



# Gender Equity and Inclusion Policy for Speakers, Panels, Session Chairs and Awards at ASI Events

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## Background

Gender equity is achieved when people are able to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities regardless of gender. To support the Australia and New Zealand Society for Immunology (ASI)'s commitment to gender equity, ASI seeks to ensure that there is an equal representation of men and women as speakers and session chairs at all ASI scientific meetings and symposia, etc.; and at meetings financially supported by ASI. This visible display of gender equity will contribute to an equal number of females and males being acknowledged for their achievements, provides opportunities for emerging research leaders and increases the diversity of role models for meeting attendees. It is anticipated that this practice will be adopted more broadly as one mechanism to address gender imbalance and differential visibility in the medical research sector.

In addition to the ASI annual national scientific meeting, ASI state branches hold annual meetings and a number of special symposia and affiliated meetings each year for local members. ASI has made great efforts, particularly in recent years, to achieve gender equity at all meetings. This policy seeks to formalise this commitment and support organising committee members to ensure that there is an equal representation of men and women as committee members, speakers and session chairs at all future ASI and ASI-sponsored events.

Gender equity at ASI will have the legacy effect of ensuring that both females and males have equal opportunity of being acknowledged for their achievements, which will promote emerging research leaders and an increased diversity of role models in the Australian scientific research community. Further, to support diversity and inclusiveness, this committee will seek to ensure that students, early career researchers and (senior) academics from all backgrounds are encouraged to participate in all aspects of the conference regardless of gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, geographical location, disability, religion or age.

The underlying reasons for the current predominance of male speakers and chairs are:

- Men continue to occupy the most senior roles and therefore enjoy greater visibility which can lead to **i)** more men being recruited onto Selection/Organising Committees and **ii)** more men being selected for speaking or chairing opportunities by Selection/Organising Committees.



- Even if Selection/Organising Committees display gender equity, members of Selection/Organising Committees will have implicit or “unconscious” biases, which can result in women tending to be nominated less frequently than equally qualified male colleagues.
- Women tend to self-nominate less frequently than equally qualified men, often as a result of decreased access to informal mentoring and encouragement.
- Women are unable to take up invitations more frequently than men. To achieve equal representation at the final event, more women need to be invited to speak, chair or appear on panels.

The approaches described below address each of these key factors and will ensure that the ASI is proactive in ensuring gender equity at annual meetings and events.

### **Objectives:**

This policy seeks to achieve equal representation of women and men at all ASI conferences, meetings and events; and at meetings and events supported by ASI; across the following categories:

- Invited international speakers
- Invited national speakers
- Speakers selected from abstracts
- Panel members
- Session chairs

### **Scope and Exclusions:**

- This policy applies to all ASI events, including conferences, meetings and workshops, that are supported by ASI, either financially or through in-kind contributions (including advertising).
- This policy applies to all ASI awards, including travel awards, that are supported by ASI, either financially or through in-kind contributions (including advertising).
- This policy excludes affirmative action initiatives that aim to promote diversity, such as the ‘Women Initiative’ events, and awards that specifically seek to promote members that are women.

### **Procedure:**

#### **1. Communication of Policy to the ASI Community**

- The ASI Gender Equity and Inclusion Policy will be widely communicated within the society.
- The Policy will be published in a prominent place on the ASI webpage as a downloadable file.
- The Policy will be published on the webpages for the annual meeting as a downloadable file.
- The Policy will be published on the webpages for local meetings as a downloadable file.

#### **2. Recruiting Selection/Organising Committees:**

- One of the most effective strategies for ensuring gender equity and diversity in key roles at an event is to recruit members to Selection/Organising Committees that reflect gender equity and diversity.
- Accordingly, we expect that Organising Committees will reflect gender equity and diversity.



## 2. Communication of Policy to Organising Committees:

- When planning begins for a new annual meeting, a new local meeting or and ASI event, the organising committee will be made aware of the ASI Gender Equity and Inclusion Policy:
  - For annual meetings and ASI-wide events, the Women's Initiative (WI) Co-ordinator will make contact with the Meeting Co-ordinator, and both parties should maintain communication.
  - For local meetings and other local events, the WI Co-ordinator will make contact with the local Branch Councillor, and both parties should maintain communication.
- In addition to gender equity, we strongly encourage Organising Committees to create broadly inclusive meetings (universal access, making it an explicitly safe space for LGBTQIA+, childcare) and suggest the "Inclusive Meeting Guidelines" from 500 Women Scientists as a helpful starting point for this:
  - <https://500womenscientists.org/inclusive-scientific-meetings>

## 3. When Requesting Self-Nominations:

- When calling for self-nominations, the organising committee will include a statement to the following effect:
  - *'We note that women tend to self-nominate less frequently than men, and every effort will be made to ensure gender equity.'*
- This should be noted should be discussed and noted in the minutes at organising committee meetings.

## 4. When Requesting Nominations for Speakers, Panellists, Chairs or Awards:

- When calling for nominations for honorary roles, such as invited speakers, panelists and session chairs, or for awards, the organising committee will include a statement to the following effect:
  - *'We strongly encourage you to consider gender equity in your nominations as, in keeping with ASI's policy, we are committed to selecting an equal number of nominees that are women and men as speakers, panelists and chairs and giving equal access to awards.'*
- This statement should be included in any nomination forms.
- This statement should be included in any in communications to the ASI community.
- The inclusion of this statement should be discussed and noted in the minutes at organising committee meetings.

## 5. Selection of Nominated Speakers:

- Prior to inviting speakers, the list of potential invitees will be provided to the WI Co-ordinator, with the WI Co-ordinator immediately advising at this point on the gender balance.
- The organising committee should aim to initially invite equal numbers of women and men as speakers at both national and international levels. Please note that the WI Co-ordinator can assist and there are a number of gender equity focused and diversity focused databases available:



- <https://www.immunology.org.au/asi-programs-and-opportunities/women-speakers-database/>
- <https://500womenscientists.org/request-a-scientist>
- The committee is advised to have additional potential women speakers, in the event that the women from the initial round of invitations are unable to accept.
- In the event that a higher proportion of men accept the initial round of invitations as compared to women, a second round of invitations should take place with a proactive effort to target women speakers and to ensure gender equity in the final speaker list and session chairs.
- In the event that the organising committee continues to find that there are barriers to achieving gender equity, the WI Co-ordinator should be asked to advise.

#### 6. Selection of Speakers from Abstracts and Session Chairs:

- All efforts will be made to ensure selection of abstracts that result in oral presentations at the national annual meeting and local meetings have equal representation of women and men.
- All efforts will be made to ensure that session chairs at the national annual meeting and local meetings have equal representation of women and men.
- Of note, all efforts will also be made to promote students and early career researchers (ECRs) in abstract selection, session chairing and other networking opportunities with more senior delegates, for example:
  - A student and/or an ECR should be invited to speak in each workshop or conference session
  - Social events should be arranged with students/ECRs and senior invited speakers to ensure parity of access to networking opportunities.

#### 7. Checks When Finalising Speakers, Panelists and Session Chairs:

- Final lists of speakers, panelists and chairs should be circulated to all members of the organising committee and the WI Co-ordinator prior to final approval and publication.
- These lists should be endorsed at a committee meeting, with final approval made by the local organising committee chair(s).
- Where gender equity balance has not been achieved, the organising committee should briefly document the steps that have been taken, note barriers encountered and report to the WI Co-ordinator and the ASI Council (**see template in Appendix 1**).

#### 8. Event Evaluation and Monitoring:

- If formal evaluation of an event is undertaken, there should be a question included regarding this Policy, such as:
  - *'Australia and New Zealand Society for Immunology 20yy is committed to ensuring diversity, such as gender equity, among speakers and chairs:*
    - *Was this commitment adequately demonstrated at this event?*
    - *Did it have an impact on you as a participant?*
- For annual national and local meetings, the organising committee should write a brief report (**see template in Appendix 1**) to the WI Co-ordinator. This should:



- Include any questionnaire results, if they were collected as above, on the participant perception of commitment to gender equity and impact of the Gender Equity and Inclusion Policy.
- Include statistics on the proportions of women and men as:
  - Invited international speakers
  - Invited national speakers
  - Speakers selected from abstracts
  - Panel members
  - Session chairs
- This report is to be forwarded to ASI Council and WI Co-ordinator.
- This report will be relayed to the organising committee for the same event the following year by the WI Co-ordinator
- Organising Committees will prioritise gender targets if they were not achieved in the previous years
- The ASI Executive Council and WI Co-ordinator will monitor the outcomes achieved and report annually to the ASI Council

This document will be reviewed and updated every 3 years.





## Appendix 1: Gender Equity and Inclusion Report Template

\* Indicates required field. Please send to [kylie.quinn@rmit.edu.au](mailto:kylie.quinn@rmit.edu.au) when complete

**\*Name of Event:**

**\*Host of Event:**

**\*Date of Event:**

**Number of Attendees:**

**\*Purpose of the Event:**

**\*What steps were taken to ensure gender equity and were barriers to gender equity encountered?:**

**\*Were attendees surveyed regarding ASI's commitment to gender equity and its impact? If so, how did attendees respond?:**

**\*Statistics on Gender Equity:**

Role	Number of Women	Number of Men	% of Women
International invited speakers			
National invited speakers			
Speakers selected from abstracts			
Panel members			
Session chairs			