

Appendix 2: Good Practice Examples

1. Use of Fixed Term Contracts

Further to the [Joint Statement agreed with the campus trade unions in March 2020](#), the University has established a joint task group to address the issue of precarious working arrangements.

In line with guidance previously issued ([Additional guidance on managing fixed-term contracts during the coronavirus pandemic](#)), with effect from 1 October 2020, where an employee's fixed-term contract is due to expire on or after 1 October 2020 if they have a period of two years consecutive service and there is an ongoing requirement for the work to be undertaken, they should transfer to an open contract.

If, having reviewed the position, the department is not confident that there will be an ongoing requirement for the post (which may be related to the funding situation), consultation with the individual should commence in accordance with this guidance: [Consulting with staff approaching the end of their contract](#).

2. Unconscious Bias (UB) Observation - Department of Chemistry

The Department of Chemistry introduced Unconscious Bias (UB) observers to shortlisting meetings and job interviews in order to reduce UB at all stages of recruitment and to promote good practice. The role of the observers is to act as a critical friend by listening to and reflecting back to the panel any instances of bias '*at the point of decision making*'. The scheme was piloted with key academic appointments in 2014 before being [expanded in 2016](#) to cover researchers and later all staff groups and postgraduate student recruitment.

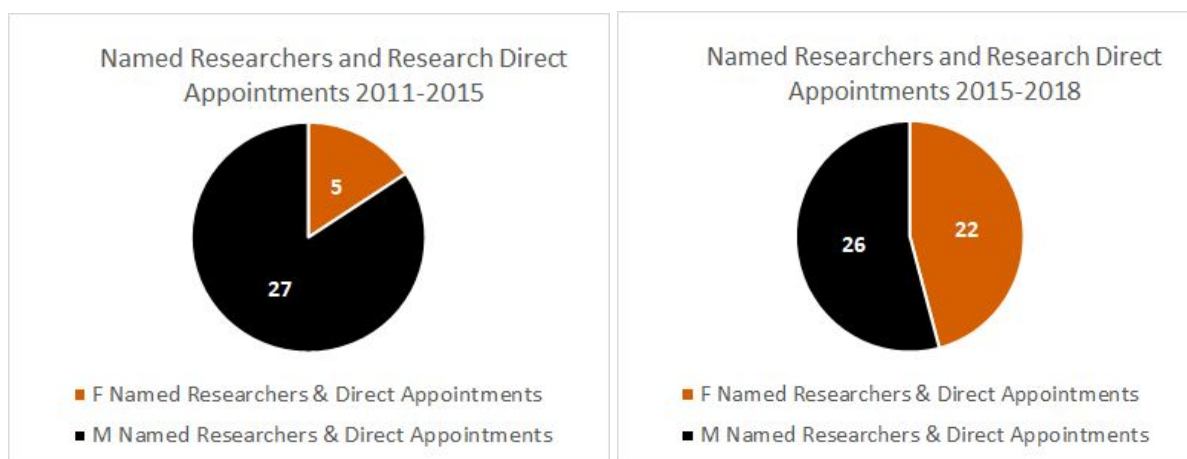
In order to expand their pool of observers, the Department of Chemistry ran an unconscious bias observer training workshop at the end of 2018 (open to all staff groups including academics, support staff and post-doctoral research associates). The workshop was opened out to members of other departments as a way of sharing good practice, there were about 30 participants, approximately half of them from other departments.

Training included a brief introduction to UB, an overview of the scheme, common types of bias to look out for, tips on giving constructive feedback, a discussion of the practicalities, and a Q&A. Guidance was produced based on the experience and feedback from both observers and panels, plus handouts, pro-formas and examples of completed feedback forms which were provided to trainees as a resource pack. Trainees were also encouraged to shadow a trained observer before undertaking their first solo observation.

This good practice has been disseminated nationally and internationally, a number of staff involved with the scheme have visited other institutions to talk about setting up similar schemes elsewhere. Imperial College London are currently seeking advice on how to implement the scheme.

Alongside the observer scheme, The [named researcher](#) and direct appointment monitoring were introduced as part of the Department's previous departmental Concordat action plan and was used to support the renewal of the Gold Athena Swan submission. As depicted in the charts below both initiatives had a positive impact on researcher/postdoc recruitment.

Gender balance of named researchers and research direct appointments in Department of Chemistry 2011-15 and 2015-18.



- The UB observation scheme contributed to an increase in the percentage of female researchers to our highest ever level of 40%, and an improved recruitment ratio of F:M for Teaching and Scholarship staff.
- Implementation of new policies for direct appointment of researchers led to an increase in the percentage of females for these appointments from 16 to 46%.
- 4 of the 8 academic appointments since 2011 have been female.
- Female and male appointment rates for researchers are equivalent, indicating a gender-neutral recruitment process.

“As an unconscious bias observer I have seen how the scheme makes individual members of staff think about their actions and changes the way individual staff approach interviewing from one recruitment to the next.” - Derek Wann, senior lecturer.