

# EMBL Australia Gender Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

**2023-2028**



EMBL  
Australia



# Vision



## A gender-diverse and fully inclusive EMBL Australia Partner Laboratory Network (PLN).

The objective of the EMBL Australia Gender Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) Action Plan is to achieve equal representation and recognition of group leaders in the recruitment and review processes, irrespective of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, disability or cultural background.

# Aim



Our aim is to recruit, retain and train aspirational scientific talent through a thorough process underpinned by our GEDI Action Plan and incorporated in the EMBL Australia recruitment and review guidelines, which support our partners in engaging fair and equitable processes and procedures at each stage of the recruitment and review process.

The Action Plan provides a framework for the EMBL Australia COO and Scientific Head to proactively support and work with host institutions to achieve equity and diversity within the network.

The GEDI Action Plan is designed to complement host institution policies and procedures. Where a host institution has policies relevant to gender equity, diversity and inclusion, the host institution co-chair is expected to uphold workplace requirements.

## Attract

- 1.1 Support and encourage PLN to run targeted women-only recruitment campaigns
- 1.2 Prominent and strong diversity statement in recruitment materials
- 1.3 Gender equity in recruitment panels and in the candidate interview list
- 1.4 Interview guides based on clear and unbiased selection criteria
- 1.5 Gender-inclusive language in advertising
- 1.6 Advertise flexible work arrangements
- 1.7 Active talent identification and targeting
- 1.8 Adopt flexibility in the recruitment week schedule
- 1.9 Encourage and support PLN to use coaching / mentors to support applicants during the recruitment process
- 1.10 Report on gender participation throughout recruitment process

## Evaluate

- 2.1 Career trajectory before and after leave to be considered
- 2.2 Review and acknowledge periods of family-caring responsibilities leave
- 2.3 Clear success criteria established and followed for review
- 2.4 Review assessment ratings established and followed
- 2.5 Adopt flexibility in the review schedule (i.e. held outside school holidays)

## Retain & Support

- 3.1 EMBL Australia will report on GEDI initiatives annually
- 3.2 Mentorship and buddy program
- 3.3 Financial assistance for childcare while travelling
- 3.4 Develop a workforce-planning guide to assist conversations prior to taking carer's leave
- 3.5 Adoption of family-friendly meeting hours and conference dates

## Key Actions and Rationale

### 1.1 Support and encourage PLN to run targeted women-only recruitment campaigns.

EMBL Australia COO will work to support the host organisation in meeting local legislative requirements to run women-only recruitment.

### 1.2 Prominent and strong diversity statement in group leader recruitment advertisements.

For example: "EMBL Australia and <host institution> are committed to striving for a gender-diverse and fully inclusive Partner Laboratory Network. We aim to recruit, retain and train aspirational scientific talent through thorough, fair and equitable policies and procedures.

Should you choose to disclose your gender at any stage of the recruitment process, this information will be used to report and improve policies and procedures in our aim to build a gender-diverse workforce."

Feature the GEDI Action Plan on the EMBL Australia website, link to it in the advertisement and within the recruitment documentation.

### 1.3 Gender equity in recruitment panels and candidate interview list.

To ensure recruitment is conducted in a fair, inclusive and objective manner, the recruitment panel assessing candidates at each stage of the recruitment process and the candidate interview list should have no more than 60 percent representation of any single gender.

Where a panel and interview list has more than 60 percent representation from a single gender, the chair should implement one or more of the following strategies:

- appoint additional members/candidates of the under-represented gender;
- in the case of an unbalanced interview list, seek appropriately qualified candidates of the under-represented gender from elsewhere within the host institution and/or from relevant professional groups outside the host institution, and/or assess whether the role needs to be re-advertised or a targeted-recruitment approach taken;
- in the case of an unbalanced panel, appoint a co-chair from the under-represented gender.

## Goal/Outcome



Increase the number of women-only applications for EMBL Australia leadership positions.



Ensure everyone who interacts with the PLN is aware of its commitment to gender diversity and inclusivity.

Visibly promote EMBL Australia and the host organisation as an inclusive workplace.

Promote transparency and accountability.



Gender balance will encourage more robust decision-making.

Ensure interview processes, including composition of the interview panel and interview candidate list, achieves gender equity.

## Key Actions and Rationale

### 1.4 Interview guides based on clear and unbiased selection criteria communicated to panel members.

Selection criteria to focus on:

#### Performance

- Quality of research;
- International standing, innovation and impact;
- Significance of proposed research and potential for success;
- Training, mentoring and the development of early to mid-career scientists;
- Contribution to the wider scientific community (locally and overseas); and
- Additionally, where relevant, development of new technologies, methods and approaches.

#### Leadership

- International standing, innovation, impact and vision; and
- Synergy and interdisciplinary interactions/research environment.

### 1.5 Gender-inclusive language used in advertisements and position descriptions.

To increase the diversity of candidates, gendered language should be avoided in position descriptions and advertisements. Advertisements should be reviewed by at least two PLN representatives to identify any potential bias in language used.

To reduce the occurrence of gendered language, advertisements may be checked using this website:  
<http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/>

### 1.6 Advertise flexible working arrangements.

Emphasise the flexible workplace environment and benefits in the advertisement, recruitment material and host organisation diversity and inclusion statement. Flexibility options can then be negotiated with the successful candidate to create appropriate solutions for the group leader and host institution.

## Goal/Outcome

Reduce occurrence of inherent and affinity bias in recruitment.

Ensure common understanding of the selection criteria by the panel members.



Encourage applications from a broader and more diverse candidate pool.



Encourage applications from a broader and more diverse candidate pool.

## Key Actions and Rationale

### 1.7 Active talent identification and targeting.

All PLN stakeholders are to be encouraged to take an active role in identifying, approaching and encouraging promising early and mid-career researchers to apply for group leader positions.

Encouraging applicants may include discussing research achievements and longer-term ambitions. This may assist potential applicants to understand the context of the selection criteria and better assess their readiness for the position. Where an applicant shows promise, but is not ready to apply, an opportunity exists to keep in contact with the researcher over time for future opportunities across the network. Any approaches made should ensure that candidates understand that there is no guarantee of success.

### 1.8 Adopt flexibility in the recruitment week schedule.

Flexibility can include a hybrid (both virtual and in-person) recruitment format, support around travel arrangements in consideration of applicants' caring and family responsibilities, interviews being scheduled outside school holiday periods for both applicants and panel members.

### 1.9 Encourage and support PLN to use coaching/mentors to support applicants during the recruitment process.

Mentors may include EMBL Australia group leaders or alumni.

### 1.10 Report on gender participation throughout recruitment process.

Where possible and appropriate, candidates should be given the option to disclose gender in their application. This option will be accompanied by a clear statement regarding EMBL Australia and the host institution's commitment to gender equity. This information is to be used for reporting on gender equity purposes only.

## Goal/Outcome



Increase the gender diversity of candidates through active approaches and encouragement.



Increase equity through flexible recruitment approaches.



Support applicants during the recruitment week.



Understand gender balance throughout the recruitment process.

Promote transparency and accountability.

## Key Actions and Rationale

### 2.1 Career trajectory before and after extended leave to be taken into consideration during recruitments and reviews.

The host institution chair should outline the group leader's career trajectory before and after periods of extended leave to the review panel.

A group leader's achievements can only be comprehensively understood when considered in the context of the opportunity available. This new action would mean all panel discussions are considered in the context of the opportunity outlined at the outset. This consideration should also be given where a group leader has reduced their working hours to part-time (reduced FTE) for a period of time. The dossier should be considered in the context of trajectory before and after leave.

### 2.2 Review anniversary to acknowledge periods of leave for caring responsibilities.

Flexibility can include a hybrid (both virtual and in-person) recruitment format, support around travel arrangements in consideration of applicants' caring and family responsibilities, interviews being scheduled outside school holiday periods for both applicants and panel members.

### 2.3 Articulate clear success criteria for group leader reviews.

The PLN Recruitment Policy and Procedure will outline clear success criteria that are clearly communicated and acknowledged by the panel members throughout the review process.

When opening the review panel meeting, the host institution co-chair will discuss the review criteria with the panel members.

### 2.4 Review assessment ratings to be adopted in the PLN Review Policy and Procedure.

Panel members are to be provided with a review assessment guide, which details ratings reflected in the review procedure. The panel is also strongly encouraged to provide a brief explanation of their rating using an assessment template.

## Goal/Outcome



Review is conducted considering opportunities available to the group leader through their first five years in consideration of periods of absence for caring responsibilities and fractional employment.



The term of employment and review anniversary will acknowledge any periods of absence for caring responsibilities and fractional employment.



Clear success criteria will reduce the incidence of unconscious bias.



Ensure common understanding of review criteria and rating system for group leaders.

## Key Actions and Rationale

### 2.5 Where possible, PLN meetings and conferences are to take school holidays and carer's responsibilities into account.

For example, recruitment weeks shall not be scheduled during school holidays so that carers can participate.

Members of the PLN with caring responsibilities are often restricted in their daily hours of work, for example by school or childcare drop-off and pick-up times. Consequently, these staff may miss out on important courses, meetings and events that fall outside of these hours.

## Goal/Outcome



Increase participation in EMBL Australia programs of those with family and caring responsibilities.

## Key Actions and Rationale

### 3.1 Report on gender equity initiatives at least once per year.

To improve communication, EMBL Australia will communicate annually to all PLN members on current initiatives underway, and on progress toward gender-equity outcomes.

Reporting may include statistics on gender balance at all levels (including the EMBL Australia Council, group leader cohort and panel members).

### 3.2 Mentorship & 'buddy' program.

Mentoring provides opportunities to share knowledge between group leaders and the host institutions. Host institution supervisors should encourage and assist in arranging mentoring opportunities to their group leaders.

EMBL Australia should arrange a mentor from within the group leader network for all new group leaders. This should also be offered to any group leaders returning from periods of extended leave.

### 3.3 Financial assistance for childcare while travelling.

Where possible, the host institution should enable the allocation of group leader packages to provide financial assistance for childcare required for significant work-related travel.

### 3.4 Develop a workforce planning guide to assist conversations prior to taking primary carer's leave.

Developing a workforce planning outline to guide discussions between the host institution and group leaders prior to taking primary carer's leave should assist transitions away from, and returning to, work. This may include the transfer of management duties and department responsibilities.

## Goal/Outcome

▶ Clear communication of outcomes, obstacles and plans to improve gender equity.

▶ Increase uptake of mentorship programs to ensure shared learning and development.

▶ Increase flexibility and opportunity for group leaders to travel and participate in professional activities, for instance, conferences, meetings, training opportunities.

▶ Improve outcomes before, during and after primary carer's leave.



## Key Actions and Rationale

### 3.5 Adoption of family-friendly meeting hours and conference dates.

Developing and circulating guidelines on timing and location of meetings, courses and events to ensure consideration of work arrangements for carers.

Members of the PLN with caring responsibilities are often restricted in their daily hours of work, for example by school or childcare drop-off and pick-up times. Consequently, these staff may miss out on important courses, meetings and events that fall outside of these hours.

EMBL Australia will seek feedback on how to best accommodate this, while balancing the need for meetings with international EMBL members and candidates.

## Goal/Outcome

Increase participation in EMBL Australia programs of those with family and caring responsibilities.

