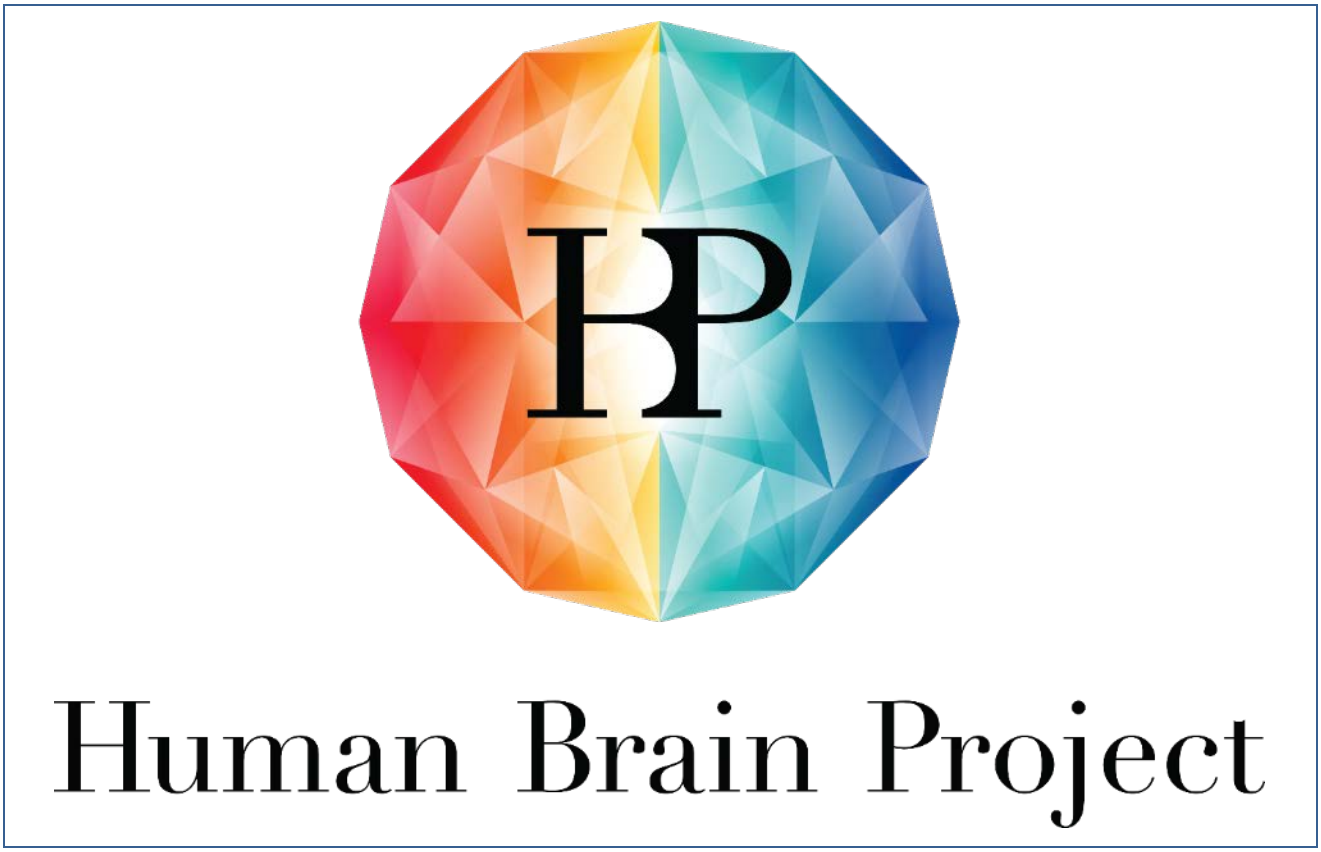
HBP Education Calls for Expression of Interest for SGA3 Diversity Awareness Guidelines for Applicants



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Abstract:	This document contains guidelines for applicants of the HBP Education Programme's Calls for Expression of Interest on how to consider aspects of gender, diversity and equal opportunities in their event proposals.
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Terminology

The term **gender** refers to the **social construction of women, men and non-binary persons**. Societies and cultures associate competences, behaviours and attitudes with a person's biological sex, and related expectations and ascribed roles lead to differences in persons' paths through life, for instance, by influencing whether and how occupational choices and achievements are recognised.

Sex refers to the **biological differentiation** between "male" and "female" and is determined by chromosomes, genes, hormones and anatomy. However, the idea of two discrete sexes is overly simplistic. The concept of "intersex" refers to a variety of conditions, whereby a person's combination of sexual, anatomical, and physiological traits does not fit the typical definition of male and female (Ainsworth 2015[1], ISNA 2015[2]).

The **term diversity** comprises the manifold traits and characteristics of human subjects and their differences based on various dimensions. Some of these traits are inherent (e.g. sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, body composition, physiology, age), some are ascribed or acquired (e.g. gender, skills, knowledge, technological literacy) and others are context-related (e.g. different mobility capacities in private and working context, social and economic background, working and living environment, lifestyle). The European Union acts to prevent discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion, belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation (see also EU Charter of Fundamental Rights[3]).

[1] http://www.nature.com/news/sex-redefined-1.16943
[2] http://www.isna.org/
[3] https://fra.europa.eu/en/charterpedia/article/21-non-discrimination

1. Introduction

The Human Brain Project (HBP) is committed to enhancing equal opportunities[4]. It aims to demonstrate how **diversity drives scientific excellence**, innovation and collaboration and to represent European best practice for **fostering equal opportunities** across various institutions, member states, disciplinary cultures and intellectual environments. In line with the strategies of the European Commission,[5] it seeks to achieve such aims through a variety of activities, **including workshops, conferences, training events and lectures**.

Consideration of equal opportunities and diversity is an evaluation criterion for the HBP Education Programme.[6] Diversity must be addressed on two levels: the diversity of lecturers, participants, contributors and organisers and diversity in relation to research content.

The purpose of these guidelines is to support applicants in integrating aspects of diversity into their proposal. When preparing your proposal, you might ask yourself the following questions:

- How diverse (or homogenous) are your speakers or lecturers?
- What characteristics and experiences of lecturers and participants can be considered to ensure diversity in your selection?
- How can you foster and encourage interaction in your courses?
- What methods and materials are suitable for your webinar, workshop or conference?
- What role does diversity play in your research and course content?

Your contributors and participants can learn a lot from you in terms of communication, fair possibilities for collaboration for all persons, regardless of gender and other diversity traits, and critical thinking that questions scientific norms and leads to innovative approaches.

2. Diversity of speakers, participants, contributors

In accordance with the standards of the European Commission[7], applicants of the HBP Education Programme's Calls for Expression of Interest are encouraged to promote gender balance at all levels. H2020 recommends[8] that "Applicants should seek at having a balanced participation, as close as possible to 50/50, of both men and women". This concerns not only speakers and lecturers but also participants and organising teams.

Fields of science have different ratios of women and men contributors, and it is important to show that you have considered gender and diversity when searching for lecturers or speakers. If your list of speakers is unbalanced, justification should be provided.[9]

[4] https://www.humanbrainproject.eu/en/about/gender-equality/
[5] see the Guidance on Gender Equality in H2020 (https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/cross-cutting-issues/gender_en.htm) and the Gender Equality Strategy "A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025" (https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/aid_development_cooperation_fundamental_rights/gender-equality-strategy-2020-2025_en.pdf).
[6] See the respective Proposal Templates for EBRAINS Workshops (https://opencalls2.humanbrainproject.eu/call/filePreview/134) and EBRAINS Infrastructure Training events (https://opencalls2.humanbrainproject.eu/call/filePreview/107)
[7] https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/cross-cutting-issues/gender_en.htm
[8] https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/gender/h2020-hi-guide-gender_en.pdf#page=10
[9] See the respective Guide for Applicants and EBRAINS Infrastructure Training events (https://opencalls2.humanbrainproject.eu/call/filePreview/106), p6.

You might also put special emphasis on **early career stage scientists** and give them an **opportunity to demonstrate their scientific and presentation skills**. You may wish to dedicate certain time slots to them or invite them to co-present to gain experience.

Each speaker or lecturer should explain how he or she has planned to **critically reflect** diversity in terms of research content and how they plan to ensure equality and **fairness among participants**.

Your audience might also be diverse. Consider how to ensure that participants with different cultural and educational backgrounds and potential unconscious biases concerning gender, race and other diversity traits can **be encouraged to actively participate** and acknowledge each other's contributions. Furthermore, if the number of participants is limited and participants must be selected, the selection must adequately **represent the diversity** of participants[9].

Scientific schools and workshops are often packed with content that must be delivered in a short period of time. Under such time pressure, classic instructor-focused lectures often seem to be the most efficient approach. However, they leave little time for reflection or for ensuring that participants are able to understand and make use of the content. This is especially true for audiences with diverse educational backgrounds and for webinars, which are far more demanding than face-to-face lectures. Therefore, you should consider the extent to which your **didactical approach** matches your audience and the given format.

3. Diversity in terms of research content

Science and research frequently involve **humans, animals, tissues or cells** that may differ in terms of sex, age or other diversity traits. Research findings are relevant for diverse **stakeholders**. Diversity also applies to **disputes in scientific communities**, **traditions of thought, different contributors** and how each of these have been perceived. The following guiding questions should encourage you to reflect on how you can consider diversity in your research:

- What is the focus of your research? How will you address, for example, the diversity of
  - human subjects (e.g. as subjects of your research or test users)?
  - animals, tissues or cells (e.g. differentiate between the sex or age of brain tissues)?
  - public policies (e.g. health, economic or technology policies)?
- Who are the stakeholders or users of the knowledge created by your discipline?
- What **examples of societal relevance** of your research can you think of?
- What aspects of diversity are distinguished in the **data and variables** you use?
- Does your choice of readings reflect the **diversity of contributors** to your field? You might use specific studies and papers to discuss the following questions:
  - How and to what extent have diversity and gender aspects been considered?
  - What are the different assumptions that underpin the interpretations of the results?
  - What alternative research designs might be possible?
- How can you refer to the **diversity of theoretical approaches** within your discipline? Are there different schools of thought or traditions in your discipline that you might reflect on?
- What roles have **women and men** played in the history of the discipline?

Examples from the field of AI and Machine Learning[10] illustrate that diversity in research is also a key factor in technical innovations and developments. As this technology is designed by humans, it may be encoded with the biases of its developers or fed with prejudiced or biased data[11]. This is

[10] https://horizon-magazine.eu/article/encoding-same-biases-artificial-intelligence-s-limitations-coronavirus-response.html
[11] https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-05707-8

especially dangerous as these technologies can reproduce such biases rapidly and on a large scale. This shows why it is crucial for researchers to reflect on possible biases and integrate diversity into their research.

Sex and gender might intersect with other diversity traits, such as age, race, social background or culture. Additionally, research findings might have different implications for different user groups or stakeholders (e.g. different treatments for women, pregnant women and men or for children and adults). A current example that demonstrates the importance of considering diversity in research is Covid-19[12], the manifestation of and response to which show not only gender differences but also racial differences and age differences. This example shows how several diversity traits can intersect and demonstrates the importance of considering aspects of diversity other than gender.

For more information on diversity in research, consult the HBP Research Guidelines[13], watch the webinar[14] or read the blog post[15].

[12] https://ethicsblog.crb.uu.se/2020/08/12/diversity-in-research-why-do-we-need-it-by-karin-grasenick-julia-trattnig/
[13] https://sos-ch-dk-2.exo.io/public-website-production/filer_public/23/1e/231e7bc7-bd5c-4c90-92b1-35aa403f0f13/hbp_guideline_diversityinresearch_190204-1207.pdf
[14] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UdAYk_mW82c
[15] http://www.theneuroethicsblog.com/2019/09/same-same-or-different-common_10.html