



Vetenskapsrådet

Gender equality observation at peer review groups of the Swedish Research Council

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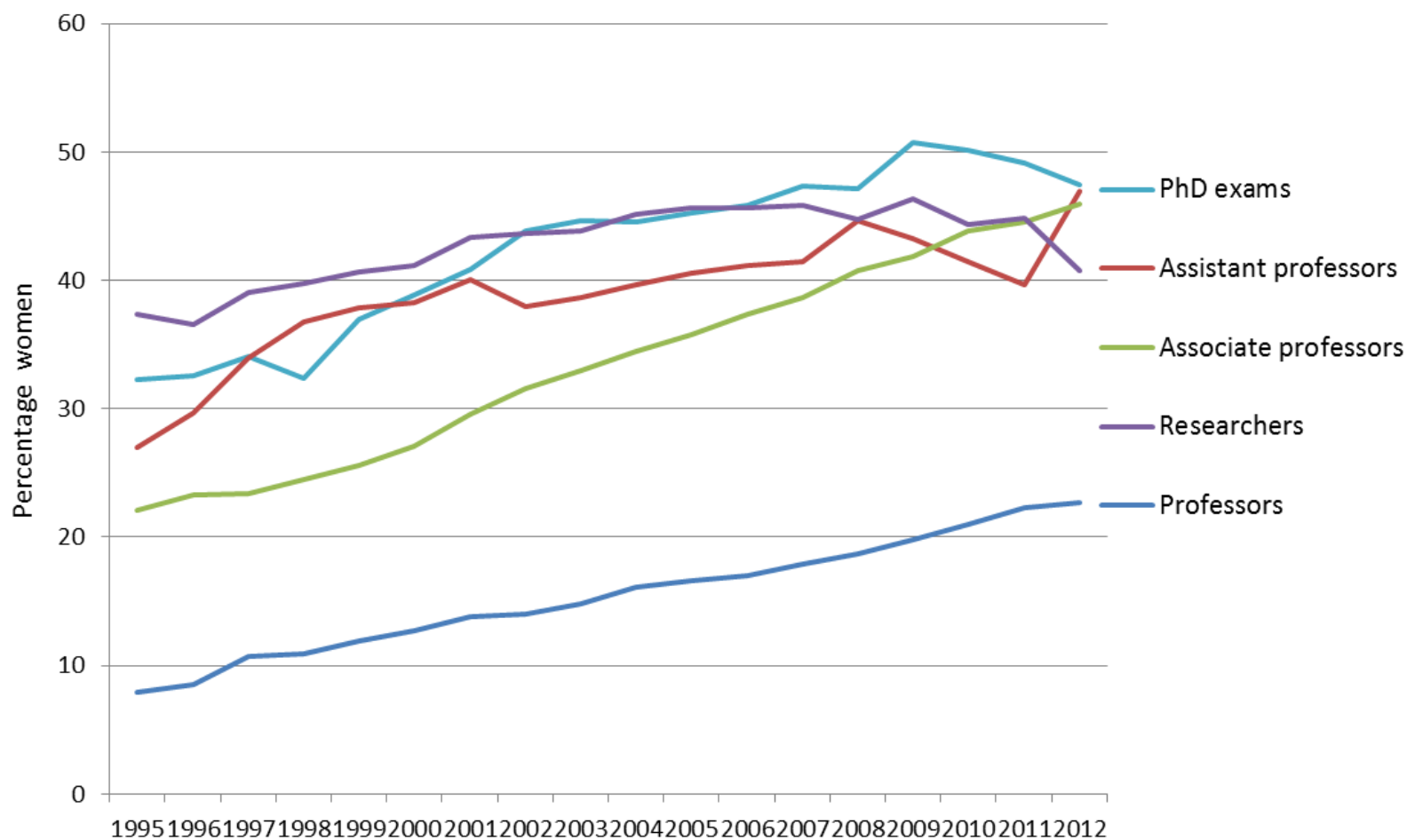
Swedish Research Council

Dept. of Physics, Stockholm university

May 14, 2014

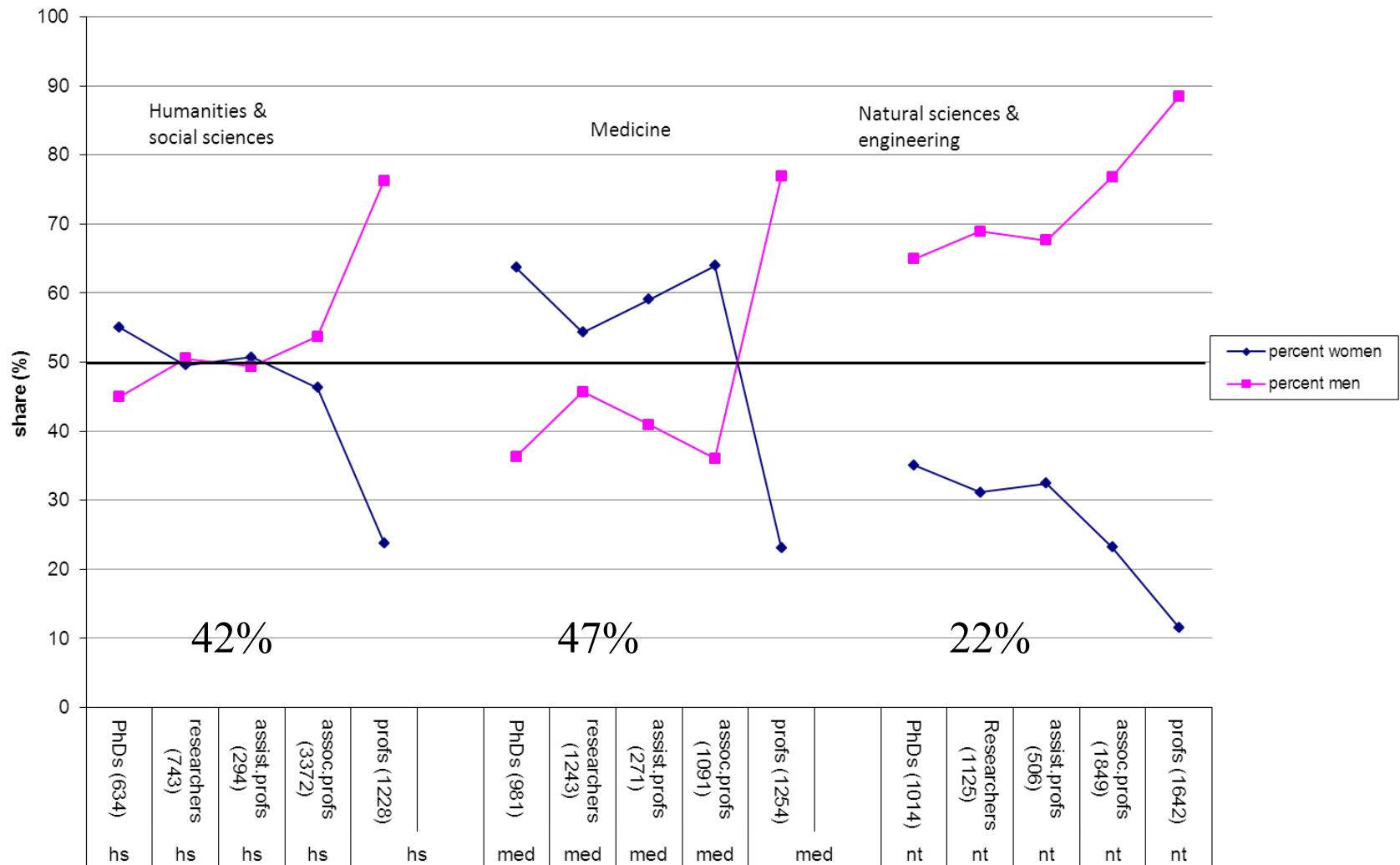
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- Background: statistics about HEI staff
 - The Swedish Research Council's gender equality strategy
 - Gender equality monitoring
 - Gender equality observations

Percentage of women in different academic positions and among new PhDs in Sweden 1995-2012



Data: Swedish National Agency for Higher Education

Percentage of women in different academic positions and subject fields in Sweden 2009 (excl. agricultural sciences)



Data: Swedish National Agency for Higher Education



The Swedish Research Council's Gender equality strategy



Swedish Research Council

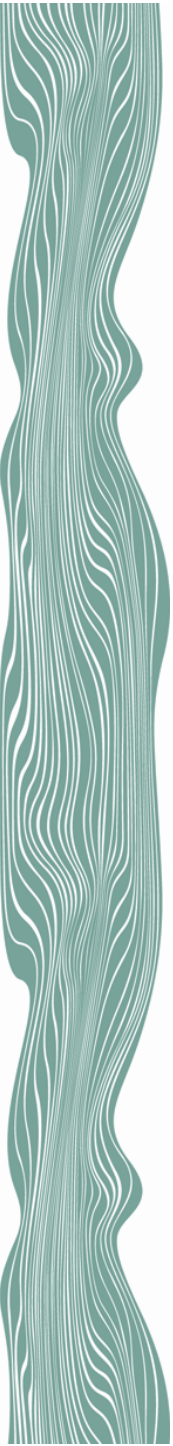
- Supports basic research in all disciplines
- A Board, a DG, plus Scientific Councils for
 - Humanities and social sciences
 - Medicine and health
 - Natural and engineering sciences
 - Research infrastructures
 - Educational sciences (committee)
 - Artistic research and development (committee)
 - International development research (committee)
 - Clinical treatment research (committee)
- Budget 2013: 5.6 billion SEK
- Receives about 6000 applications annually
- About 80 peer review groups (700 peers)



Strategy for Gender Equality at the SRC

Background

- The primary objective of the Swedish Research Council is to allocate funding to research of the highest scientific quality and that best promotes innovation
- The Swedish Research Council supports the best researchers, regardless of gender.
- The Swedish Research Council assumes that research capacity exists to the same extent in both sexes.
- Moreover, the Swedish Research Council assumes that research is benefited when both genders participate and apply their expertise and experience.
- Gender equality is also a matter of justice. Women and men should have equal opportunities to conduct research and develop professional careers as researchers.



Strategy for Gender Equality at the SRC

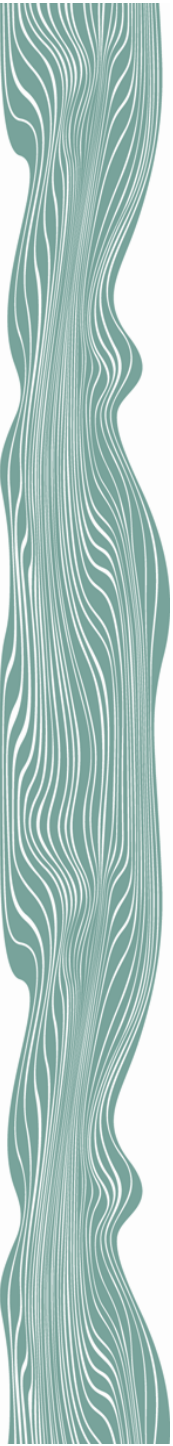
Task:

In compliance with the Instructions Ordinance, the Swedish Research Council promotes gender equality throughout its sphere of activities.

Operative goals:

SRC should:

- achieve and maintain an equal gender distribution in its evaluation panels,
- ensure that the percentages of female and male applicants for grants from the SRC correspond to the percentages of women and men among the potential research grant applicants,
- ensure that women and men have the same success rates and receive the same average size of grants, taking into account the nature of the research and the type of grant.



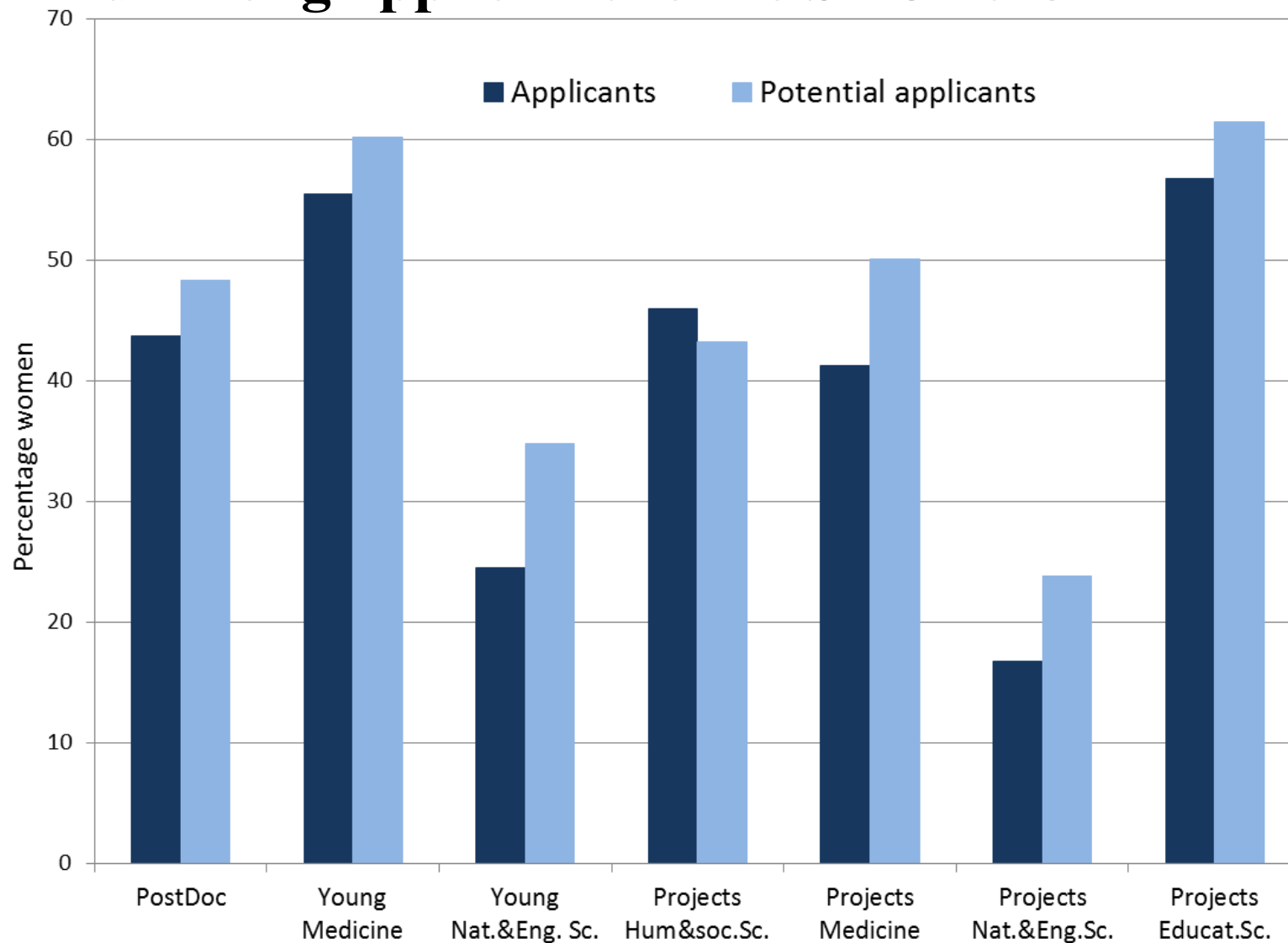
What can SRC do to fulfill the operative goals?

- SRC monitors the success rates every year and publishes the results regularly
- Each Scientific Council presents to the Board the outcome of the annual calls for proposals regarding the operative goals of the strategy. The presentation must include comments on possible disparities from reaching the goals, and an action plan to rectify any disparities.
- Such an action plan for 2011 included:
 - gender equality presentations to peer review groups
 - gender equality observers in some peer groups
 - the Director General should extend an invitation from SRC to universities and university colleges to cooperation regarding gender equality.

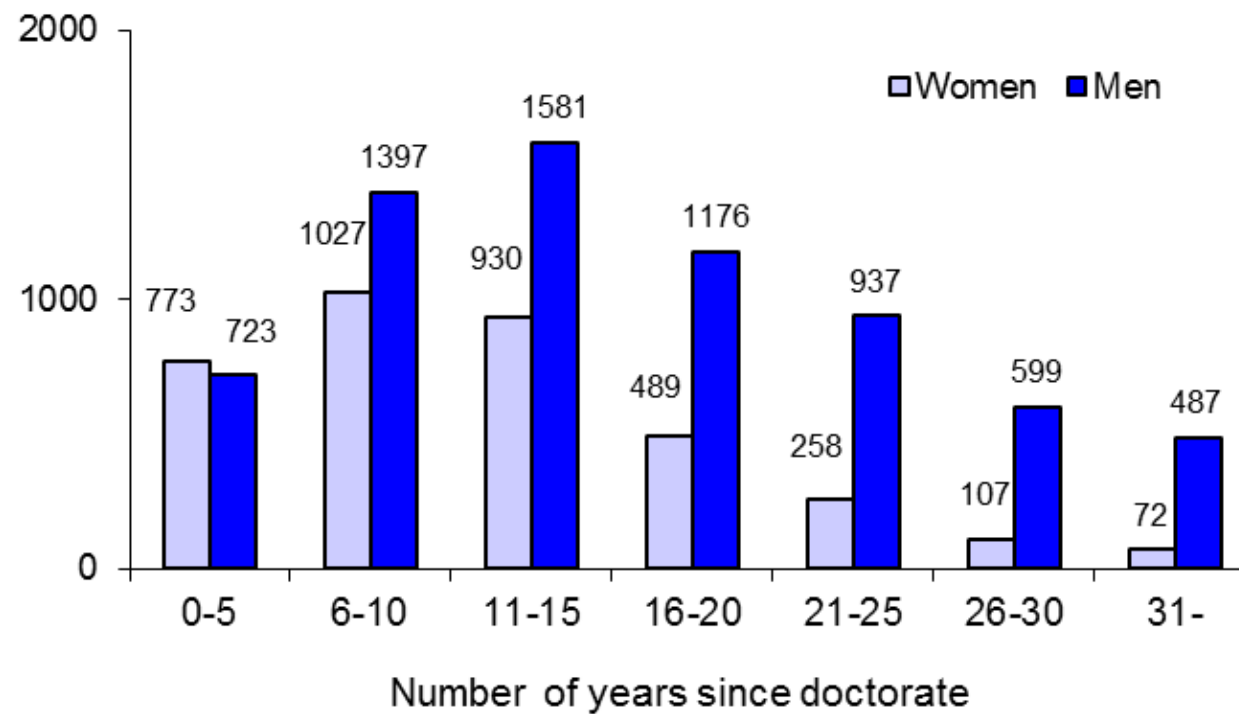
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Gender equality monitoring at SRC

Share of women among potential applicants and among applicants to the SRC 2013

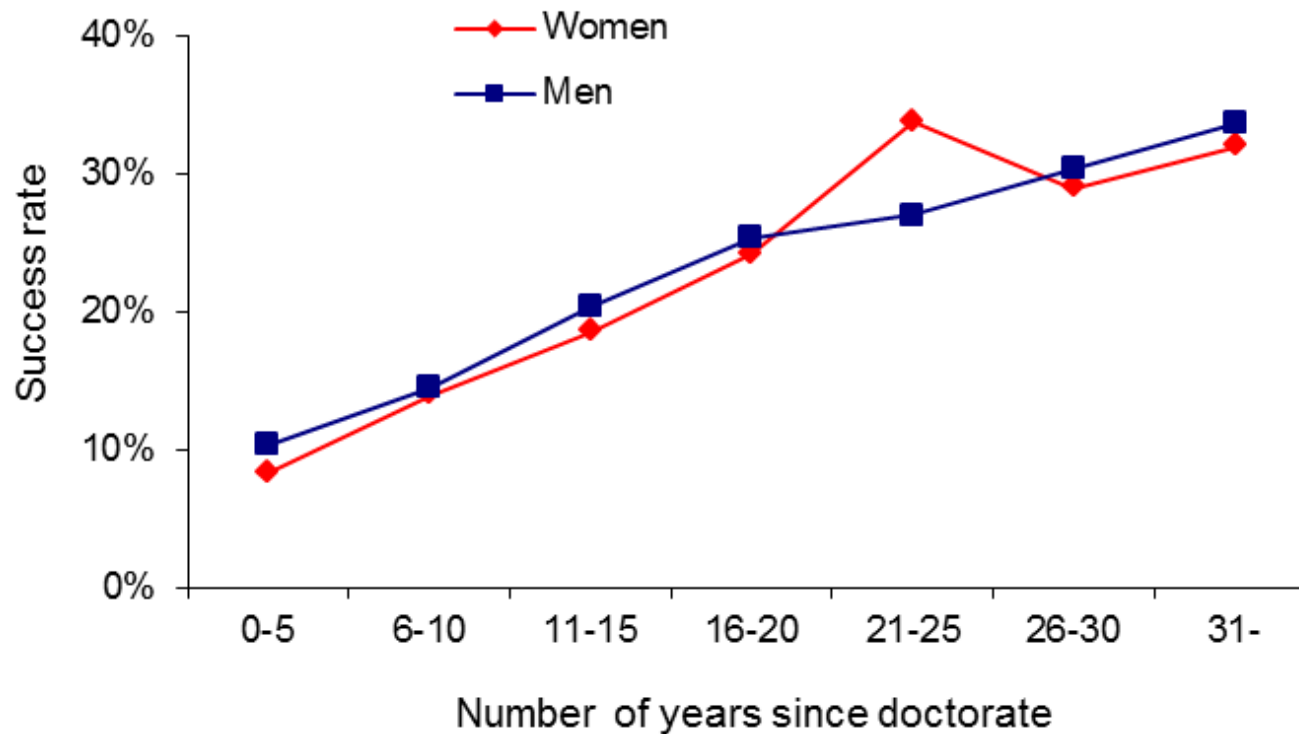


Number of project grant applications 2011-2013 to the SRC by gender and years since doctorate



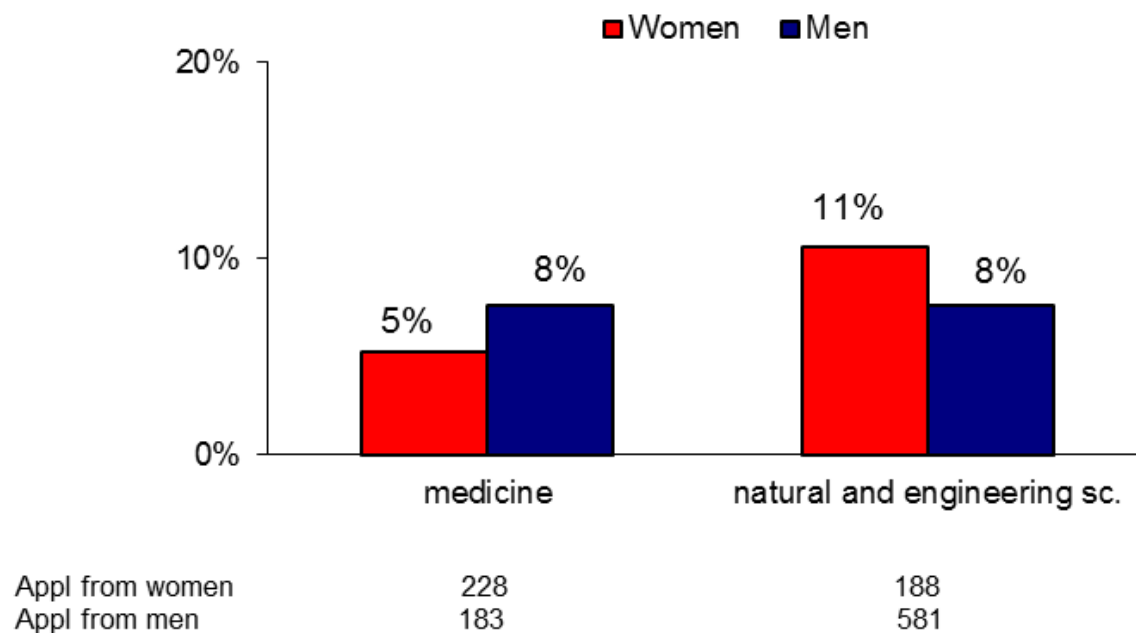
Applications 2011-2013: from women 3 656, men 6 900, sum 10 556 (35% women)
Not including young project grants Medicine or Natural & Engineering Science

Success rates for project grant applications to SRC 2011-2013 by number of years since doctorate



Not including young project grants Medicine or Natural & Engineering Science

Young project grants 2013: success rates by scientific council and gender (applicants with PhD only)

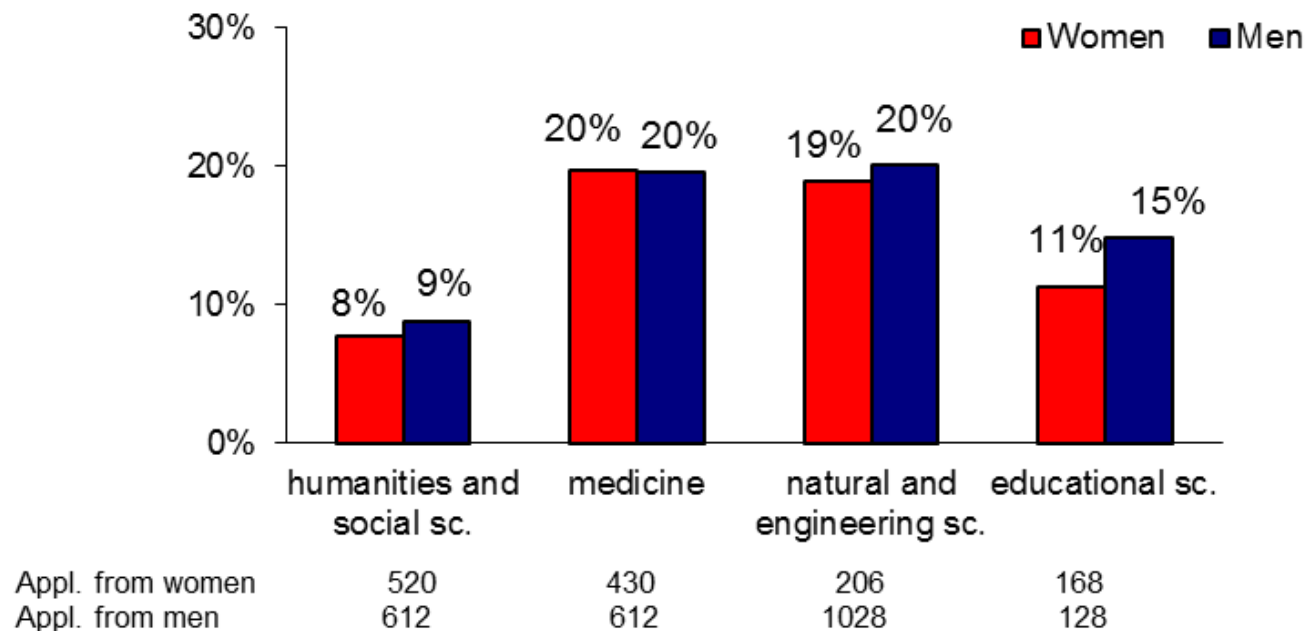


Applications 2013: from women 416, men 764, total 1 180 (35% women)

	Women granted	Expected granted	Men Granted	Expected granted	Difference
Medicine	12	14,6	14	11,4	-2,6
Nat&Eng Sc	20	15,8	44	48,2	4,2

Probability difference is chance only 31% Med, 23% N&E, 73% total

Project grants 2013, success rate by scientific council and gender (applicants with PhDs only)



Applications 2013: from women 1 324, men 2 380, sum 3 704 (36% women)

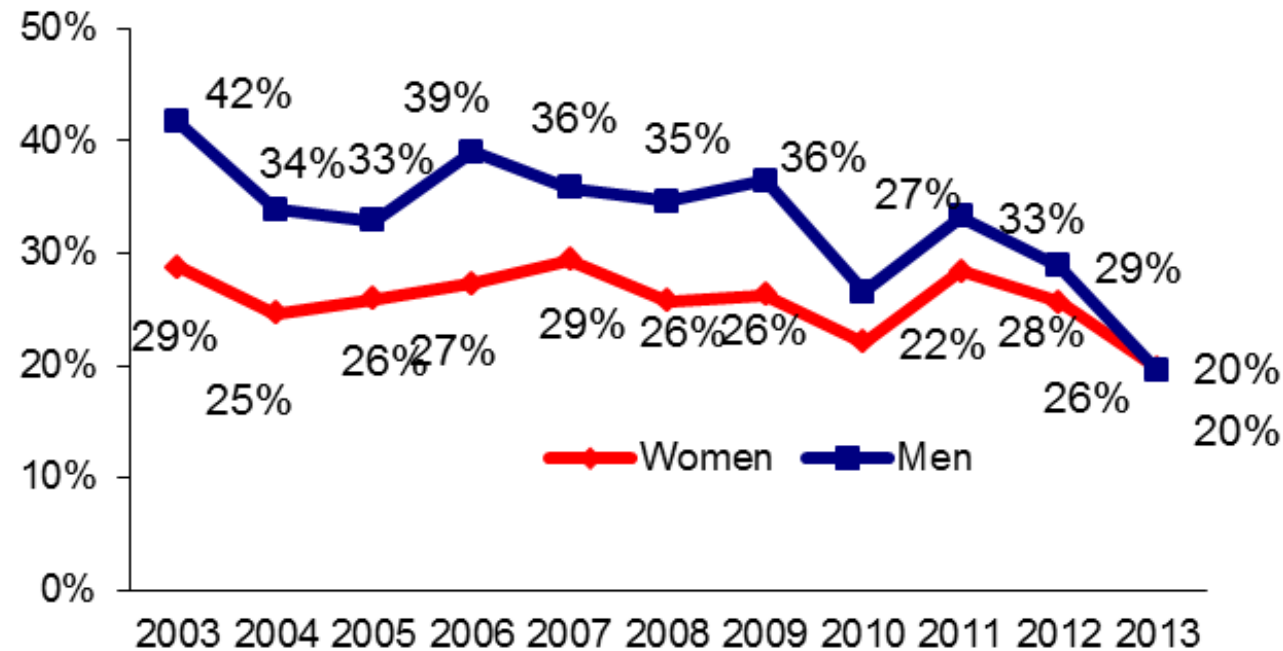
Not including young project grants Medicine or Natural & Engineering Science

In 2013, taking into account differences in years from PhD, **2 more applications from women were granted** than expected (183 instead of 181).

The probability of such a difference (or greater) to occur by chance is 84%.

Medicine and health

Project grants 2003-2013: success rate by gender



Young project
grants not included

Expected success rates 2013: women 18.4% , men 20.6%

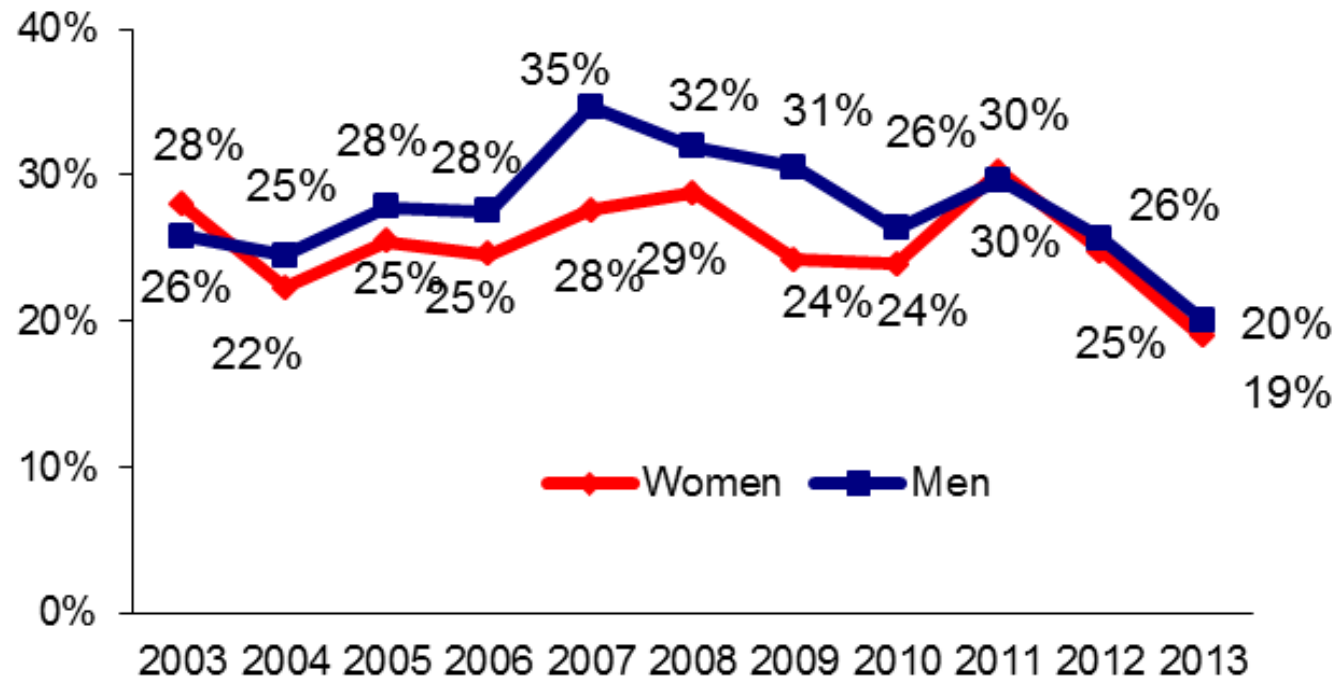
Actual success rates 2013: women 19.8% , men 19.6%

6 more applications from women granted than expected

Probability that such a difference (or greater) occurs by chance is 39%

Natural and engineering sciences

Project grants 2003-2013: success rate by gender



Expected success rates 2013: women 18.1% , men 20.2%

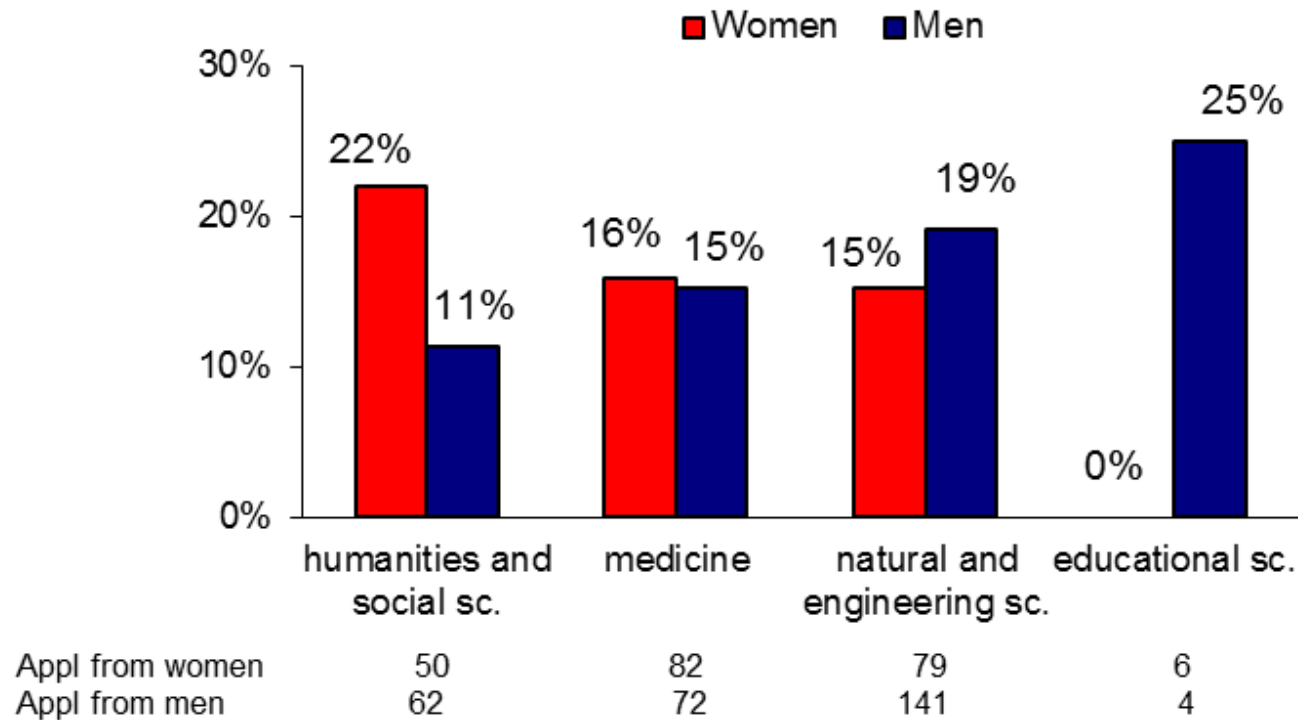
Actual success rates 2013: women 18.9% , men 20.0%

2 more applications from women granted than expected

Young project grants not included

Probability that such a difference (or greater) occurs by "chance" is 77%

International Post Doc fellowships 2013



Applications: from women 217, men 279, sum 496 (44% women)

In total: 36 women granted; **0.6 more than expected**,
Probability that such a difference (or greater) occurs by "chance": 90%

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Gender equality observations at SRC



Gender equality observations

Background

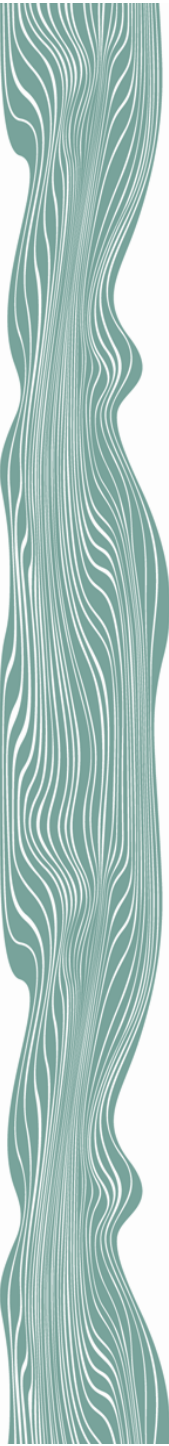
- Differences in success rates, in particular in medicine

Aims

- Investigate and make visible gender differences in the peer review process – as a basis for discussions at SRC
- Give recommendations to improve the process

Qualitative method, not general conclusions

- Observations are shown to occur, not how often they do
- One group 2008 and 2009, four groups 2011, fifteen (thirteen) groups 2012



Gender equality observations in 13 panels 2012

Investigators:

Johanna Andersson, Cecilia Hahn-Berg, Camilla Kolm, (Chalmers)

Veronica Ahlqvist, Lisbeth Söderqvist, John Tumpane (SRC)



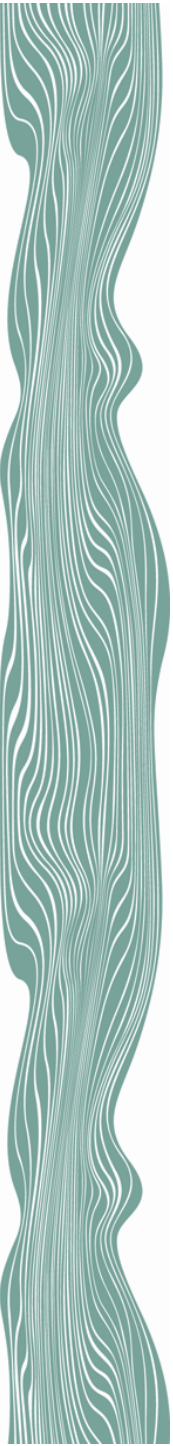
Observers in 15 (13) panels

- Medicine and health – 8 panels
- Natural and engineering sciences, – 2
- Arts, humanities and social sciences, – 2
- Education, research infrastructure, special call,
– 1 each
- Focus on qualitative observations
- 6 observers – with a gender perspective



Observations

- Group dynamics
- Evaluation of the research and/or the researcher
- Use of "informal information"
- Process problems, role of chair and SRC staff



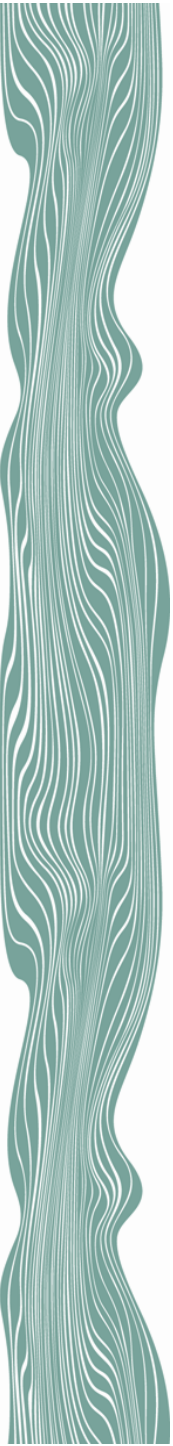
Group dynamics and status

- Location in the room
men – women, panel members – SRC officer
- Who speaks and who is heard?
- Comments on applications without having read
“I haven’t read this application, but nevertheless I have to say...”
- Certain members, often women, played down their competence
“You know this better”
“I didn’t really understand this application”.
- Some panelists, often women, changed their preliminary grades



Group dynamics and status, cont'd

- In one panel men spoke twice as much as women
- In another panel the men spontaneously took the floor, and the women raised their hands. In this panel also, men spoke twice as much as women.
- In a third panel, men dominated by interrupting and belittling comments made by women, who on several occasions disparaged their own comments by withdrawing their viewpoints.
- In other panels, this didn't occur



Evaluation of applications

- Namedropping

“Here we see that there’s a guy named X who wants to collaborate with her [...] He’s a big gun, and it’s pretty neat for her that he has chosen to collaborate with her.”

- Women’s independence more often questioned

“She has these co-applicants, it seems like it’s to elevate her own CV.”

“What is her role in all these papers? She’s on a strong team, so what is her role, actually?”

- Differences in choice of words

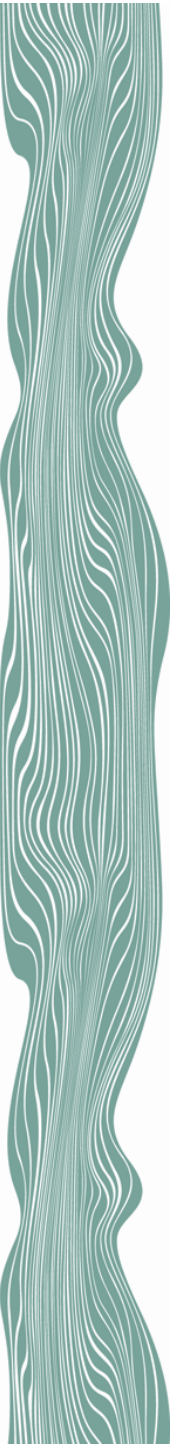
women: *“good”/“strong”/“solid track record”/“high novelty”*

men: *“well-known”/“respected”/“established”/“a rising star”/“excellent”*



Informal information

- Family members
- Collaborators
- Age
- Reputation
- Conflicts of interest?



The process

- How is the issue of gender equality treated ?
What tools can be used?
“We only know that we have to attain the right gender distribution, but we don’t know how to do so or why it’s wrong.”
- Positive action, conditions to be met
“...would like to postpone such considerations till later in the process. Right now we’re just judging science.”
- Difficulty to deal with the goals of SRC in some panels
“Here we see the consequences of the gender thing, the gender takes it all.”
- Other panels agreed with the SRC policy
- Time constraints at the end of the meeting
“We need one more woman”; “which woman shall we lift up?”
- Tactics and strategy - placing women just under the limit for funding
- Balance of roles - SRC staff and chairs



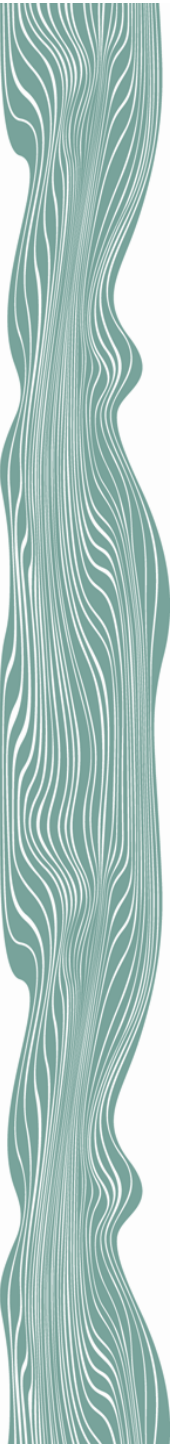
Recommendations to the SRC

- Is the research or the researcher evaluated?
- How are conflicts of interest dealt with?
- Clarify the role of the SRC staff at meetings
- Budget negotiations separate from assessment?
- Investigate the success-rate of the main reader of applications
- Discussion of treatment of the notion ‘*independence*’. Similarly: ‘*potential*’, ‘*excellence*’, ‘*high-risk*’



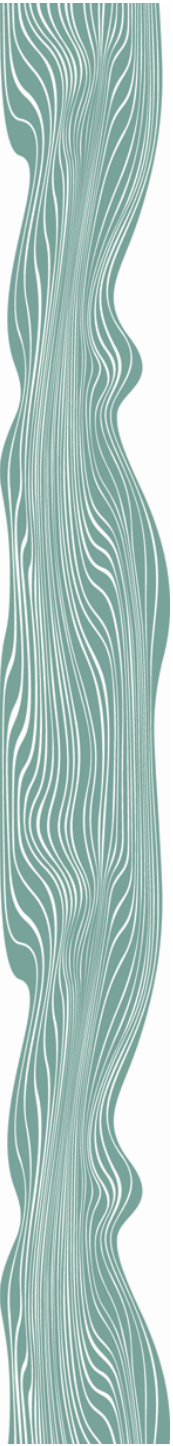
Recommendations for panels

- Training for panel chairs (from 2013)
- Training for SRC staff (from 2013)
- Meeting techniques for chairs
- Guidelines for SRC staff on how to handle certain situations



At the start of a panel meeting

- How the grade scale should be used
- How much time is spent on each application
- How speaking time should be shared
- How each reader should present their findings
- Who should start, who should summarize
- Reminder of policy, aims, guidelines
- Information about positive action
- Reminder on informal information
- Checklist



SRC's gender equality studies (mostly in Swedish)

- *Vetenskapsrådet och jämställdheten*, SRC report 17:2006
- *A question of balance*, Nature **449**, 944, 2007
- *Jämställdheten i Vetenskapsrådets forskningsstöd 2003-2006*, SRC report 2007
- *Jämställdheten i Vetenskapsrådets forskningsstöd 2003-2007*, SRC report 2008
- *Kvinnors och mäns framgång med forskningsansökningar inom medicin*, SRC report 4:2009
- *Career development and success: Follow-up and evaluation of junior research positions from the Swedish Research Council, Medicine*, SRC report 5:2009
- *Jämställdheten i Vetenskapsrådets forskningsstöd 2006-2008*, SRC report 3:2010
- *Kollegial bedömning av vetenskaplig kvalitet – en forskningsöversikt*, SRC report 4:2010
- *Uppföljningsstudie av forskarassistenter vid ämnesrådet för medicin*, SRC report 2010
- *Jämställdheten i Vetenskapsrådets forskningsstöd 2009-2010*, SRC report , 6:2012
- *Jämställdhetsobservationer i fyra beredningsgrupper 2011*, SRC report 3:2012 L
- *Gender equality observations in a selection of SRC's eval. panels 2012*, SRC report 2013
- *Bibliometrisk studie av projektansökningar i medicin 2006&2007*, SRC-report, manuscript
- *"Örebrorapporten" (granskares bedömningar inom medicin)*, SRC-report, not published
- *Bibliometrisk studie av jämställdhet och unga forskare 2011*, SRC report, manuscript
- *Diskussion av självständighet i ansökningar, projektbidrag unga MH 2011*, VR-studie, man.
- *Jämställdheten i Vetenskapsrådets forskningsstöd 2011-2012*, SRC report, manuscript
- European Commission, *Mapping the maze – getting more women to the top of research*, 2008
- European Commission, *The Gender Challenge in Research Funding*, 2009
- *The female underclass*, Nature **459**, 299, 2009, (editorial on *The Gender Challenge*)



End of presentation