

September 2016

The Section of Philosophy at Institute of Media, Cognition and Communication, University of Copenhagen, adopts the following gender policy guidelines:

The Section of Philosophy endorses the generic guidelines recommended by The British Philosophical Association/SWIP. As these guidelines in part deal with issues already covered by Danish law or by various university wide rules, and as they in some cases presuppose institutional and procedural settings that not apply to our context, we have decided to adopt a modified version of the guidelines. In many cases we have included text verbatim from the generic guidelines, and in other cases we have modified the text to suit our needs. See separate document detailing a plan for implementation.

It is important to note the legal status of these guidelines. The guidelines express a commitment on the part of members of the Section of Philosophy. In some cases the guidelines overlaps existing Danish legislation or UCPH rules, in other cases the guidelines are stricter. The Section of Philosophy does not have the formal authority to impose legal or other sanctions on members of sections in case they violate the guidelines. Neither does the Section of Philosophy have the authority to formally investigate alleged breaches of Danish legislation or UCPH rules in the areas covered by the guidelines. Cases of alleged breaches of Danish legislation or UCPH rules in the area covered by these guidelines can be subject to formal investigations initiated by the competent authorities, and will typically include formal hearings of all affected parties.

1. Introduction

There is evidence from a wide range of sources that even the most well-intentioned people – male and female – can exhibit unconscious biases in the ways they deal with women (and other social groups that are negatively stereotyped in a particular context). Among other things, the following guidelines are intended to reduce the influence of these biases and to break down stereotypical associations of philosophy with maleness. Although the focus of these recommendations is on gender, many of the suggestions will also help with other forms of bias.

2 Teaching

The Section of Philosophy will ensure that those involved in teaching know about the workings of unconscious bias. Information about and discussion of gender bias should be included in any training or induction sessions run by the department for staff, including teaching assistants, and should also be communicated to students. The Section of Philosophy aims to ensure that readings by women are well represented on all course reading lists and/or are set as required seminar reading.

3 Conferences, workshops, seminars

Events where all speakers, or a disproportionate share of speakers, are male can help to reinforce the stereotype of philosophy as male, and such all-male events forego an

opportunity to present role-models for female students. The Section of Philosophy advises that organizers of these events take reasonable steps to ensure a balanced representation of male and female speakers at events. We advise that organizers attend to other dimensions of diversity, such as race, ethnicity and disability as well. We also advise that organizers of conferences, workshops, seminars and research groups consider a chairing policy that is friendly and inclusive. As the recommendations from BPA/SWIP say, 'Standard rules for conducting seminars often serve to reinforce existing hierarchies, with the same few high status individuals monopolizing discussion. This makes it harder for the more marginalized members of the profession to advance, and it also means that fewer perspectives get discussed.'

4 Departmental culture

The Section of Philosophy intends at all levels to cultivate an atmosphere in which maintaining a healthy climate for all department members, especially those from under-represented groups and including non-academic staff, is considered everyone's responsibility. Insulting, aggressive and unprofessional behavior should not be tolerated – whether from staff (including support staff and teaching assistants) or students. This includes, but is not limited to, dismissive remarks about the intellectual abilities of certain sorts of people; hostile questioning and or/excessive interruption of speakers; and gratuitous sexual comments. The Section of Philosophy tries to ensure that all staff and students feel comfortable in dealing with such behavior in the most appropriate manner. At a minimum it includes a responsibility to reflect on the consequences (including unintended consequences) of one's own behavior, and it also includes a responsibility to intervene, either formally or informally.

5 Hiring panels and assessment committees

Hiring processes, panels and assessment committees are subject to a number of formal rules, including some that guarantee a minimal gender balance in the panels and committees. As gender bias is a pervasive phenomenon, however, the Section of Philosophy will ensure that its members are aware of the workings of unconscious biases when serving on hiring panels and assessments committees and similar bodies.

6 Sexual harassment

The EU defines 'sexual harassment' as 'unwanted conduct related to the sex of a person occur[ring] with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment'. Danish Legislation and UCPH rules adopt a similar definition. Sexual harassment can be carried out by persons of any gender, and persons of any gender may be victims, and sexual harassment may interact with and be modified by issues of race, ethnicity, religion, class and disability status.

The Section of Philosophy will attend seriously to harassment committed by students and by staff, as both can have dramatically negative effects on particular individuals and on departmental culture. All members of the Section of Philosophy as well as students should be made aware of the regulations that govern sexual harassment in the university. Individuals who experience what they consider sexual harassment

should contact Head of Institute or Head of Section. Students might also contact the student counselor.

7 Caregivers

Staff members and students with caregiving responsibilities—whether parental or other—face constraints on their time that others often do not. The Section of Philosophy intends to schedule important events, as far as possible, between 9 and 4, where childcare is more readily available. When an event has to be scheduled outside of these hours, we give plenty of advance notice so that caregivers can make the necessary arrangements.

8 Staff-student relationships

Romantic or sexual relationships that occur in the student-teacher context, or in the context of supervision, line management and evaluation, present special problems. The difference in power and the respect and trust that are often present between a teacher and student, supervisor and subordinate, or senior and junior colleague in the same department or unit makes these relationships especially vulnerable to exploitation, and can have other unfortunate unintentional consequences.

We strongly discourage any romantic or sexual relation between teaching staff (permanent as well as temporary) and students at any level (BA-level and MA-level). The Danish Public Administration Act implies when such cases occur the teaching staff in question cannot take part in assessments of the student in question for exams, or in assessment of applications for scholarships and stipends managed by UCHP. We also recommend that the teaching staff in question withdraw from small-group teaching and individual supervision, and withdraw from writing references and recommendations for the student in question. Note that faculty guidelines make similar provisions about relations between PhD-supervisors and their PhD-students.

If a student has entered into a relationship with a member of staff, while the responsibility for taking the above steps lies with the member of staff concerned, the student is entitled to report their relationship to another member of staff, Head of Section, or Head of Department.

The Section of Philosophy, September 2016