

Stream Title Gender equality and career progression in Science, Engineering and Technology

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Stream outline:

The proportion of women in Science, Engineering or Technology (SET) remains at 18.5% (LFS, 2006) despite numerous initiatives aimed at tackling women's under-representation within these professions. This attrition starts early with less than a third of female SET students employed in those sectors after they graduate. Evidence suggests that simply increasing the numbers of women in SET professions is an inadequate strategy for improving women's experiences and career opportunities. Instead, low participation of women in SET and the problems women face in the sector are part of wider societal perceptions that identify SET occupations as male domains (Bagilhole, et al, 2007). We invite presentations from researchers offering new and emerging perspectives about female under-representation and lack of progression in SET education and employment, and identifying innovative interventions to address this problem.

Stream questions:

- To what extent are there gendered cultures within SET employment and educational environments? What impact do these have on the exclusion and underachievement of women, including women in top management tiers? What measures are being or could be implemented to bring about sustainable change?
- How are women scientists, engineers and technologists represented in the mass media? How does gender intersect with other issues in the public communication of scientific issues? What role can those who contribute to the media production process, including writers, producers, and science communicators play in challenging gender stereotyping?
- Many initiatives have been introduced to address the problem of under-representation of women in SET over the last 30 years. What can we learn from their effectiveness and limitations that will assist real change in the future?

Key words: Gender, Science, Engineering, Technology, employment, career progression, culture change.