

BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme at Kent Philosophy

Policy Document and Action Plan

This Policy Document and Action Plan were adopted unanimously by the Department of Philosophy, University of Kent at its Board of Studies Meeting in December 2015. Please read in conjunction with the BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme Guidance document.

Equality Officer

Starting in September 2016 an Equality officer will be chosen from senior staff. Their function is to monitor and report on any issues arising with respect to the points outlined in this document, and to act as a liaison. If the role turns out to be too onerous, we will share the burden amongst senior staff.

Gender bias

Hiring panels

- We already make sure that members of hiring panels know about the workings of unconscious bias, both through training offered by HR to panel members, and through the EDI training that we've all been through.
- We already make sure that hiring panels include at least one woman, by HR policy.
- We already agree specific hiring criteria and weighting in advance, by HR policy.
- We already allow sufficient time for non-rushed consideration of job applications, by HR policy.
- At present, we're not anonymising any part of the hiring process. It's not clear that doing so would be feasible, given the rather limited online system we're using (iGrasp).

Promotions and Appraisals

- We already make sure members of promotions panels know about the workings of unconscious bias, both through training offered by HR to panel members, and through the EDI training that we've all been through.
- The Head of School is not currently asking for CVs from all eligible School members. Policy decisions are being planned about what is to be done here at School level, and what it might make sense to do on a departmental level.
- We have brought all of the issues of this section to the attention of School officers who are in charge of promotion and appraisal decisions, including the issue of general support for everyone with regard to appraisal.

Teaching

In 2016-17 and then on a regular basis, we will have a presentation on the issue of unconscious gender bias at one of our departmental teaching events to which we invite all teaching staff. We already mark second and third year work anonymously. We will move to extend this policy to first years. We maintain anonymity through all board of examiners meetings.

Research Excellence Framework

Historically, we have included everyone on Teaching and Research contracts in our submission to the RAE and REF. We will try to continue this policy. Anonymising is not practical in such a small department.

General

We will adopt the following policies from September 2016:

We require in all taught modules that if the proportion of a module's suggested reading written by women does not exceed 25% then a conversation will be triggered as to whether a better balance could be achieved. First names are to be given in reading lists to make clear gender. These policies will be monitored by the equality officer.

We have proposed to our School that we be allowed to include all staff and PhD students' photos on our website. They have raised objections concern viability, legality, data protection, updating. We will take this up further to see what is allowable.

Seminar discussion policy is addressed in the relevant section.

We will provide information to staff and students that insulting, aggressive and unprofessional behaviour will not be tolerated. This will be via handbooks and induction events. The equality officer will address the first years and postgraduates in welcome week and make themselves available for anyone who has concerns.

We will incorporate active bystander training links in our handbooks. We will liaise with the Student Union to provide such training.

Conferences and seminar series

From September 2016

1a) For conferences and seminar series, the convenors are all required to look at the document on the BPA website to address implicit bias. This will be monitored in the summer Board of Studies meeting.

b) Addressed as in 1(a)

c) We will send out the following boilerplate to every person invited to a conference hosted by us and to all departmental seminar invitees:

“At Kent we have signed up to the BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme on Conferences and Seminar Series. We are happy to pay for your expenses and outlined above, but should you have access to your own institutional funding to cover any of these, we will use the money saved to make subsidise attendance of Early-Career Researchers and Postgraduates at our event. Please let us know if you would like to do this.”

d) Speakers are to be treated equally. Titles are to be given or not given uniformly to everyone at an event. This is to be included in the departmental good practice document.

e) We will provide the link to the campus Oaks day nursery on a boilerplate basis.

2 We will include the above policies in our handbook. We will publish this handbook on our website. We will publicise this handbook in UG and PG Handbooks, and at induction events.

3. Once a year at the summer Board of Studies we will review the gender balances of all conferences and seminar series for that year. Any steps needed will be minuted for action.

4. We have adopted all of the seminar chairing policy suggestions and will include these in a document available on our website.

Sexual Harassment

From September 2016:

1. We will provide a link to the University Equality and Diversity Policy on our departmental website, including the university’s definition of ‘sexual harassment’, whom to contact in possible cases of sexual harassment, and how to file a complaint

2. We will also provide a link to the University’s Harassment contacts:

<https://www.kent.ac.uk/hr-equalityanddiversity/support/harassment/>

3. All induction sessions, for staff and students, will include information about these policies, and we will invite a member of the EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) Unit.

4. Staff will read and discuss the advice given at www.oed.wisc.edu/sexualharassment/guide.html at the Summer Board of Studies.

5. We include all of this information in a document on sexual harassment and make this available at our website.

6. At the start of tenure of a managerial role, anyone will acknowledge that they have given their full consideration to the University’s procedures regarding sexual harassment.

7. We will have a policy statement on departmental culture, where it is made clear that dismissive or sexualizing comments and behaviour are not acceptable. This will be included in our document on sexual harassment and handbooks.

8. We will have a regular time, at the summer Board of Studies when the Equality officer reports, to reflect on the climate in the department in terms of what has been done, what has not been done and how we can improve.

9. Anyone approaching us with complaints will be treated in full confidentiality.

10. We will incorporate active bystander training links in our handbooks. We will liaise with the Student Union to provide such training.

Caregivers

We will minute at the Board of Studies that we adopt the following policies from September 2016:

1. Schedule important events, as far as possible, between 9 and 5 (the hours when childcare is more readily available). When an event has to be scheduled outside of these hours, give plenty of advance notice so that caregivers can make the necessary arrangements.
2. Be receptive, as far as possible, to requests from staff of any gender for part-time and flexible working. (This is largely, but not exclusively, an issue for caregivers—requests from non-caregivers should also be taken seriously.) Also be receptive, as far as possible, to requests for unpaid leave.
3. Try, as far as possible, to take caregiving commitments into account when scheduling teaching responsibilities.
4. Be aware that students, not just staff, may have caregiving responsibilities. Have a staff contact person for students who are caregivers. Take student requests for caregiving accommodations seriously.
5. Make sure that students and staff are made fully aware of any university services for caregivers. We will provide the link to the campus Oaks day nursery on a boilerplate basis.
6. Make sure that staff have an adequate understanding of what caregiving involves. (E.g. don't expect a PhD student to make lots of progress on her dissertation while on maternity leave.)
7. Make sure that parental leave funds provided by the university are actually used to cover for parental leave.
8. Those involved in decisions about the REF should be fully informed about current REF policies regarding output reduction for caregivers. Currently, there are specific policies related only to mothers; but other caregiving may be taken into account through making a specific case.

The Board of Studies will monitor adherence to these policies. We will include these policies in a document made available at our website.

Staff-student relationships

From September 2016:

1. We will advertise our policy on relationships between staff and student in a document linked from our website.
2. We will very strongly discourage relationship between teaching staff and undergraduates.

3. Our policy will include the requirement that such a relationship does occur, the member of staff in question should:

- inform a senior member of the department – where possible, the HoD – as soon as possible;
- withdraw from all small-group teaching involving that student (in the case of teaching assistants, this may involve swapping tutorial groups with another TA), unless practically impossible;
- withdraw from the assessment of that student, even if anonymous marking is used.
- withdraw from writing references and recommendations for the student in question.

4. We will include in our policy document that a student is equally entitled to report their relationship to another member of staff, and to request that the above steps be taken.

5. We will very strongly discourage relationships between academic members of teaching staff and graduate students, especially between a supervisor and a graduate supervisee.

6. Our policy will include the requirement that such a relationship does occur, the member of staff in question should:

- inform a senior member of staff – where possible, the HoD – as soon as possible;
- withdraw from supervising the student, writing letters of recommendation for them, and making any decisions (e.g. distribution of funding) where preferential treatment of the student could in principle occur;
- in the case of PGT students, withdraw from all small-group teaching involving that student, unless practically impossible;
- in the case of PGT students, withdraw from the assessment of that student, even if anonymous marking is used.

7. The Head of Department will seek disclosure as to such relationships' continuance.

8. We will adopt as our policy that in the case of a relationship between staff with a large disparity of seniority that disclosure of the relationship to Head of department is strongly encouraged. The Head of Department will then remove the senior partner from relevant decision-making. Anyone who perceives conflict of interest may approach the Head of Department to seek guidance.