

# MSI Equitable Hiring Strategy 2022-2027

## OBJECTIVE

To ensure equitable hiring practices are undertaken at MSI over a five-year period to develop a workforce that embraces diversity and inclusion.

## BACKGROUND

In keeping with the aims of the [CoS Diverse and Equitable Hiring and Workforce Development](#) Guideline, MSI is committed to establishing itself as a highly inclusive workplace. We believe a diverse workforce will enrich personal and professional interactions; will contribute to scholarly excellence; will encourage students from historically underrepresented groups; and will support the University's overall equity strategy.

Mathematics has historically lacked the demographic breadth, and the evolution in social attitudes is not yet adequately reflected in the field at large or at MSI specifically. Recognising this, MSI has made a concerted effort over the last decade to improve the number of female academics in continuing and contract positions, as well as raising awareness of issues related to equity and inclusion. To measure the progress made, we note that in 2012 MSI had three female academics in continuing positions (two Early and Mid-Career, one Senior). At present, MSI has four women in senior academic positions, two continuing female Mid-Career academics, and three women on tenure-track or conversion pathways. In the same period that the net increase in the number of women was six, ten male-identifying academics have joined MSI. Several members of the school have also held joint appointments across several units of the University, with their MSI FTEs increasing during the period under review. The MSI Directorship has been held by both male and female members of department.

Data collected by the American Mathematical Society confirms that PhDs in the mathematical and statistical sciences are awarded to males at nearly three times the rate of women. In 2018, the most recent year for which complete data is publicly available, doctoral degrees in statistics and biostatistics make up roughly a third of the annual doctoral degrees counted, and in these fields 43% of the graduands were female. Due to historical administrative quirks, statistics is not housed within MSI, so the more indicative statistic for MSI is that of new non-statistics PhDs, less than 25% are awarded to women.

We are proud of the track record we've achieved over the last decade with regard to hiring excellent female mathematicians, particularly through the competitive search pathway. Nevertheless, we identify a number of challenges in the near and more-distant future:

- (1) MSI must maintain a positive trajectory with regard to gender diversity as part of a holistic effort to pursue qualitative and quantitative excellence.
  - a. Hiring quotas divorced from pipeline considerations threaten broad departmental support for hiring practices that support gender equity.

- b. Short term objectives of the ANU, partially induced by financial pressures, are at odds with the long-term objectives of the capability-based selection process endorsed by the College Guidelines.
- (2) MSI should not treat gender as the unique target of efforts to diversify its workforce; the legal framework for addressing other demographic categories is less clear, but this should not blind us to their relevance.
  - (3) MSI has historically had high employee satisfaction and strong social cohesion. Suggestions that these have frayed over the last few years should be a call to rebuild an exemplary academic and social culture for all members of the department. The absence of numerical parity among demographic cohorts should exert pressure to consider how our culture may fail to serve and support everyone equally, but addressing this latter point on its own is a worthwhile challenge to be embraced by MSI independent of any factors outside of our control.

## CURRENT WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS

MSI ran an anonymous demographic survey in August 2022 to identify underrepresentation across the workforce.

It was identified that MSI has a high percentage of staff born outside of Australia, and the associated cultural and linguistic diversity both suits ANU's highly international student body and supports close ties to the international research community. The School has proportionally more male-identifying academics and proportionally more female-identifying professional staff, with reported female-to-male gender ratios of approximately 1:4 and 7:3, respectively. MSI is underrepresented in terms of female academics, male professional staff, First Nations staff, and persons with disability. MSI exceeds the national average for employees identifying as LGBTQIA+, and 13% of the MSI staff are already members of the Ally network.

The full report on our workforce demographics is available [here](#).

## ACTIONS TO ADDRESS UNDERREPRESENTATION

Initiatives	Actions	Success Measures	Approvals Required
<b>Address the gender gap in academic positions in the mathematical sciences</b>	<b>A. Awareness and mitigation of bias</b> (i) Hiring Committees should receive direct communication on the issue of implicit bias, including references to relevant studies illustrating that this is an issue in academia. This material should be sent when the Committee is formed,	Ai. MSI should prepare a focused and relevant document discussing implicit bias in academic hiring. This should be shared with Committee	A. MSI Equity and Diversity Committee B. School Manager C. MSI Executive D. School Manager

	<p>before applications are available and workload considerations might realistically suppress attention.</p> <p>(ii) MSI has previously required unconscious bias training and it was not viewed as valuable. As offerings will change over time, staff should be made aware of further opportunities as they arise and supported to attend trainings if interested.</p> <p>(iii) Hiring committees should be asked to articulate priorities before commencing the shortlisting process.</p> <p>(iv) The shortlists should include a brief report explaining how bias was addressed and managed by the committee during this stage.</p> <p><b>B. Job advertisement process</b></p> <p>(i) Employ gender neutral language in advertisements, and where appropriate, explicitly state openness to flexible arrangements. Job ads should also explicitly note ANU parental leave policies and support for carers. Ads may also note MSI's existing and aspirational (gender) diversity.</p> <p>(ii) Ensure that ads are circulated in discipline-specific forums (e.g., MathJobs, WMSIG newsletter, European Women in Mathematics job board).</p> <p>(iii) In job ads for academic positions, consider listing current staff who may be contacted outside of the formal application process with any questions. Ideally one of these contacts will be female, but workload considerations may preclude this.</p> <p><b>C. Recruitment practices</b></p>	<p>members upon appointment.</p> <p>Committees should provide a document discussing their collective process and any bias-mitigation strategies along with the shortlist. Anonymised versions of this document should be made available to future Hiring Committees.</p> <p>Feedback should be solicited from staff who undergo training to determine which options are valuable to their colleagues.</p> <p>B. Run ads through a gender decoder. Report back to MSI on what changes are made. Every future ad should be written with this feedback in - hand. Ads should be reviewed for compliance with ii, iii, iv.</p> <p>C. Hold an MSI-wide meeting two weeks before job ads open and again two weeks before they close. Individuals and groups will</p>	<p>E. School Manager</p> <p>F. MSI Executive</p>
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	<p>(i) Before jobs are formally advertised, school-wide discussion should be held to discuss recruitment strategies and outline specific targets. Research groups should have clearly delineated and documented recruitment processes, and these should be reported to the Hiring Committee before shortlisting begins. This approach is consonant with a focus on excellence and all staff should be encouraged to participate.</p> <p>(ii) Encourage staff to use personal and professional networks to recruit, in addition to generic job boards (e.g., Facebook groups, listservs).</p> <p>(iii) The annual report or PDR targets for continuing and tenure-track staff should include an opportunity to describe contributions to the search and hiring process. Recruitment efforts require a significant time commitment, and staff should be recognised for this contribution.</p> <p>(v) Explore options to increase the size of the first-round Hiring Committee. More eyes on applications would lead to more-expert evaluation of the full candidate pool, while a narrower Hiring Committee could be convened later in the process. Furthermore, a broader panel will ease reliance on traditional prestige markers that may exclude candidates from target demographics. There is broad support for this among MSI staff, as there is currently tension between confidentiality rules and workload management for Hiring Committee members.</p>	<p>publicly share the recruitment efforts planned and undertaken, and all members of the department can discuss strategy for the remaining time.</p> <p>Shortlisted candidates are routinely asked why they are interested in ANU. This could be combined with a question about how they became aware of the job in order to evaluate the success of various strategies. This information should be included in the post-search report noted above.</p> <p>MSI should open discussions with ANU HR about how to adjust the current process while still remaining in compliance with the legal framework for hiring.</p> <p>A copy of the approved strategy should be directly provided to Hiring Committee members upon appointment.</p>	
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	<p>(iv) Clear guidance should be provided to all Hiring Committee members as to the strategic goals associated with each search.</p> <p><b>D. Gender targets</b></p> <p>(i) Whenever possible, multiple positions should be advertised simultaneously. This is anticipated to have several possible effects in relation to the gender balance of new hires; see also D(iii). MSI has a successful track record of advertising female-only identified positions at postdoctoral, tenure-track, and continuing levels, but also has research needs that may be difficult to meet with a constrained applicant pool. As a minimal threshold, three consecutive male hires in tenure-track or continuing positions will trigger an identified position in the next round. The school should engage in broad consultation about this strategy to ensure support.</p> <p>(ii) Encourage members of the Hiring Committee to read applications from women first.</p> <p>(iii) Reflecting the observed fact that many female mathematicians have partners who are academics or even mathematicians, successful recruitment of female mathematicians may require joint appointments. One strategy to address this is always advertising multiple positions (D(i)). Alternatively, MSI may consider supporting partner hires.</p> <p>(iv) In order to increase transparency with regard to achieving gender equity targets, MSI should examine fixed-term as well as tenure-track and continuing hires.</p>	<p>D. Continue to track hires by gender over time. Use identified positions as necessary to ensure new continuing and tenure-track hires are at least 25% female over any three-year period.</p> <p>Tracking should be extended to include grant-funded and short-term postdoctoral hires as well as established categories (e.g., MSI Fellows) where identified positions have already been employed to increase the number of female hires.</p> <p>E. Add ROPE question to the written job application; add a culture question to either the written job application or the interview questions.</p> <p>F. Whenever possible, fill academic positions by advertisement and in consultation with continuing and tenure-track academic staff.</p>	
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	<p><b>E. Application Process</b></p> <p>Applicants should be offered an opportunity to indicate how they might contribute to ANU's stated IDEA priorities. Diversity statements, per se, are a divisive issue in the mathematical community; we do not advocate a mandatory statement but instead propose that applications should include the following two prompts: (1) an opportunity for applicants to disclose ROPE considerations that may affect the evaluation of their application. This should be clearly identified as both optional and confidential; and (2) an open-ended question about contributions to departmental/university culture in line with the collegiality priorities of the promotions process. An applicant who indicates their potential contributions to an inclusive department may be positively evaluated on this front.</p> <p><b>F. Transparency in process</b></p> <p>Except in the case of strategic recruitment at the senior level and with a separate consultative process, tenure-track and continuing hiring should be by a competitive process and MSI should avoid executive appointments to continuing positions. This principle applies also to applications for conversion among academic staff hired on a fixed-term basis; whenever possible, these staff should apply for advertised positions rather than convert through the CoS process.</p>		
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<p><b>Increase diversity and inclusiveness across non-gender-based demographic cohorts</b></p>	<p><b>International</b></p> <p>A high percentage of MSI staff were born overseas, and we enjoy the associated cultural and linguistic diversity. We are committed to making our school a welcoming environment for students and staff from diverse culture and national backgrounds.</p> <p>(1) In order to attract international applicants, advertisements should include a description of the role of selection criteria in Australian hiring, as this may be unclear to applicants from a different system.</p> <p><b>B. Indigenous</b></p> <p>MSI is delighted to celebrate the recent ARC success of Associate Professor Rowena Ball and looks forward to the influx of talent and energy associated to her project.</p> <p>MSI will investigate hosting an Indigenous cadetship.</p> <p><b>C. Disability</b></p> <p>Job ads for both academic and professional positions should emphasise that candidates with disabilities are encouraged to apply and that appropriate accommodations will be sought at every stage of the application and employment process.</p> <p>Hiring managers should be offered the opportunity to attend well-regarded disability awareness training.</p> <p>Anonymous surveys indicate that a significant percentage of staff with disability are reluctant to</p>	<p>A. Add a description of the role of Selection Criteria to the job applications requesting them.</p> <p>B. Staff should be supported to undertake Indigenous Awareness training and report on the quality and benefit of their experience for the benefit of their colleagues.</p> <p>C. Hiring managers should consult with CoS Services staff on their experience working with DES providers and disability awareness training.</p> <p>Use advertisement template from CoS HR as a starting point for all MSI job ads, in order to emphasise concrete accommodations supporting candidates with disability.</p>	<p>A. School Manager</p> <p>B. School Manager</p> <p>C. Hiring Managers</p>
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	<p>disclose this publicly. It's possible that this indicates concern about culture and acceptance, and MSI should look for ways to promote inclusion and positive portrayals.</p> <p><b>D. LGBTQIA+</b></p> <p>Support staff and students to attend Ally training, which has received favourable feedback from multiple MSI staff in the past.</p> <p>MSI should encourage participation in <i>Wear it Purple Day</i>. For example, in 2022, this was advertised to all staff, with a particular emphasis on visibility for those in student-facing roles.</p> <p><b>E. Professional Staff recruitment</b></p> <p>(i) Highlight existing and aspirational gender diversity in all job categories (academic and professional).</p>		
<b>Support for tenure-track hires</b>	<p>MSI currently has three female staff being evaluated according to the newly announced CoS tenure-track/conversion process, and the decision to hire women into these roles should be accompanied by a robust support system. Currently the feedback offered to these staff through the PDR system is divorced from the confirmation mechanism, which is at odds with best practice and international norms. MSI should lead the CoS in supporting tenure-track staff throughout the process.</p>	<p>MSI should create an internal review system that offers 2- and 4-year reviews by a panel mixing internal and external evaluators. The reviews over time should feed-forward to a document that will be submitted to the CoS transition committee as part of the formal evaluation.</p>	MSI Executive



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**MEASURING PERFORMANCE**

MSI will provide an annual review each November at the CoS Executive Committee. This review will track the success of recruitment and retention actions outlined in this strategy. The review will report on the following points:

- workforce demographics, including changes over time;
- our progress in closing identified gaps;
- whether the School is on track to meet strategic goals,
- whether any attraction, recruitment, selection or retention methods will be amended to help the School close identified gaps.