

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE NOTE FOR SECTIONS

Suggested Actions for Section Chairs and Standing Committees to increase Fellowship Diversity

1. This short document is suggestive not prescriptive. It is expected that Sections will adapt the suggested actions to their own needs and circumstances. It is assumed that research excellence is always the fundamental criterion by which possible candidates for the Fellowship (and the Corresponding Fellowship) are judged. Sections are advised to be proactive and unrelenting, if they are not already, in trying to increase the diversity of the individuals that are balloted for the Fellowship (and Corresponding Fellowship).
2. Section Chairs and SSC members should see it as their responsibility to take the initiative in identifying suitably qualified (that is, intellectually outstanding) individuals from under-represented groups. Although, in principle, 'under-represented groups' include all 'legally protected categories' as defined by equality legislation, in practice most Sections will probably need to focus primarily on trying to increase diversity in terms of gender, age, geographical location (non-Golden Triangle institutions) and ethnicity.

Suggested Actions

3. Sections should be as systematic as possible in the management of long-lists. This could include:
 - Restricting the number of long-list names to perhaps no more than 20-25 individuals (ideally culling names if others are added) who are genuinely likely to be elected to the Fellowship within the next 5 years or so;
 - Insisting that a written case be made for inclusion on the long-list, in which the individual's key intellectual contribution is clearly and compellingly stated.
4. Section Chairs should actively solicit views from Fellows on possible women candidates for the Section shortlist. A similar approach could be adopted, where relevant, for other underrepresented groups. When views are solicited, those suggesting names should be reminded that any written case needs to be very strong: the proposers need to put a lot of effort into the proposals.
5. Every 2-3 years, SSCs could assemble a list of all Professors and Readers in the profession in the UK (remembering that the Fellowship is also open to independent scholars). If helpful, this could be cross-referenced to departmental performance in the previous REF, with particular emphasis on identifying potentially strong candidates who might otherwise be overlooked.
6. Where relevant, citations data (over the previous 5-10 years) on individuals in the profession could be obtained. There may be individuals who are very widely cited but who are otherwise not on the Section's radar. SSCs could also check the publications of the top publishers and journals in the field, again to identify individuals who might not otherwise be considered by the Section. In any such case, the SSC would need to be proactive in persuading a Section member to write a strong supporting case.
7. SSCs could institute a regular agenda item to consider whether there are any 'new' or 'non-mainstream' areas of the discipline(s) where the Section is underrepresented and where there are excellent scholars who might merit short-listing for the Fellowship. Again, if there are, SSC would need to take the initiative in soliciting written recommendations from existing Fellows.