

WOMEN'S NETWORK

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The Women's Network...

- early to mid-career researchers and lecturers across the University of Manchester
- an informal space
- bi-monthly meetings
- a chance to discuss gender-related challenges

TWEET! Follow us on Twitter @Women_sNetwork and tweet us when you find something that the rest of the network ought to know!

Thanks for submitting items!

We appreciate all the interesting and hot button topics you have suggested for inclusion in this edition!

Get involved!

Send in your ideas, concerns and questions, links to articles and blogs, pictures, recent publications, and anything else you want to share with the Women's Network (or to contribute to the newsletter).

You deserve a platform and we would love to give you one!

Brag Box

Have you had anything published recently? Did you get a promotion? Were you invited to speak? Did you get a personal best in your sport of choice? Let us know and we will put it in the next edition's Brag Box... a way to celebrate your successes!

We Get It!



The UoM launched the **We Get It** campaign against sexual harassment in 2014. Thousands of staff and students signed a pledge to stand up against sexual harassment wherever they saw it. The university even recruited more harassment advisors with some special training to deal with sexual harassment. Unfortunately, not everyone has all the information about the policy or knows where to report problems or how to get help.

Join the Women's Network for a chance to learn and ask questions about the policies, resources and support exist at the UoM.

Date: October 10, 2018

Time: 10:30

Place: TBD

Letters of Recommendation

Studies in both **geosciences** and **chemistry and biochemistry** show that letters of recommendation are more likely to describe male applicants as excellent than they are to describe female applicants as excellent.

What to do? There are suggestions that the solution is to work on making people aware of implicit biases, but that can be **ineffective or even make**

things worse. Another option is to just **stop asking for or writing letters of recommendation**, but since they are biased in favour of male applicants and applicants with good connections, that may be a hard sell.

In the meantime, think critically about the language you use when you are next asked to write a letter of recommendation.

The Promotion Project

Norwegian Professor Curt Rice presented on gender equality at NUIG, which had been in the headlines for its problems with failing to promote female staff and for the legal battles that followed. In his talk, Rice described the Promotion Project by which Tromsø university went from being the worst for gender balance in Norway, with fewer than 10% women professors, to having over 30%. This change was achieved through a focused support system of mentoring to improve the confidence and self esteem of women who were at or nearly at a point to apply for promotion.

Of course, improving the self-esteem of female academics won't help remove institutional discrimination, but there is hope there too. Irish research bodies now require 40% of females as PIs on grant proposals and Spanish universities are required to **consider gender perspectives on all publicly funded research and to develop plans for improvement**.

Generating Routes for Women's Leadership (GROWL)

Mark your calendars!

On **24 October 14:00** - Generating Routes for Women's Leadership (GROWL) the Women's Network hosts a guest presentation from the Sylvia Pankhurst Gender and Diversity Research Centre at MMU.

This special event is a chance to hear about research evidence, exchange practice innovations and work with peers from other organisations to think about how you can grow better routes for women's leadership. You can also expect to learn more about the GROWL Enquiry Tools which summarise the evidence and poses provocative questions around six phases of the leadership life course where we know women face challenges to progression.

Location yet to be decided. More information will be available closer to the date and will be sent out through the Women's Network email list, the twitter feed and the newsletter.

Time for tea and cake

The next meeting for the Women's Network will be **7 November at 10:30**.

This will be a good opportunity to welcome new members to the network, to catch up with existing members, and to enjoy some hot drinks and cake. Basically, that means we will have a kettle, some tea bags, and at least one cake. Please feel free to bring something to share, but there is no obligation.

Again, the location is yet to be decided. More information will be available closer to the date and will be sent out through the Women's Network email list, the twitter feed and the newsletter.

What happens when mentees become the mentors?

Male, pale and stale university professors to be given 'reverse mentors' as part of a broader project aimed at challenging bias, funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council's (EPSRC).

The mentoring element will see white men in senior academic posts assigned a junior female colleague from an ethnic minority as a mentor. Prof John Rowe, who is overseeing the project at Birmingham University, said he hoped the scheme will allow eminent professors to confront their own biases and leave them "feeling quite uncomfortable".

I can think of a few people I would like to be mentored through a programme like this.

Random Feminist-ish Quote

"We're all building our world, right now, in real time. Let's build it better"

— Lindy West, *Shrill: Notes From a Loud Woman*.

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Stuff on Social Media

Cycle to Work day!

Wednesday, August 15 is [Cycle To Work Day](#). Summer is a great time to try a cycle commute or get back into a cycle commute that you have let slip by the way-side. Get in touch with the UoM cycle-commute club to learn more about what they offer on [the UM-BUG staffnet page](#) or on twitter [@umbug1000](#).

AI can help!

We have all heard that AI systems can inherit the biases of their designers, but that is not always the case. A new AI system called Quicksilver was designed to help spot the omission of scientists from Wikipedia, and it turns out most of the missing scientists are female. Quicksilver is referred to as "the industry's first machine-generated knowledge base" and can even automatically draft Wikipedia-style entries about the missing scientists. [Read more here](#)

What is a PhD for?

Is science about changing the world or chasing citations? [This article in the Guardian](#) argues that "It's time to disrupt the current PhD system to make it better for early-career researchers. We need to move away from a self-referential culture in which academics talk only to their peers." and instead argues that the PhD system and the way success is measured and reported must be disrupted in science is to have any real impact on society.

The Stuff on Social Media column is driven by user input . . . So get in touch with ideas, comments and suggestions!

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Tweet us at [@Women_sNetwork](#)