



UKRI Women's Chapter Network - Terms of Reference (ToR)

Background – About Our Network

The UKRI Women's Chapter was established in early 2021. The network is open to all UKRI employees who are interested in making UKRI a more inclusive working environment for women and increasing their visibility in research and innovation within UKRI and beyond where possible. This includes anyone who identifies as a woman, who is affected by women's issues and anyone who has a want to understand more. The network will work with UKRI management, EDI and HR to raise awareness about issues that impact women in the workplace and provide a 'listening ear' for our colleagues as well as to encourage more people who identify as woman to pursue careers in research and associated professional and support roles. We strive to seek the views of everyone to shape our inclusion agenda and enable us to focus our efforts on actions that will make the biggest and most positive difference.

1. Mission and priorities of the UKRI Women's Chapter staff network

Our mission is to be a network that supports full and equal access for the participation of women to promote gender equality and empowerment within UKRI and beyond, encouraging inclusivity and fairness amongst genders.

We will help UKRI to:

- Value and celebrate women and their achievements
- Provide female employees with fair treatment, equal access to opportunities and relevant support to grow
- Support UKRI to promote culture change towards a more inclusive environment
- Sustain a workplace culture where all genders are treated fairly and thrive.

We aim to work collectively towards improving policies and practices and implementing change by understanding and raising concerns from members, acting as a consultation group for policies and practices and helping to generate ideas and solutions.

Key priorities of our network are:

- Establishing and promoting the network, and encouraging membership
- Engaging with and supporting the development of the UKRI Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy
- Providing a non-judgmental space to discuss and action solutions to gender equality issues. Understanding of issues being faced by our communities and work with the different UKRI functions to support and/or influence the development of strategies and policies to address these
- Working across the pipeline to encourage career development of women
- Identifying opportunities that we can offer our communities
- Working alongside the other networks to address all the above key priorities from the intersectionality lens to pursue inclusivity

2. The Network Governance Structure

The network is open to any UKRI staff member who can become a UKRI Women's Chapter Member by submitting the membership form in the UKRI Women's Chapter Web Page (Please see section 3 for details).



The Network has a Leadership Team of voluntary members of the Network itself, who have management, advisory and decision-making responsibility (Please see section 4 and Annex 1&2 for Details)

The Network welcome Special Interest group/s (SIG/s), which is a bottom-up, self-governed group within the network which offers a forum and community to members interested in a specific topic (Please see Annex 3 for Details).

The network has voluntary executive sponsor/s from among senior staff who serves as Champion and currently, these roles are fulfilled by [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]. (Please see the Annex 4 for Details)

3. Network Membership

The network is open to any UKRI staff member who's interested in women's issues and gender equality.

New members can join at any time throughout the year by completing the form on the network's page on The Source [Membership Form](#)

The benefits of membership are:

- Access to regular newsletters and updates
- Opportunity to join and run Special Interest Groups (SIGs)
- Opportunity to propose and/or lead in specific activities
- Opportunity to take part in the Leadership Team election (as a candidate and as a voter)

Members can leave at any time.

There is no obligation for members to attend the network events.

Our events are also open to non-members unless stated otherwise.

4. Purpose of UKRI Women's Chapter Leadership Team

The UKRI Women's Chapter network has a core Leadership Team of approximately 15 voluntary members from across UKRI, including representatives of STFC WiSTEM.

The UKRI Women's Chapter Leadership Team has management, advisory and decision-making responsibility to ensure overall coherence of the UKRI Women's Chapter activities to fulfill its mission and achieve its objectives (Please see Annex 1 for specific Roles).

Lived experience of those identifying as a woman is not a criterion to be on the Leadership team. We welcome everyone from different backgrounds and walk of lives who care about our mission and adhere to our values.

The Leadership Team does this by creating, implementing and updating the Network Action Plan, in particular:

- Acting as champions of change to assist in attaining gender equality, particularly with respect to recruitment, career development, promotion and retention of women in UKRI.



- Organising frequent events (online, hybrid and in-person) that are relevant to UKRI staff who identify as women and their allies.
- Sharing ideas, raising concerns, taking part in consultations run by UKRI Senior Management, EDI and Human Resources on relevant issues, for example measures to remove barriers to the participation of women in R&I.
- Inputting to Equality Impact Assessments of UKRI policies and procedures if required
- Providing evidence when required on issues relating to women in UKRI by canvassing members, collating their views and sharing them with relevant central teams and senior staff
- Connecting UKRI Women's Chapter to other staff networks and UKRI functions to raise awareness, acknowledge intersectionality and strengthen EDI messaging

5. Leadership Team Meetings and Attendance

The Leadership team meets monthly to progress actions and plan for the future, unless business requires otherwise.

Attendance is voluntary but all Leadership Team members are strongly advised to be present as frequently as possible.

Meetings are accessible and hosted on Zoom. This might change when the Covid pandemic stops being a risk.

Team members unable to attend should notify the secretary by email in advance.

6. Review of Terms of Reference

This document will be reviewed once a year by the members of the Women's Chapter Leadership Team in line with the needs of the emerging priorities for the network and UKRI requirements.

Version 1.0

Last updated: May 2022 [tbc]

[draft, work in progress version, to be agreed at Leadership Team meeting]

7. Annexes

Annex 1 Leadership Team Membership: Individual Responsibilities

Annex 2 Special Interest Groups

Annex 3 Executive Sponsor/s

Annexes

Annex 1

Leadership Team Membership: Individual Responsibilities

The Chair's duties are: leading the strategic direction of the network; representing the network at all staff networks Chairs' meetings; being the main point of contact for UKRI consultations, e.g. with HR and central EDI Team; liaising between the network and its executive sponsors and representing the network to external stakeholders.

The Vice-Chair's duties are: supporting the Chair and all of the above, and covering for the Chair in meetings and other engagements as required.

The Secretary's duties are: supporting the Chair and Vice-Chair in their duties, preparing agendas in liaison with the chair, taking minutes of monthly meetings and ensuring that agreed actions are followed up, maintaining effective records and administration including organising the election (see item 6.7)

The Communication Lead duties are: planning and delivering communications about women's issues and network activities, including liaising with the rest of the Leadership team, UKRI Internal Comms, UKRI Events, internal and external speakers as required.

The Events Lead duties are: planning and delivering network events, including liaising with the rest of the Leadership team, UKRI Internal Comms, UKRI Events, internal and external speakers as required.

The Membership Lead duties are: welcoming new members via email, responding to member's queries, engaging with members through Yammer, producing the network newsletter for members and growing the membership base in collaboration with the rest of the Leadership Team.

There are without portfolio roles, which includes any activities, commitments and new matters which may rise in due course.

Annex 2

Special Interest Groups

A Special Interest group (SIG) is a bottom-up, self-governed group within the network which offers a forum and community to members interested in a specific topic.

Any network member can suggest the creation of a new Special Interest Group and volunteer to lead it.

There are no restrictions on the number of SIGs within the UKRI Women's Chapter.

All virtual, hybrid and in-person events (talks, workshops, coffee meetings, social events, etc) proposed by SIGs, and any associated comms, need to gain approval of the central UKRI Women's Chapter leadership team first to ensure their alignment with the network's vision, mission and inclusive culture.



Following the approval, SIG leads, and members have the freedom to organise events. The network's Comms Lead and Events Lead can provide advice and support, for example in terms of liaising with UKRI Comms and UKRI Events.

SIGs are encouraged to report back quarterly to the leadership Team and contribute to the UKRI Women's chapter Newsletter

SIGs are encouraged to use the UKRI Women's Chapter Yammer channel for their interactions to strengthen the voice of our network.

Annex 3

Executive Sponsors

4.1. The network has two executive sponsors from among senior staff. It is a voluntary role. Currently, these roles are fulfilled by [REDACTED], and [REDACTED].

4.3. In case either of the sponsors steps down, it is the UKRI Leadership Team (EDI Team) responsibility in consultation with the UKRI Women's Chapter Leadership Team to find a replacement. The network Chair should coordinate the team's efforts to approach selected senior staff; the Chair can delegate this work to another leadership team member.

4.3. An executive sponsor of UKRI Women's Chapter staff network:

- Serves as a champion of the group by advocating for our mission at senior UKRI level and inspiring our network activity
- Is a mentor to the network, acting as a sounding board with advice and help with building cases etc. Supports the group through active communication and regular visibility. Provides advice and counsel to guide the network's development
- Meets with the chair/s of the Network once a quarter
- Acts as an inclusive role model
- Gives strategic direction to align with the UKRI's business strategy and aims whilst providing an insight into the broader UKRI picture
- Connects to a broad network of strategic, senior relationships, and provides the network with visibility and access to decision making environments
- Liaises with the executive team and represents views and issues highlighted at this level
- Helps actively to identify and overcome obstacles and resistance to progress of the network's vision and mission within the organisation using personal skills and position of influence
- Helps to extend the reach of the network
- Lends support for our campaigns and events, including providing content and participating in events.