

Workshop D – Gender equality plans from the perspective of junior physicists

QUESTIONS

The numbering scheme refers to the [Fields of Action of GENERA](#).

3. Flexibility, time and work life: work-life balance, care and family life

- c) **How do you evaluate the demands for working abroad on short-term contracts as a post-doc?**

If you chose for an academic career after your PhD, you are expected to spend at least a couple of years abroad as a postdoc, before applying for a permanent position. Usually, it is not easy to combine this with family life. Will this scare you away from an academic career? Would it help you if the postdoc period would be only one year abroad or could be cut up into short periods? Do you feel it is fair that a postdoc period abroad is almost mandatory for a getting a permanent position in the Netherlands? Do you consider an academic career outside the Netherlands? Is it even your preference? What would attract you to an academic career in the Netherlands?

- d) **What do you think of the culture of long working hours thought to be necessary to succeed in an academic career in physics?**

In a recent interview to the New York Times on long working hours and gender inequality, prof. Robin Ely of the Harvard Business School said that “24/7 work cultures lock gender inequality in place, because the work-family balance problem is recognized as primarily a woman’s problem. The very well intentioned answer is to give women benefits, but it actually derails women’s careers. The culture of overwork affects everybody.” Do you think such a long working hour culture exists in physics? Is this an aspect you have ever considered when deciding your next career steps?

4. Presence and visibility: recruitment, retention & attrition, advancement, visibility

- b) **How do you evaluate positive discrimination programmes like FOM/v or Rosalind Franklin Fellowships as compared to a level playing field of programmes like Marie Curie Fellowships or the VENI, VIDI of NWO?**

By definition FOM/v and the Rosalind Franklin Fellowships are discriminating since only women can apply for them. How would you evaluate them as a driver to enhance the gender balance in physics research? Do you consider them stigmatising the women that take part in them? Do you expect the best qualified women physicists to apply for these programmes? Would you apply for

them yourself? What is your opinion about a mentoring scheme for female PhD students and postdocs such as the one organised by FOM?

Usually, a physics research organisation or institute prefers a level playing field instead of positive discrimination of women physicists in the application for jobs or grants. Do you consider the recruitment and selection procedures at your institute providing a level playing field for men and women? Do you consider the grant selection procedures in Europe or in the Netherlands providing a level playing field? Can you give an example of why a selection procedure could be disadvantageous for women?

5. Gender inclusive/Gender-sensitive organisational culture: gender awareness and bias, non-discrimination, deconstructing excellence

c) What measures do you propose to create a culture of inclusiveness for women in your organisation or at your institute?

Which factors do you identify, from your experience, as responsible for the small fraction of female physicists? Would you assess the working environment of your institute as inclusive for women? Did you experience gender stereotyping at your institute or at your university, e.g. by teachers or by your supervisor?

There is some experience that female scientists perform better when they are in teams of predominantly women. Should we actively assemble such teams, so that we can form cores of strong female presence and excellence, which can serve as examples to inspire students?

Do you consider the working environment at your institute safe for women? Do you feel safe at your institute? Is there an appeal body for complaints about unpleasant behaviour? How is the appeal body structured and organised? Did you experience sexual harassment at your institute or by colleagues of your institute?

At various institutes the leadership is trained for gender/diversity awareness and unconscious bias. Would you appreciate if all physics and technical staff, including postdocs and PhD students, would be trained in the same way? Should it be made mandatory?