

# RSAA Equitable Hiring Strategy: Progress report

22<sup>nd</sup> February 2026

A/Prof Luca Casagrande (RSAA Associate Director, IDEA)  
Professor Stuart Wyithe (RSAA Director)

Following the RSAA Strategic Review conducted by an international panel in late 2024, the RSAA Equitable Hiring Strategy was updated in 2025 to introduce additional actions and success metrics that take broader dimensions of diversity into account, beyond gender. The updated strategy was communicated at the March All-School meeting and published on the RSAA IDEA webpage.

To evaluate the implementation of the strategy and its outcomes, all chairs of hiring panels for completed recruitment rounds in 2025 were invited to participate in an anonymous survey administered by the Associate Director (IDEA). The survey was designed to benchmark RSAA hiring practices against the Equitable Hiring Strategy and previous annual reports. While the 2025 update to the strategy explicitly broadens the scope of diversity considered, the survey questions were intentionally left unchanged, as they are sufficiently broad to capture these refinements and to allow direct comparison with results from previous years.

During 2025, RSAA advertised nine positions: 5 academic roles, 2 engineering/technical roles, and 2 positions in HR/management. Survey responses were received for 6 completed recruitment rounds (3 academic, 2 technical and 1 HR appointment). These low numbers warrant some caution in interpreting and comparing against previous years, yet responses remain informative in assessing alignment with the Equitable Hiring Strategy. Full results for each survey question are provided in the Appendix. Below we summarise the key findings.

## Training and Composition of Hiring Panels

RSAA has prioritised unconscious bias training over recent years, as noted in previous reports. Given the high completion rate among staff, no additional unconscious bias training sessions have been organised at RSAA since 2023. Nevertheless, 67% of hiring panel chairs reported having completed the training within the past two years, with 100% having completed it within the past five years. This meets the Equitable Hiring Strategy target of a 90% completion rate over five years. Over the coming years, it will be important to provide opportunities for both existing and new staff to refresh or undertake this training.

All surveyed hiring panels in 2025 achieved gender balance (40/40/20 women/men/any). This is comparable to 2023 (90%) and higher than in 2024 (50%). The lower figure in 2024 reflected the predominance of engineering and technical recruitment rounds, where achieving gender balance on panels was constrained by the available staff pool.

## Mitigation Strategies and Rubrics for Each Position

For all advertised positions, discussions on potential biases and mitigation strategies took place before shortlisting, in line with the Equitable Hiring Strategy's expectation of 100% compliance. Selection rubrics were used in 83% of cases, consistent with the previous year

and broadly aligned with the Strategy's goal of full compliance. The only position for which a rubric was not applied was the HR role; however, this position was advertised internally only.

#### Advertising and Invitations to Apply

With the exception of the HR role, all positions were externally advertised, exceeding the 90% target set out in the Equitable Hiring Strategy. Proactive invitations to apply from women and/or individuals from under-represented groups were reported for only two positions (33%: one academic and one technical), representing a decrease from previous year (50% in 2023 and 100% in 2024). Across all announcements, 67% were assessed using a gender decoder, and 100% included statements on work-life balance, flexible working arrangements, parental and caregiver support, and/or access to campus childcare facilities. These results are consistent with previous years, indicating that compliance with established best-practice requirements is now well embedded. However, more active measures, such as reaching out to under-represented groups, remain less consistently applied. This suggests a need for improved awareness and guidance for staff on appropriate channels and mechanisms to reach a more diverse applicant pool.

#### Shortlisting and Offers

Two of three academic and one of two technical recruitment rounds attracted a reasonably balanced pool of male and female applicants and resulted in gender-balanced shortlists. This was not possible for the other positions (one each in HR, academic and technical), highlighting the importance of reaching a diverse applicant pool at the advertising stage. Of the academic appointments, two offers were made to men and one to a woman, consistent with the existing gender ratio seen across academic positions at RSAA. For technical roles, both offers were made to women, representing a positive step towards improving gender diversity in this area. For the HR position, the applicant pool was skewed towards women, with approximately twice as many female candidates as male candidates, and the position was filled by a woman.

#### Building on the equitable hiring strategy and future directions

As in previous years, many of the recommendations outlined in the Equitable Hiring Strategy were implemented in the 2025 hiring processes. The School continues to benefit from the unconscious bias training undertaken in earlier years, as well as from ongoing reminders of the Equitable Hiring Strategy. Maintaining high levels of training uptake and regularly refreshing staff awareness of the Equitable Hiring Strategy will continue to be essential. However, more proactive engagement with individuals from under-represented groups remains critical and requires further strengthening.

In this context, a dedicated recruitment committee was established for the two Stromlo Fellowships advertised in late 2025 (with the hiring process to be concluded in the first quarter of 2026), with the specific purpose of identifying and approaching a broader and more diverse pool of strong candidates. Approximately 20 potential candidates were proactively contacted through this process. The impact of this initiative will be assessed in the 2026 report.

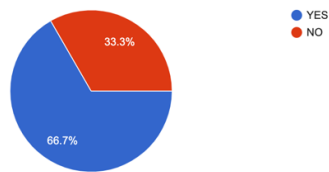
The number of positions advertised in 2025 (9 in total) is comparable to 2024 and substantially lower than in 2023 (23 positions). Nevertheless, the overall conclusions remain consistent with previous reports: gender balance among applicants and offers largely reflects the current

demographic profile of the School, underscoring the continued need for more affirmative actions to improve the representation of women in senior and leadership roles.

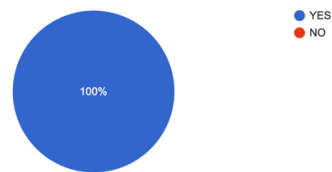
## Appendix

The survey questions are the same as those in previous reports to facilitate comparison. Below, we present the complete findings of the data.

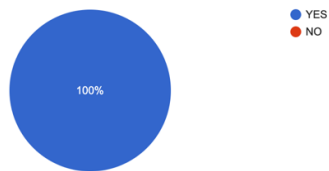
Has the chair of hiring panel completed Unconscious bias training in the last 2 years?  
6 responses



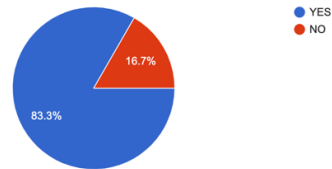
Has the chair of hiring panel completed Unconscious bias training in the last 5 years?  
2 responses



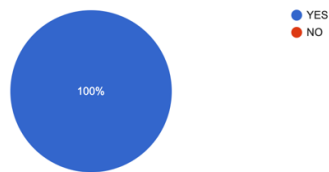
Did the chair discuss biases and potential mitigation strategies with the hiring panel before shortlisting?  
6 responses



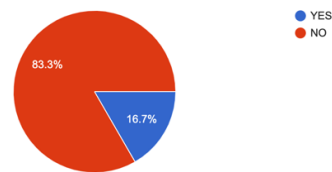
Did you have rubrics for each position before seeing the list of applicants?  
6 responses



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

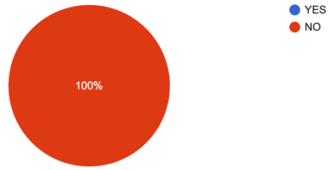


Was the position (or positions) advertised only internally?  
6 responses



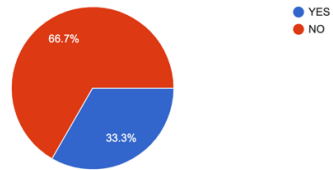
Was the position (or positions) for an identified women only hire?

6 responses



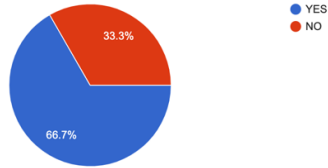
Did you personally invite some women or people from underrepresented groups to apply?

6 responses



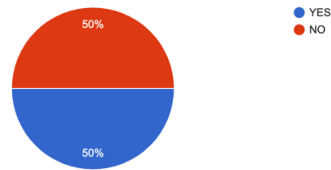
Was the job announcement run through a gender decoder?

6 responses



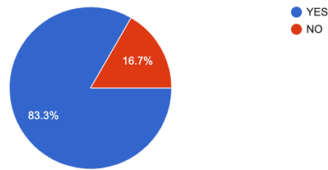
Were applicants encouraged to include a relative to opportunity statement in their application?

6 responses



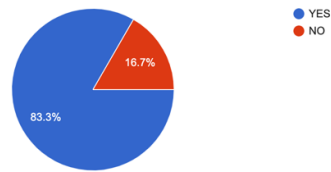
Was the job announcement advertised through different channels and networks with the intent to reach women and under-represented groups (e.g., AAS Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy, ASA mailing lists, targeted emails to individual, etc ...)?

6 responses



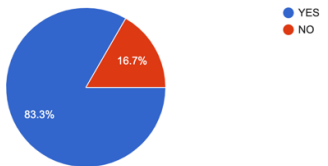
Did the job announcement include a statement on diversity and/or gender balance and/or under-represented groups?

6 responses



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

6 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?

6 responses

