

Guidelines for ESEB symposium organisers

We wish to encourage potential symposium organisers to take diversity (of gender, nationality and career stage) into account when proposing speakers for their symposium.

As ESEB members will be aware, research shows clearly that (gender) bias in academia is usually not the result of intentional acts of exclusion, but rather the effect of subtler mechanisms like implicit bias. Substantial concern has been raised about gender bias among invited speakers for symposia at previous ESEB (and other) meetings. The organisers of the ESEB congress acknowledge this concern and wish to ensure that symposia selected for the congress draw participants (both invited and those selected for inclusion when abstracts are reviewed) as broadly as possible to reflect the full research strengths of the fields represented.

Balance in terms of gender, nationality and career stage will be included as one criterion used by the scientific committee when selecting symposia.

TIPS for ensuring sufficiently diverse line up of speakers

1. Make a list of qualified women and minority candidates, before deciding who to invite for your symposium. Databases such as DiversifyEEB (<https://diversifyeeb.wordpress.com/list-2/>) are useful resources. Make sure you have more women and minority candidates on your list than you need for the symposium: analysis of previous conferences revealed that invited women are twice as likely to decline invitations than invited men.
2. If invitations are declined, be aware that ESEB offers "Congress Attendance Aid Grants" to increase the number of female speakers and poster presenters. <http://eseb.org/prizes-funding/equal-opportunities-initiative/congress-attendance-aid-grant/>.
3. If it is difficult to attain equal gender representation due to low acceptance rates, consider inviting promising early career scientists.
4. When deciding between equally qualified candidates, preference should be given to the female or minority candidate.
5. Consider a blind reviewing process of submissions for contributed talks, at least for the initial rounds, to create a ranking of the abstracts. However, before making final decisions, it may be helpful to know more about the participants to ensure diversity of gender, level of seniority, country of origin etc.
6. Read this paper with 10 simple rules for gender balance <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4238945/>
7. Read this paper on creating a symposium environment that makes everyone feel comfortable to ask questions <https://doi-org/10.1371/journal.pone.0212146> and this associated info-graphic by the authors <https://uploads.strikinglycdn.com/files/0b0103cd-e0e6-4819-94cb-61752735899a/promoting%20diversity%20in%20question%20asking.pdf>
8. Contact the EO officer if you need help with reaching gender balance and diversity.