

# **Initiatives and Best Practice from the UK**

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# Initiatives and Best Practice from the UK



- Government
- Higher education funding councils
- Learned societies
- Individual universities

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## Government

Introduction of a positive duty on all public authorities to promote equality between men and women in April 2007

Every university and college of higher education will be expected to provide evidence that they have taken account of the duty in relation to their core functions of

Policy development

Service design and delivery

Employment practice

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- Proportionality
- Effectiveness
- Involvement
- Transparency

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## Government

Establishment of UK Resource Centre for Women in  
Science Engineering and Technology

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## Higher education funding councils

### Research Assessment Exercise

- All Panel members briefed about equality
- All universities and colleges of higher education required to produce an equality code of practice

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## Professional Bodies

Institute of Physics – Women in University Physics  
Departments Site Visit Scheme

Royal Society of Chemistry – Good Practice in  
University Departments

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## Perceived barriers

- Family responsibilities
- Stereotyping and preconceptions
- Lack of visible female role models
- Exclusion from informal networks
- Leadership's failure to take responsibility for women's advancement
- Personal style differences
- Lack of mentoring



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## Perceived barriers (2)

- Lack of awareness of organisational politics
- Lack of professional development opportunities
- Lack of opportunities for visibility
- Lack of opportunities to work on challenging assignments
- Sexual harassment

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## **Additional personal barriers within HE**

Lack of self-confidence: underestimating knowledge and experience

Focusing on the negative: the experience and skills that one doesn't have

Wanting to see jobs through to the end, and thus staying too long in post

Work/life balance within long hours culture

Women's routes to seniority often via roles relating more to people and teaching than 'big money' research empires

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## Queen's University Belfast

- Vice-Chancellor requested an investigation into gender issues – Women's Forum established in 1999
- Aim: To address the issue of gender imbalance at QUB by improving the profile and position of women within the University.

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## Queen's University Belfast

### Process

- Initiate
- Pilot
- Evaluate
- Mainstream
- Monitor

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## Key factors for success

- Active support of head of the university/college
- Baseline data, monitoring and evaluation
- Staff consultation
- Clear career paths and promotions procedures
- Positive work environment
- Mentoring scheme
- Women Returners' Scheme

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## Websites

Institute of Physics Report -

<http://diversity.iop.org/news/index.html>

Royal Society of Chemistry Report –

<http://www.rsc.org/ScienceAndTechnology/Policy/GoodPracticeinUCD.asp>

Equal Opportunities Commission – [www.eoc.org.uk](http://www.eoc.org.uk)

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