

# Best Practice Guide for Minimising Gender Bias in HPC Training



The INTERTWinE team is committed to achieving equality of access to HPC for everyone, irrespective of their gender. High-quality training is a key element in making HPC accessible: providing new career opportunities; enhancing personal experiences; and enabling employers to get the best from their staff. However, poor training—particularly training that is seen as exclusive or restrictive—has a negative impact on everyone who is involved.

This short Best Practice Guide is an *aide-mémoire*, to remind you of measures that should be taken to improve the accessibility of INTERTWinE training and to minimise the impact of real and perceived gender bias.

The guide considers the whole training process: the development of material; the advertising of events; the registration process; the delivery of a course; and follow-up and gathering feedback. It is intended to be short enough to be reviewed before delivering a training course or while preparing training material.

The guide is derived from '[Improving accessibility to HPC training](#)', published by Diversity in HPC<sup>1</sup>, which should be consulted for further information.

Trainers should review this guide frequently to remind themselves of crucial best-practice steps and to ensure INTERTWinE training courses are accessible, inclusive and productive.

## Material preparation

- Underrepresented groups and minorities are more easily deterred by jargon and complex language: avoid unnecessary technical terms and acronyms, and focus on conveying key concepts in simple terms.
- Use inclusive examples and avoid case studies or imagery that reinforce gender (and other) stereotypes. For example, avoid using examples that always involve images of one gender or another, and avoid referring to machines as 'he' or 'she'.
- Ask colleagues to review your slides and handouts, specifically looking at the inclusivity and diversity of the material.
- Consider and address feedback received during previous presentations of the material.

## Advertising

- As with course material, make sure advertising text focuses on concepts rather than jargon, and that it provides a clear and complete description of an event.
- Underrepresented groups will be more likely to register if advertising demonstrates diversity: aim to use material and imagery that emphasises diversity.
- Aim to time courses to maximise accessibility for participants. For example: if you expect the majority of participants to be local, set start and finish times to allow for school runs; if you expect the majority of participants to be non-local, aim to contain the course in a small number of days, to reduce participants' time away from family commitments.

## Registration

- People can be deterred from registering by questions that highlight any minority or underrepresented characteristics they have. Delay asking for sensitive information

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hpc-diversity.ac.uk/>

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until the end of the registration process. Also, aim to decouple the gathering of sensitive information from other elements of the registration process.

- Explain why personal information, such as gender, is being collected and make it clear that such information is not a consideration in the acceptance of registrations.
- People who associate with minority or underrepresented groups are likely to be deterred by significant attendance prerequisites and are likely to rate their expertise lower. Minimise the number of prerequisites for a training course and eliminate any that are unnecessary. Also, do not ask registrants to self-report their level of experience or competence.
- People from minority or underrepresented groups can be reluctant to make requests or raise requirements (e.g. around minor timing changes, dietary requirements, or accessibility facilities). Provide registrants with good opportunity to raise requirements well in advance of the actual course.
- Engage registrants in a dialogue, to improve the level of attendance and give people opportunities to raise requests or requirements in advance of the event.
- Provide registrants with a detailed timetable for the course, along with copies of slides and materials in advance.

### Course delivery

- Aim to have gender diversity in trainers.
- Include time for breaks and networking opportunities.
- Provide multiple ways for delegates to raise questions, to avoid the perception that a participant is drawing attention to themselves by asking a question – for example, allowing people to approach you in the breaks, or to raise questions using chat clients such as Skype.
- It may not be obvious that someone feels in the minority: aim to make everyone feel included.
- Aim to avoid making judgements based on a participant's behaviour – e.g. if a participant arrives late or does not look to be fully involved in an activity.

### Course feedback

- Explain how feedback will be used and highlight INTERTWinE's data-management policy.
- If sensitive information is collected, put this at the end of the form and aim to decouple it from other parts of the form.
- Aim for a feedback form that can be completed in a couple of minutes, and provide participants with opportunity to provide feedback either at the end of the course or subsequently.