



BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme Conferences and seminar series

Introduction

Events where all speakers, or all keynote/invited speakers, are male can help to reinforce the stereotype of philosophy as male. We suggest that departments adopt the following policy with respect to organizing conferences and workshops. We also suggest that organisers attend to other dimensions of diversity, such as race, ethnicity and disability.

This policy is closely modeled on the advice on how to avoid a gendered conference at feministphilosophers.wordpress.com/gendered-conference-campaign.

For further information on the BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme, please see our general guidance notes on the BPA Good Practice website (bpa.ac.uk/resources/women-in-philosophy/good-practice).

Please note: Although these recommendations are directed at departments, conference organisers are urged to consider the suggestions below even if their departments have not adopted these policies.

Recommendations

1. Departments should adopt a policy making the following requirements on those organizing conferences or seminar series (including staff, postgraduates and undergraduates):
 - a. When drawing up a list of potential invited speakers, take reasonable steps to ensure that women are well represented; see the Good Practice website for more information and advice.
 - b. Where possible, consult the women on your list before fixing the date of the conference, to ensure that women speakers are not just invited but will

actually attend.

- c. Women may well be at lower-prestige institutions and/or in lower-ranked jobs. (E.g. in the UK, only 12% of professors in Russell Group philosophy departments are women.) They may therefore have less access to institutional funding. If you cannot fund all speakers, ask bigger-name speakers whether they can fund their own travel (they can always say no), freeing up resources for less well-known speakers.
 - d. Organisers should ensure that male and female speakers are treated equally on publicity material and the conference programme (e.g. to avoid the situation where a male speaker is described as ‘Senior Lecturer in philosophy at ...’ but a female speaker, also an SL, is described as ‘teaches philosophy at ...’; or where the male speaker’s title (Dr, Prof.) is included by the female speaker’s isn’t).
 - e. Investigate whether the provision of childcare facilities for the duration of the conference is possible. Many universities have crèches on or near campus, which may be able to offer a day rate for conference delegates. For larger conferences, if campus facilities are not available consider hosting the conference at a hotel that offers childcare and babysitting services. Consider setting aside funding to subsidise the use of childcare facilities by delegates; see the Good Practice website for more information and advice.
2. Departments should ensure that this policy is available to staff and students who are organizing events in a permanent format (e.g. intranet, handbooks) and that they are aware of it.
 3. Departments should, on a regular (e.g. annual) basis, monitor the gender balance at conferences and seminar series organized by colleagues within the department, and, if significant imbalance emerges, take steps to strengthen their policies.
 4. Departments should consider adopting an official departmental ‘seminar chairing’ policy. See the BPA Good Practice Website for some specific proposals you might consider implementing.