Science, vol. 368, p724 (2020)
  https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12506

5. For an equal distribution of the word between men and women

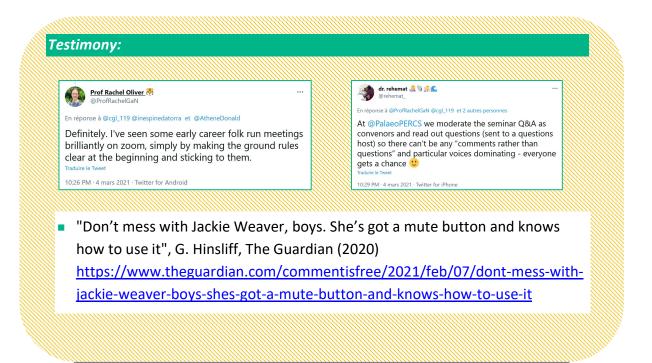Unlike a face-to-face conference, several moderators should be appointed with different functions:

1. The first person should have the control over the microphones and open only the microphone of the person who is speaking. This person should ensure that the first question is asked by a woman (see point 6)

2. The second person should monitor the thread of discussion and relay the questions asked in writing.

3. The third person should keep track and check that the floor is not given more to men.

Testimony:

Hannah Buckland
@HannahMBuckland

Anyone else noticing an increase in the questions and discussion from ECRs during/after virtual seminars and conferences? These formats are the first time I have had the guts to ask questions (written in the zoom chat), personally I think this is a massive positive!

Traduire le Tweet

4:01 PM · 13 janv. 2021 · Twitter Web App

Marissa Lo
@MarissaLoBot

En réponse à @HannahMBuckland

I've really enjoyed typing questions out rather than saying them out loud, it gives me time to phrase it clearly rather than just blurting something out and feeling embarrassed about it later!

Traduire le Tweet

4:27 PM · 13 janv. 2021 · Twitter Web App

Sam Poppe
@SamPVolcano

En réponse à @HannahMBuckland

Hear hear! It's exciting yes! Too often in real-life sessions 1-2 seniors are allowed to question and drive the conversation, but no longer. I've never asked so much than the past year! Change for the better 👍👍

Traduire le Tweet

9:23 PM · 13 janv. 2021 · Twitter for Android

dr. rehemat 🌍👩‍🔬👨‍🔬🏔️🌊
@rehemat_

En réponse à @HannahMBuckland

Same! I have gained so much more confidence with asking questions over these pandemic times. The anonymous Zoom Q function is so awesome 😃

Traduire le Tweet

5:30 PM · 13 janv. 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

6. To support women's voice

At the beginning of the meeting, the rules on speaking should be define explicitly and enforce them (e.g. keep the microphones locked until the floor is given). This is because men are more likely to speak without permission, whereas women are more likely to use the "raise your hand" option and wait for the moderator to give them the floor. It has been shown that without specific controls, the effects of hierarchy and status are amplified during videoconferences.

To ensure that the tools are mastered, a "warm-up" could be organized at the very beginning of the session during which the whole audience is invited to raise their hands.

Testimony:

Prof Rachel Oliver
@ProfRachelGaN

En réponse à @cgl_119 @inespinedatorra et @AtheneDonald

Definitely. I've seen some early career folk run meetings brilliantly on zoom, simply by making the ground rules clear at the beginning and sticking to them.

Traduire le Tweet

10:26 PM · 4 mars 2021 · Twitter for Android

dr. rehemat
@rehemat_

En réponse à @ProfRachelGaN @cgl_119 et 2 autres personnes

At @PalaeoPERCS we moderate the seminar Q&A as convenors and read out questions (sent to a questions host) so there can't be any "comments rather than questions" and particular voices dominating - everyone gets a chance 🙂

Traduire le Tweet

10:29 PM · 4 mars 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

- "Don't mess with Jackie Weaver, boys. She's got a mute button and knows how to use it", G. Hinsliff, The Guardian (2020)
  https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/feb/07/dont-mess-with-jackie-weaver-boys-shes-got-a-mute-button-and-knows-how-to-use-it

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Bibliography:

- *"The impact of status and audio-conferencing technology on business meetings"*
  E. France, A. Anderson, M. Gardner, International Journal of Human-Computer Studies (2001)
  http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1071581901904641

7. To encourage women to ask questions

In academic STEM seminars, women ask fewer questions than men. It has been shown that ensuring that the first question is asked by a woman, or at least prioritizing a request to speak by a woman, increases the proportion of questions asked by women over the whole Q&A session.

Bibliography:

- *"Women's visibility in academic seminars: women ask fewer questions than men"*
  A. Carter, A. Croft, D. Lukas, G. Sandstrom, Plos One (2018)
  https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0202743

8. To improve

A gender observer can be appointed by the organizing committee to take notes during the event. Conducting a survey to get feedback on the organization is also a good way to promote more equality.

9. To avoid bias during assessment panels

The panel can be trained about biases before the audition or, at least, see some videos (see below). One of the key points is to decide on clear and formalized rules so that all candidates benefit from the same selection process. The chairperson of the panel is responsible for ensuring that these rules are respected.

Video-conference juries do not always allow the candidate to see the members of the panel. However, it is very important to establish a link, even if only visually, in order to speak easily. One solution is to prepare a list of general questions that can be asked to all candidates at the very beginning of the assessment (before the discussion on specific topics). This methodology helps to start the interaction with the panel in a reassuring way.

Videos:

- Video proposed by the ERC for its panel members
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g978T58gELo&feature=youtu.be
- Video made by "the employer's network for equality & inclusion"
  (http://bit.ly/2pRNhQL) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rbe5D3Yh43o
- MOOC proposed to CNRS panel members
  (contact the "mission pour la place des femmes" at the CNRS who will communicate it https://mpdf.cnrs.fr/)

Bibliography:

- "Committees with implicit bias promote fewer women when they do not believe gender bias exist"
  I. Régner, C. Thinus-Blanc, A. Netter, T. Schmader, P. Huguet; Nature Human Behaviour (2019)
  https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-019-0686-3

Appendix: What is fair representation of women?

The charter for gender fairness of the French Society of Physics, signed by the CNRS, recommends reaching the percentage of women in the field (when known - 20% otherwise) in the different committees of the conference. It also recommends to reach or exceed the percentage of women in the field with a floor of 30% (when not known - the floor is imposed) for women chosen to give an invited lecture or an oral presentation.

Example:

There are differences within sub-disciplines, e.g. women are much more numerous in biophysics than in theoretical physics. These variations must be taken into account. For example, here are the decisions made at the University of Aix-Marseille for a selection panel of 10 person for a position of full professor

c) Parité homme / femme

Selon les termes du décret du 6 juin 1984, un CDS doit comporter « une proportion minimale de 40% personnes de chaque sexe », tous collèges confondus :

- pour un poste de professeur, dont le nombre de membres est de 8 ou 10, selon le type de CDS, la part réservée à chaque sexe est d'au moins 4.
- pour un poste de MCF, dont le nombre de membres est de 12 ou 16, selon le type de CDS, part réservée à chaque sexe est d'au moins 5 ou 7.

Le décret n°2017-1606 du 24 novembre 2017 prévoit des **dérogations** dans 10 disciplines pour le recrutement des professeurs d'université, sachant que dans ce cas, la part réservée à chaque sexe doit être d'au moins 2 personnes :

Section	Taux dérogatoire	Part réservée à chaque sexe au sein d'AMU (cas général : un profil PR / un comité)
25 – Mathématiques	20%	2
26 - Mathématiques appliquées et applications des mathématiques	32%	3
28 - Milieux denses et matériaux	30%	3
29 – Constituants élémentaires	20%	2
30 - Milieux dilués et optique	29%	3
35 - Structure et évolution de la terre et des autres planètes	27%	3
36 - Terre solide : géodynamique des enveloppes supérieures, paléobiosphère	23%	2
60 – Mécanique, génie mécanique, génie civil	20%	2
61 - Génie informatique, automatique et traitement du signal	21%	2
63 – Génie électrique, électronique, photonique et systèmes	23%	2

Bibliography:

- The demographics of the disciplinary sections are available here: https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid153536/fiches-demographiques-des-sections-de-sciences-2019.html
- The charter for gender fairness at conferences is available by following this link: https://www.sfpnet.fr/charte-de-parite-pour-les-conferences-scientifiques

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