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**Defining Best Practice for
Senior Executive Diversity in
the Higher Education Sector**

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Fisher Leadership

AHEIA's Higher Education HR Conference

Brisbane, 11 May 2018



Jo Fisher of Fisher Leadership launching the Gender Diversity Recruitment Best Practice Guidelines in the Ballroom at the National Convention Centre, Canberra


If you would like a copy of the *Gender Diversity Recruitment Best Practice Guidelines*, please download it from [the UAEW website](#).



- In 2017, UAEW invited Fisher Leadership to develop best practice recruitment guidelines.
- Guidelines were road-tested with the sector.
- Consultation included 24 universities with 40 participants including: People & Culture leaders, recruitment teams, diversity specialists, academic leaders and Vice Chancellors.

Purpose of Guidelines

- An essential step towards more balanced & positive leadership across universities in Australia
- Set of standards against which to measure current executive recruitment performance
- A practical resource tool that identifies checklists, case studies and actions that universities can adopt to accelerate progress
- Targeted to all who participate in the selection and appointment of senior executives in universities – professional and academic roles



“The barriers to achieving gender balance in the executive leadership of universities in Australia are well known and yet progress remains slow. A university without gender balance in its executive ranks is unlikely to optimise the intellectual or cultural environment for students. If the higher education sector is to be a serious change agent for women in leadership, systematic structural change will be necessary. The UAEW guidelines are a welcome resource to help universities embed effective organisational measures that have the potential to make a real difference.”

Professor Helen Bartlett,

Vice-Chancellor,
Federation University Australia

“Gender equality in organisations matters. This is as true for higher education as elsewhere. The under-representation of women in executive positions is not just a terrible waste of talent; it also limits our thinking, the quality of our conversations and decisions, and the outcomes we deliver. As a member of the national Male Champions of Change initiative, I am taking personal responsibility for increasing the number of women in senior roles at La Trobe University. The guidelines, developed by Universities Australia Executive Women, are a valuable, practical tool to help us achieve this.”

Professor John Dewar,

*Vice-Chancellor,
La Trobe University*

“We have taken vital steps in achieving equality and have seen significant growth in female student numbers with women now accounting for 23.8 per cent of commencing engineering students in 2017 – up from 18.8 per cent before 2013, and well above the current national average of 16 per cent. Despite these achievements, equal representation by women has yet to be reached in academic leadership, particularly in the STEM fields. As a Male Champion of Change (MCC) in STEM, I am committed to building organisational cultures that foster equality and grow the pipeline to improve gender balance.”

Professor Peter Høj,

*Vice-Chancellor and President,
The University of Queensland*

“Why is it so important to increase the proportion of senior executive women in higher education? It has been said that women ‘hold up half the sky’. But in many of the professions – including law and academia itself – women represent more than 50% of Australian university graduates. How can we possibly claim to lead, to mentor and to inspire new generations if there is no parity of demography at the most senior levels of university management? It is compelling. It is simple. And it is essential.”

Professor Adam Shoemaker,

*Vice-Chancellor and President,
Southern Cross University*



To apply a practical approach, we have classified the main stages in the process of executive recruitment into the four main areas of:

1.
Preparation

2.
Attraction

3.
Selection

4.
Appointment
and
Integration

- Organisational commitment
- Reconstruct criteria and language
- Signal commitment to flexibility

- Breadth of advertisement / networking
- Goals for short list balance
- Allow time to come forward

- Set selection panel expectations
- Support inexperienced candidates
- Weight potential over experience

- Ensure flexibility
- Mentoring and feedback
- Future talent pipeline

1 PREPARATION

1.1 Workforce Planning and Readiness for Diversity

1.2 Role Design and Specification

1.3 Apply Gender-Neutral Language in Candidate Information

1.4 Broaden Selection Criteria

1.5 Emphasize Capabilities

1.6 Assess Values, Cultural and Motivational Fit

2 ATTRACTION

2.1 Gender Diversity Attraction Strategies

2.2 Transparent and Diverse Advertising Approaches

2.3 Encourage Internal Candidates

2.4 Considering Use of an Executive Search Firm

2.5 If you choose the option of working with an Executive Search Firm

2.6 Allow time for Passive Candidates to Come Forward

3 SELECTION

3.1 Diverse Membership of Selection Panels

3.2 Training in "Addressing" Unconscious Bias in the Interview Phase

3.3 Candidate Support

3.4 Evaluation and Assessment Practices

3.5 Short Listing with the Selection Panel

3.6 Selecting and Referencing the Preferred Candidate

3.7 Candidate Offer and Contract Negotiation

4 APPOINTMENT AND INTEGRATION

4.1 Candidate Experience and Pre-Appointment

4.2 Appointment and Introduction Process

4.3 Integration Program

4.4 Retention

4.5 Build Leadership Talent Pipelines and Succession Planning

✓ better decision making

✓ more innovation

✓ improved performance

✓ better teamwork

EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT PROCESS RESOURCE FOR PEOPLE AND CULTURE TEAMS

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The Executive Recruitment Process Resource for the Best Practice in Recruitment for Advancing Women in Executive Appointments

The Executive Recruitment Process Resource for People and Culture Teams incorporates Executive Recruitment Process Phases and Sector Case Study Snapshots (full case studies available at Universities Australia Executive Women Group homepage <https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/uni-participation-quality/Equally-and-Participation-Women-in-universities/Universities-Australia-Executive-Women-Group>), and WebSite Links.

① PREPARATION >>

Preparation is a vital stage of senior executive appointments. Whether it is a role that is being recruited internally or via an executive search firm, preparing gender neutral job and person specifications are essential to achieve the best senior executive recruitment outcomes. Decisions on selection should be based on objective, job related criteria. Ruling out gender bias needs to start at the preparation phase.

Preparation Phases:

- 1.1 Workforce Planning and Readiness for Diversity;
- 1.2 Role Design and Specification;
- 1.3 Apply Gender-Neutral Language in Candidate Information;
- 1.4 Broaden Selection Criteria;
- 1.5 Emphasise Capabilities; and
- 1.6 Assess Values, Cultural and Motivational Fit.



1.1 Workforce Planning and Readiness for Diversity

- Ensure readiness of the Council, the Executive and the entire organisation to embrace gender diversity as a priority as well as to visibly champion actions and ongoing commitment
- Document evidence of readiness and embracement of diversity via actions taken and policy formulation. An organisation-wide gender diversity strategy should be prepared and communicated internally and externally
- Prepare overall workforce plans and prepare current gender diversity workforce data, including statistics and metrics for schools and faculties on gender balance
- HR Business Partners (HRBs) to review workforce plans and gender diversity data
- HR Leadership and HR HRBs present workforce plans and diversity data to Executive team
- HR HRBs to challenge hiring managers on gender diversity gaps in workforce areas
- Workforce plans to indicate gender diversity targets and flexible work goals
- Workforce plans to set gender targets for attraction, promotion and succession plans
- Communicate workforce plans, gender diversity data, gender action plans and targets
- Continually review and update readiness to diversity, workforce plans and data.



**EXECUTIVE
RECRUITMENT
PROCESS
RESOURCE
FOR PEOPLE
AND CULTURE
TEAMS**
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The Executive Recruitment Process Resource for People and Culture Teams incorporates Executive Recruitment Process Phases and Sector Case Study Snapshot. Full case studies available at www.monash.edu.au/executive-women Group homepage <http://www.monash.edu.au/executive-women> participation-quality-equity-and-participatory-women-in-universities/monash-act/act-executive-women-groups-and-website-links

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CASE STUDY 1:

Gender Neutral Job Descriptions, University of Wollongong

CASE STUDY 2:

Athena Swan Parking Bays and Parenting Rooms, Edith Cowan University

CASE STUDY 3:

Women in STEM Fellowships, Swinburne University

CASE STUDY 4:

Advertising for Women-Only Research Fellowships, University of South Australia

CASE STUDY 5:

Peer-Mentoring Program, Swinburne University and La Trobe University

CASE STUDY 6:

ASPIRE Leadership Program, University of Southern Queensland

CASE STUDY 8:

Professorial Talent Spotting and Advancement using the Women's Professor Group and Learning Excellence Academy, Murdoch University

CASE STUDY 7:

Leneen Forde Future Leaders Program, Griffith University

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CASE STUDY 1:

Gender Neutral Job Descriptions, University of Wollongong

University of Wollongong identified the need to provide gender neutral role specifications to attract women in STEMM roles, given the difficulty they were experiencing in attracting applications from women, and also given that these roles are heavily dominated by men. The university's recruitment team reviewed a STEMM-related position description for gender neutral language and removed any language with unintended bias in the role specification. They also added the university's diversity statement and commitments in supporting women in their careers in the advertisement. A re-advertised senior role in a male dominated STEMM discipline resulted in an increased number of female applicants.

4 APPOINTMENT AND INTEGRATION >>

Successful induction and ongoing support is key to help new leaders settle into their appointment. Integration is also important and can include support such as sponsorship and mentoring.

Integration Phase:

- 4.1 Candidate Experience and Pre-Appointment;
- 4.2 Appointment and Introduction Process;
- 4.3 Integration Program;
- 4.4 Retention; and
- 4.5 Build Leadership Talent Pipelines and Succession Planning.



CASE STUDY 5:

Peer-Mentoring Program, Swinburne University and La Trobe University

A grassroots peer-mentoring program was initiated at Swinburne University in 2014, led by female academics, to grow the number of academic women promoted to professorial levels. At Swinburne, the program assisted the 2015, 2016 and 2017 promotions rounds, with over 80 participants in the first year, 2015. The program was adapted at La Trobe University in August 2017, with over 150 participants. During the 2016 Promotion Round at Swinburne, six women were promoted to level E compared to an average of one per year, in the previous six years. The appointment profile changed after two years, with fewer level A and B women, and more level D and E women.

④ APPOINTMENT AND INTEGRATION

CASE STUDY 6:

ASPIRE Leadership Program, University of Southern Queensland

At the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) a conscious effort was made to advance women's careers, leading to the creation of a Women's Development Program. The Aspire: Inspiring Women's Career Advancement at USQ Program was introduced in 2011. The inaugural program included two main streams, "Executive Women" and "Future Leaders", supported by general workshops designed to raise awareness of gender equity issues and empower staff to manage their own careers. Over the last 7 years, the program has produced more than 130 graduates, who capitalised on the opportunity by: raising their profiles in their areas of expertise; developing their networks; and progressing their careers. The focus on developing internal talent resulted in a significant improvement in women in senior executive positions, with 33.95% of these positions held by women in 2018, compared to 14% in 2010.

APPOINTMENT AND INTEGRATION

CASE STUDY 7:

Leneen Forde Future Leaders Program, Griffith University

Benchmarking data have revealed Griffith University above sector in the representation of women academic staff; as well as senior academic staff at Level D (Associate Professor) and above. In the higher education sector, Griffith has the third highest representation of women staff at D (Associate Professor); and ninth highest representation of women at E (Professor), as cited in the 2016 Selected Inter-Institutional Gender Equity Statistics (Universities Australia 2017). Griffith identified the need to build on these successes by focussing on the further progression of women into leadership roles. The Leneen Forde Future Leaders Program was established to address this need. The Program was named in honour of the Honourable Leneen Forde AC in recognition of her outstanding contribution to Griffith and to the status and progress of women nationally and internationally.

② ATTRACTION



are recognising the importance of communicating their Diversity and Inclusion policies as well as aspirational targets to achieve gender equality, commitment to equal pay and flexible working arrangements. In the attraction phase, steps 1-6 are important actions for hiring managers and HR leaders to follow:

Attraction Phase:

- 2.1 Gender Diversity Attraction Strategies;
- 2.2 Transparent and Diverse Advertising Approaches;
- 2.3 Encourage Internal Candidates;
- 2.4 Considering Use of an Executive Search Firm;
- 2.5 If you choose the option of working with an Executive Search Firm; and
- 2.6 Allow time for Passive Candidates to Come Forward.



CASE STUDY 4:

Advertising for Women-Only Research Fellowships, University of South Australia

The University of South Australia introduced a new initiative to invest in female researchers in 2017. It ran a campaign for the Future Industries Institute where pursuant to Section 47 of the Equal Opportunity Act SA 1984, it advertised for women only researchers at Level A, B, C and D. The appointment process resulted in three women researchers appointed, after 71 applications were received from qualified women and 11 candidates interviewed.



Open Discussion



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