

RSAA Equitable Hiring Strategy: Progress report

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The RSAA Equitable Hiring Strategy was presented to the School in November 2022. The Associate Director (IDEA) recently provided a refresher at the all-School meeting in November 2023, which was in advance of the seasonal academic hiring round. The strategy offers a set of recommendations to enhance diversity in the School via retention and hiring practices. The strategy includes metrics to monitor the adoption and impact of these initiatives and to measure their success. This is particularly important within RSAA which has the lowest women's representation in the College of Science among its staff.

To evaluate the implementation of the strategy and resulting outcomes all chairs from hiring panels in the past 12 month period participated in an anonymous survey undertaken by the Associate Director (IDEA). The purpose of the survey was to benchmark RSAA hiring practices against the strategy during the first year of its implementation. Only completed job rounds were taken into account for this purpose.

During the past 12 months, RSAA has advertised 23 positions across 16 distinct job advertisements.

- 4 Academic adverts (8 positions)
- 10 IT/technical adverts (13 positions)
- 2 professional/administration adverts (2 positions)

The survey reports data on the hiring of 20 individuals, and we regard it as indicative of how hiring practices have been implemented across the School. The full data for each survey question is available in the Appendix. In the following we provide a brief summary of key findings.

Training and Composition of Hiring Panels

RSAA has prioritized unconscious bias training over the past two years, as evidenced by the 2022 demographic survey conducted by the College. RSAA has a 63% staff completion rate for unconscious bias training, including an 83% completion rate for academics at level D/E who are primarily involved in academic hiring. Among survey respondents 50% of hiring chairs have completed the training within the last 2 years, and 70% have completed within the last 5 years. The equitable hiring strategy aims for a 90% completion rate, and this target is met among the academic cohort with 100% of respondents having undergone unconscious bias training within the last 5 years. During the past 12 months 90% of hiring panels achieved gender balance (40/40/20 women/men/any).

Mitigation Strategies and Rubrics for Each Position

Discussions on potential biases and mitigation strategies took place before shortlisting for 90% of positions, while specific rubrics for each position were developed in 80% of cases. This closely aligns with the Equitable Hiring Strategy's recommendation for 100% compliance.

Advertising and Invitations to Apply

All positions have been externally advertised, surpassing the 90% target set in the strategy. For half of the positions, women and/or people from under-represented groups were invited to apply, and job announcements were advertised through different channels and networks in order to reach under-represented groups. In 90% of cases, job announcements included statements about work-life balance, flexible work arrangements, parental and caregiver support policies, and/or campus childcare facilities. For 70% of jobs in the past 12 months announcements included language addressing reasonable adjustments to support disability needs, and 90% of advertisements underwent gender decoding. The Equitable Hiring Strategy does not set specific percentages for these statements, aiming instead to enhance diversity in the applicant pool. While we have not benchmarked against hiring rounds preceding the Equitable Hiring Strategy, we are able to provide data on the resulting gender distribution of applicants. In the aggregate data (covering academic, professional/IT, and professional/administration positions), there were 71 women applicants, 161 men, and 3 from other genders. A similar distribution is observed for academic positions (34 women, 73 men), aligning with the postdoc demographic survey conducted at RSAA in 2022 (30-70% women-men). There's a notable (but opposite) gender imbalance for professional/administration positions (5 men, 25 women) and for technical/IT roles (12 women, 82 men, 3 others).

Shortlisting and Offers

Separate shortlists for men and women were implemented for 40% of positions (rising to 50% when accounting for two positions where gender diversity lacked among the total applicant pool). A 50-50 men-women shortlist ratio was achieved for 30% of positions (rising to 40% when accounting for two positions where gender diversity lacked among the total applicant pool). Notably, all academic shortlists had a 50-50 ratio in cases where there was a more balanced gender distribution among applicants.

Offers were extended to 15 men and 5 women, with variations based on the type of position. Specifically, offers were made to 2 women and 5 men for academic roles. Among the professional/administration positions, 2 women received offers, while in Technical/IT roles, offers went to 1 woman and 10 men.

Additional notes and considerations

In 2023, RSAA appointed a female to a continuing level-E position. This hire was not included in the survey, as it originated from a previous year. Additionally, another women-only faculty recruitment has been recently advertised and will be appointed in early 2024.

In 2022, the RSAA AITC (Advanced Instrumentation and Technology Centre) conducted a significant women-only recruitment to directly address gender balance. This initiative included 10 positions which are not captured by the survey, but which significantly enhanced gender diversity among engineering and technical staff.

Building on the equitable hiring strategy and evidence-based actions in academic hires

Many of the recommendations contained in the Equitable hiring strategy have been implemented during the hiring occurred in the last 12 months. Among academic positions, the gender balance among applicants and offers is similar to the status-quo currently seen among the postdoc population within the School. Thus, despite its positives, the strategy is likely to lead to gender balance only on very long timescales. Indeed, this is the prediction of workforce modelling previously undertaken by Lisa Kewley, indicating that other actions are needed.

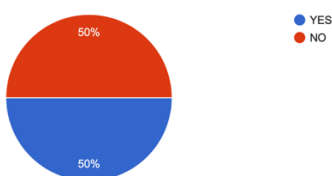
The previous ASTRO 3D director (Lisa Kewley) and the current RSAA director led a paper that was recently published in *Nature Astronomy* titled **The achievement of gender parity in a large astrophysics research centre**. The paper reports how the ASTRO 3D centre of excellence set and achieved the goal of having equal numbers of women and men at all levels of the Centre. ASTRO 3D has implemented the components of the RSAA equitable hiring strategy for recruitment since 2017. The larger scale of ASTRO 3D relative to RSAA indicates the aspects of the Equitable Hiring Strategy which will see success. While the components of the RSAA Equitable Hiring Strategy including balanced shortlists, unconscious bias training etc are beneficial, the paper demonstrates that gender parity will only be achieved following proactive promotion of gender parity in the scientific leadership. RSAA will actively pursue this outcome through identified female only continuing appointments in 2024 and beyond. As part of our upcoming 2024 School review the Associate Director IDEA will therefore lead an analysis of RSAA demographics at 5 and 10 years under different scenarios of identified hiring among the continuing staff.

Appendix

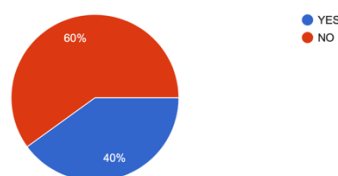
Here we report the full findings of the data for each of the questions in the survey circulated among hiring managers in November 2022. We received 10 responses covering 20 positions, meaning that certain distinct job advertisements have been aggregated within the same hiring panel. Despite this, we consider the data indicative of the practices employed for advertising and candidate selection in RSAA over the past 12 months.

The distribution of applicants was as follows: 160 men, 71 women, and 3 individuals from other genders applied. Offers were extended to 15 men and 5 women.

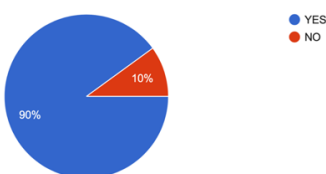
Has the chair of hiring panel completed Unconscious bias training in the last 2 years?
10 responses



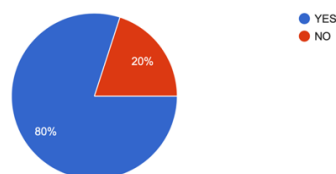
Has the chair of hiring panel completed Unconscious bias training in the last 5 years?
5 responses



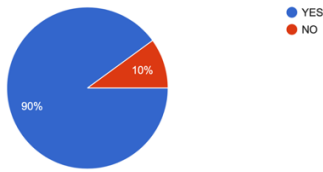
Did the chair discuss biases and potential mitigation strategies with the hiring panel before shortlisting?
10 responses



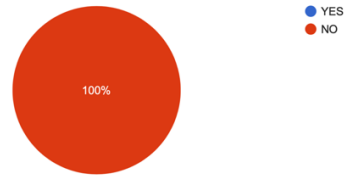
Did you have rubrics for each position before seeing the list of applicants?
10 responses



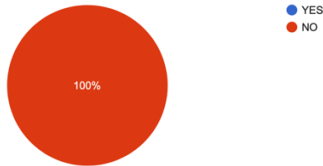
Was the recruitment panel gender balanced (40/40/20 women/man/any)?
10 responses



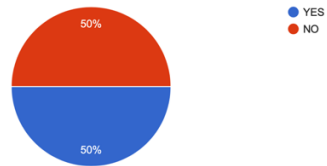
Was the position (or positions) advertised only internally?
10 responses



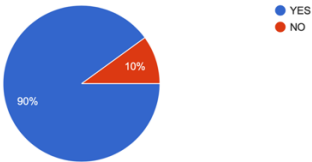
Was the position (or positions) for an identified women only hire?
10 responses



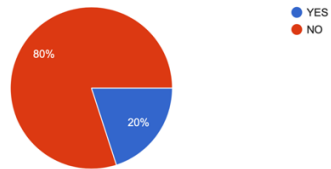
Did you personally invite some women or people from underrepresented groups to apply?
10 responses



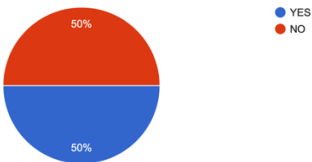
Was the job announcement run through a gender decoder?
10 responses



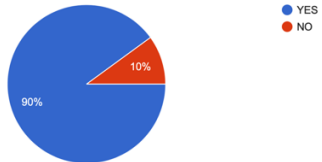
Were applicants encouraged to include a relative to opportunity statement in their application?
10 responses



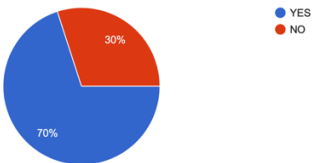
Was the job announcement advertised through different channels and networks with the intent to reach women and under-represented groups (e.g., AAS ...ng lists, targeted emails to individual, etc ...)?
10 responses



Did the job announcement include a statement on diversity and/or gender balance and/or under-represented groups?
10 responses



Did the job announcement use wording around reasonable adjustments to support disability needs?
10 responses



Did the job announcement include a statement about work-life balance and/or flexible work arrangements and/or parental and carers support policies and/or campus childcare facilities?
10 responses

