

Guidelines for Avoiding All-Male Panels

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1. Background

Internationally, disapproval of panels biased towards men (manels) (Note 1) is rapidly spreading across all fields of society, including academic conferences, academic journals, universities and the like. Conventional male-only events not only fail to incorporate the voices of women and minorities, resulting in discussions that lack diversity and inclusivity, manels themselves have become understood as a form of injustice.

Recent years have seen an increase in women's representation. In Japan, however, events with only symbolic participation by women (gender washing; Note 2) and thus still biased towards men remain a common issue that needs to be addressed.

In consideration of this, Ehime University has established guidelines from the perspective of promoting diversity to avoid events that are biased toward men and thereby promote the substantial participation of women.

Note 1:

"Manel" is a term referring to "All-Male Panels" and describes circumstances where women and other marginalized groups are excluded from opportunities to speak as subject experts in events, conferences or other public gatherings.

Note 2:

"Gender washing" refers to misleading appeals of working towards gender equality while, in fact, such efforts are insufficient.

2. Objective

The objective of the guidelines is to contribute to the creation of forums with different perspectives and diverse discussions. To this purpose, the guidelines provide a range of specific measures to avoid male-only events and promote the substantive participation of women, thereby encouraging events (symposia, panels, etc.) that take into account various aspects of individual identity, including gender, age, nationality, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, and religion, in accordance with the Ehime University Diversity Promotion Statement.

3. Target

The guidelines apply to events sponsored by Ehime University or by its faculties. Following the guidelines is encouraged for events co-sponsored by or held at Ehime University.

4. Possible Concrete Measures

(1) Planning Team Members

From the planning stage of the event, form teams with attention to diversity and inclusivity, including women.

(2) Ideas for Event Formats

Look into ways to enhance diversity and inclusivity of events through changes to the event format. Pay attention to gender balance in the program of a symposium, within the panel of a panel discussion, and throughout the entire series of lectures or seminars (single speaker events).

(3) Selection of Speakers

Include women speakers. In addition, consider diversity in age, nationality and other characteristics taking account of intersectionality (Note 3).

Should you have trouble finding a suitable candidate, consult women or minority experts or groups familiar with the topic and use online databases or social media.

(4) Avoid purely symbolic representation (Gender Washing)

Avoid women participation for the sake of form, and instead ensure individuals can contribute through their expertise. Do not limit requests to female speakers to their gender role, avoiding questions framed to represent gender ("as a woman," "from a woman's perspective," etc.). Furthermore, facilitators or chairpersons have different roles from speakers invited for their expertise. Avoid panel compositions where a single woman facilitates an otherwise all-male panel of experts.

(5) How to recruit participants

Include event participants in considerations of diversity and inclusivity. Specifically, set the schedule and time of the day for the event to allow a wide range of people to participate. Consider providing temporary childcare.

When announcing the event, targeted outreach in addition to general announcements for the targeted audiences encourage participation by women and minorities. Avoid excluding specific groups from outreach efforts based on assumptions ("they are probably busy taking care of their small children").

Proactively offer support to those who may need it. For example, ask "what kind of support would allow you to get you involved?"

(6) Facilitation during Events

Chairpersons or facilitators need to ensure fair time allocation to secure equal opportunity for women or minorities to speak. Make sure closing comments or recaps of the event are not biased towards men.

(7) Review and Evaluation of Events

Reflect on events to consider to which degree participation of women and minorities was achieved and evaluate the extent to which consideration was given to gender diversity and inclusion.

If an event was biased toward male participants, critically self-evaluate to identify the reasons for the bias and consider measures to prevent recurrence.

These guidelines do not restrict intentionally selecting speakers with similar attributes in accordance with event objectives for events aiming to promote diversity.

Note 3:

“Intersectionality” refers to a situation in which overlapping social identities (gender, age, nationality, (dis)ability, sexual orientation/gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, class etc.) can combine and interact to create unique forms of oppression.