“Project Juno is about taking diversity to a different plane – you think about what you are doing and do it differently.”

Prof. Robin Ball
University of Warwick

Appointment and selection processes and procedures that encourage men and women to apply for academic posts at all levels.

Ensure that recruitment and selection processes are open and transparent, and that everyone is treated fairly

Identify how career breaks are taken into consideration, that all staff who interview have undertaken equality and diversity training for recruitment, and that all new staff, including postdoctoral research assistants, have an induction. Demonstrate the impact of these measures to date and identify further measures to build on this.

Recruitment procedures include:
- appointing committees and procedures are designed to treat applications from men and women equally;
- all appointing committees are constructed to meet diversity criteria;
- all members of an appointing committee participate in scoring applications against objective criteria to generate the shortlist;
- members of appointing committees are required to have undergone the human resources training programme “Recruiting the Best”, which includes specific emphasis on equality and diversity, legal, and best practice requirements in recruitment.

All university employees are required to take part in training on diversity and equal opportunities, for which human resources provides an online module “Diversity in the Workplace”. The department requests data from human resources to ensure that the Juno Committee monitors uptake annually.

An extensive induction programme is in place for new staff, which is fully documented on the department intranet. This starts with introductions to key support staff, health and safety briefing, and a department orientation tour on the first days. This is followed by an induction meeting with the head of department and deputy head shortly afterwards (ideally a week), which the new staff member’s mentor also attends. In subsequent weeks, staff work through the orientation material on the website and may also attend a centrally organised half-day session on orientation to the university. For teaching fellows and postdoctoral research assistants there are follow-up meetings at two – three – six – and nine – month intervals after appointment teaching fellows with the head of department and postdoctoral research assistants with their respective PIs. For academic staff, the initial induction meeting is followed by a subsequent meeting with the mentor, after which it is up to the mentor and mentee to develop the basis on which they maintain contact. Human resources collect feedback on the induction process, to ensure that it is working as it should and this feedback is disseminated to the department.

We are particularly pleased at the positive response by new staff to our extensive induction process, involving departmental and central activities. This is supported by an extensive dedicated area on the department’s intranet with information to help orientate new staff to the workings and culture of the department. The same programme runs for research staff as well as academic staff. The induction process is embedded in department practice by having it initiated automatically by the department administration and by having the process set out publicly on the departmental web pages.
The percentage of women research staff in all physics cost centres in the UK is 19%, whereas here it is x%. Clearly, we need to address this at every stage of the recruitment process. Since there is no evidence of bias in the recruitment process once an application is received, we need to increase the percentage of women applicants for these positions. In order to address the generic issue of encouraging women to apply, we had strengthened our “welcoming” statement on our job advertisements recently as part of our Juno Practitioner Action Plan; however, this is being revisited. The physics department now has a new Juno action to include a specific statement regarding women.

The figures show that the women in the department are distributed across the academic grades somewhat differently to their counterparts in other UK universities, with proportionally more of the women at the professor grade and fewer at the research grade. These percentages again are swayed by very small numbers; the total number of women at present is x. In an effort to address the under-representation of women throughout the university, the human resources equality and diversity team has produced a report on the feasibility of removing the names from applications and CVs in an effort to mask the gender of applicants. The feasibility study is ongoing. Also, human resources has increased its focus on training for members of recruitment panels, including diversity training.

Recruitment data have been collected in recent years, so information on the gender balance of applicants, which might help us analyse whether there is a problem at the recruitment stage, is limited. Four years ago, out of a total of 94 applicants to academic and research posts, 16% were female. 28 applicants were interviewed (14% female), from which 11 men and two women (i.e. 15% of the total) were appointed. Three years ago, there were a total of 70 applicants, 14% were female. 26 applicants were interviewed (27% female) and seven appointed, of which three were female (43%). And in the previous two years, there have been a total of 259 applications, of which 17 were from candidates who chose not to record their gender on the equal opportunity form. Of the remaining 242, 12.4% were female. 32 applicants were interviewed (21.9% female) and three appointments were made (no female). These sets of data would appear to demonstrate that there is no problem with women being shortlisted or appointed, although the latter statistics are heavily affected by the small numbers considered. A gender bottleneck is present at the application level so that strategies for increasing the number of women applicants should be searched for. The department is now publicising its commitment to gender equality in every job announcement as well as in its publicity material, highlighting the Juno Practitioner and university Athena SWAN Bronze awards. The department will be considering how it can take forward an action to proactively seek out more female applicants.

The department has put in place the following actions:
- identification and encouragement of high-quality female applicants internal to the department through the mentoring and staff review and development schemes;
- identification and encouragement of eligible females external to the department to apply for posts;
- an explicit statement about equal opportunities on all job adverts, and provision of Athena SWAN material and a family/carers information sheet as part of the further particulars;
- the presence of at least one female academic on all search and interview committees;
- coverage of childcare costs for female interview candidates and the requirement that all academic staff have completed the university’s specific equality and diversity online training course.

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