

Call for Papers

The Pursuit of Excellence in Contemporary Universities and the 'Business Case' for Gender Equality: Critical perspectives from gender studies, the humanities and the social sciences

**Panel at the 10th European Feminist Research Conference
"Difference, Diversity, Diffraction: Confronting Hegemonies and Dispossessions"**

12-15 September 2018 in Göttingen (Germany)

The claim that the excellence of research integrally involves an equity component has been an important element in the most recent push to improve diversity in universities internationally and appears everywhere as part of the 'business case' for gender equality. To a large extent, the focus of concern has been STEM disciplines, where the under-representation of women is held to create research deficits both through under-utilisation of the best human resources and through depriving research of the full 'diversity' of perspectives. In this context, humanities and social science (HASS) disciplines have rarely been discussed as posing specific issues. Yet HASS disciplines have had much to say about the feminist transformations of knowledge necessary for gender equality, besides suffering their own stark gender imbalances in many areas. Given that the idea of a feminist transformation of knowledge is largely absent from the current discussion, there is a real risk that accounts that have been given of the positive relationship between the pursuit of gender equality and disciplinary excellence not only lack depth, but present an idealization of knowledge that covers over the real histories of gender relations in disciplinary contexts, and ignores complex inequalities associated with androcentric research priorities, male-dominated mainstream influence on judgments of excellence or outright hostility to feminist work. If the analysis of the relationship between inequality and distortions in knowledge is wrong or misleading, so too may be the proposed remedies. It is therefore urgent to form a deeper theoretical, historical and sociological account of these issues.

We invite papers that explore contemporary discourses on the intersection of gender equality and excellence in knowledge-production from a perspective that opens out critical questions concerning what this relationship may really be or what it might mean. The critical investigation of leading discourses on the relationship of equality and excellence is timely given the ways in which these are currently becoming established in research and higher education institutions. How does gender inequality affect the construction of knowledge claims? Does gender inequality in academia produce knowledge that distorts our understanding of social, economic and political realities? How do disciplinary differences in evaluation practices intersect with gender? Evidence has been amassed of persistent but perhaps also various forms of gender inequality within and between different disciplines. This invites critical reflection on the terms on which excellence is understood, and the specific forms of its relationship with gender inequality in the contours of disciplinary research.

Both junior and senior scientists are invited to submit an abstract (length: max. 2.500 characters including spaces) in form of a word- or pdf-document. Abstracts should also include FULL contact details, including your name, institutional affiliation, mailing address, and e-mail address.

Abstracts should be sent until 07th February 2018 to both panel organizers:

Fiona Jenkins (fiona.jenkins@anu.edu.au) and Heike Kahlert (heike.kahlert@rub.de),

More information about the organizing chairs can be found at:

<http://philosophy.cass.anu.edu.au/people/associate-professor-fiona-jenkins> and
<http://www.sowi.rub.de/sozsug/index.html.en>.

More information on the 10th European Feminist Research Conference can be found at:

<https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/572444.html>.

Please note: We apologise for the fact that no funding, travel or other bursaries can be offered for attending the conference! However, the conference organizers offer some grants (see: <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/travel+and+accommodation+grants+for+conference+participants/574637.html>).