



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTION TO THE SENIOR ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

Q: What is the SALI?

A: The Senior Academic Leadership Initiative (SALI) is a new initiative run by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) funded by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) aimed at taking positive action to accelerate gender equality goals and objectives in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Ireland.

HEIs have been invited to submit applications for funding under the SALI to support activity aimed at achieving gender balance at the highest point on their academic career ladder, i.e. professor or senior lecturer level 3.

Q: How will it operate?

A: The initiative is managed by the HEA, on behalf of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS). HEIs will be invited to apply for funding through a Call for Applications. Following a competitive process based on the annual Call for applications from HEIs, the HEA will approve a defined number of new and additional senior academic leadership posts to successful HEIs. There will be a total of 45 such posts provided over a period of three years.

Q: How many posts will be created?

A: It is envisaged that 45 senior academic leadership posts will be awarded to HEIs over three years to assist in accelerating gender balance at senior levels.

The first posts (20) issued in 2019 to the HEIs and recruitment for suitable candidates to take up these posts followed in 2020.

The timeframe for the second cycle of posts is:

- Call for applications issues to HEIs – **9th October 2020**
- Deadline for applications - **12:00, 29th January 2021**
- Announcement of outcome – **Q2 2021**

Q: What is the SALI's core objective?

A: The SALI aims to help achieve gender balance in the higher education sector, through the procurement of funds for new and additional senior academic leadership posts over and above what already exists in the system.

A key objective of the initiative is to strengthen gender diversity at the senior academic leadership level within HEIs and to encourage the benefits that such diversity can deliver.

The initiative aims to attract outstanding applicants both from within the sector in Ireland and internationally.

The SALI will also assist in increasing the number of women involved in the decision-making processes in the institutions.

Q: Why do we need an initiative like this to help achieve gender equality?

A: The initiative is based on a detailed evidence and research base comprising the 2016 HEA Expert Group Report and the Gender Equality Taskforce analysis.

There is a significant imbalance in female representation at professional level in universities in Ireland. The HEA's [Higher Education Institutional Staff by Gender](#) report (2018), highlighted that in 2017 only 24% of Professor posts were held by women as compared to 51% women lecturers, an entry level for academic posts in the university sector. The most recent [report](#) indicates a 1% increase in these figures per annum (e.g. 26% of Professor posts were held by women in 2019).

The Minister of State for Higher Education established the Gender Equality Taskforce in November 2017, to identify significant measures that could accelerate progress in achieving gender equality in the Irish HEIs. The Taskforce was established to oversee a national system review of the recruitment and promotion policies and practices in place in higher education institutions, with a view to identifying good-practice and highlighting areas that needed improvement.

Data analysis conducted by the Gender Equality Taskforce, on the estimated rate of change for the future suggests that the adoption of a particular approach to recruitment and promotion, the "Flexible Cascade Model"¹, could take some 20 years to achieve gender balance at professor level in universities (i.e. minimum 40% female professors).

While, in the technological HE sector, 45% of lecturers were female in 2017, whereas only 31% of senior lecturer 3 level posts were held by women. Analysis by the Taskforce suggests that it could take up to seven years to achieve 40% gender balance at this level and, in 2019, only a 1% increase in senior lecturer 3 level posts held by women has been noted. The SALI aims to accelerate this process.

The HEA Expert Group and Gender Equality Taskforce both recognised that in addition to the organisational and culture change initiatives needed, a significant targeted positive action initiative was required in order to effect change within a reasonable timeframe at the highest academic level in both sectors.

International evidence is that the establishment of new and additional gender-targeted posts would be a proportionate and effective means to achieve rapid and sustainable change, and on that basis has the potential to be transformative for the higher education sector in terms of securing gender equality goals.

Q: How can the SALI help with organisational and cultural change?

A: The SALI will help with progressing systemic change of HEIs internal assessment process, helping to embed gender-proofing in HEI appointment procedures and practices.

Research has shown that a perceived lack of confidence in one's chance of success, which results in women not putting themselves forward for roles, is often not due to a lack of confidence in themselves, but rather a lack of confidence in the environment to judge them fairly.² Pre-existing subtle biases have been shown to affect the assessment of applications with a female name and the procedures for appointments³. The HEA Expert Group and the Gender Equality Taskforce have

¹ Where the proportion of women and men to be recruited or promoted to a certain level is based on the proportion of each at the career level directly below.

² McKinsey and Co. (2010) *Women Matter* 2010, p11.

³ C.A. Moss-Racusin et al. (2012). Science faculty's subtle gender biases favour male students. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 109(41)16474-79 2012; van den Brink et al. (2010) Transparency in academic recruitment: a problematic tool for gender equality? *Organisation Studies* 31(11)1459-83; Nielsen, M.W. 2015 'Limits to meritocracy?'

highlighted particular key areas for focus to help address this. The implementation of these by the HEIs will be taken into consideration as part of the SALI assessment process, thereby helping to embed the gender-proofing of appointment procedures and practices in the HEIs.

Therefore, the SALI will not only appoint new and additional senior leaders in areas where there is a significant under representation of women, but it is a signal to candidates that the HEI offering a SALI post has demonstrated their commitment to gender equality, through the provision of their Gender Action Plans and evidence that they are progressing their stated objectives and targets to achieve organisational and cultural change. The institution must also demonstrate plans for future developments in this area and outline the organisational and cultural initiatives in place to support the newly appointed staff. In this way, the SALI posts are also helping to bring about organisational and cultural change in HEIs.

Q: How inclusive is the SALI in regard to candidates past experience?

A: A key objective of the initiative is to strengthen diversity at senior academic leadership level in HEIs given the benefits that increased diversity would be expected to generate for HEIs as set out in the report of the Gender Equality Taskforce. Consequently other capabilities and life experiences which have been acquired by applicants outside of the academic environment (e.g. from the performance of caring responsibilities) can be taken into account in assessing candidates, in so far as they are of importance for the suitability, performance and capability of applicants to perform senior academic leadership roles in higher education and to underpin the achievement of increased diversity at that level.

Q: Is the SALI for women only?

A: No, both women and men are eligible to apply. However the core objective of the SALI is to enhance under-represented groups within the higher education sector, and the key objective of this Call is principally to attract outstanding female applicants both from within the sector currently and internationally in order to address their lack of representation at the top level in higher education institutions.

In exceptional circumstances, candidates who are in a minority or protected under Irish social legislation, or who also belong to an underrepresented minority in academic posts may be approved if the individual HEI can clearly articulate reasons worthy of legal protection as to why these candidates should be considered for funding under the SALI.

Q: Can men apply for these posts?

A: Yes, men can apply for these posts, in exceptional circumstances. The SALI is aimed primarily at supporting significantly under-represented groups in the higher education sector, and for this Call the priority for the new and additional roles will be highly qualified female candidates from within the sector in Ireland and internationally. However, in exceptional circumstances, male candidates who are in a minority or protected under Irish social legislation, or who also belong to an under-represented minority in academic posts may be approved if the institution can clearly articulate reasons worthy of legal protection as to why they should be considered.

Q: Many other groups are under-represented in our HEIs, will the SALI provide them with an opportunity to participate in this scheme?

A: The SALI's core objective is to address female under-representation in HEIs through the addition of new posts which will be funded in areas where there is clear evidence of under-representation.

In exceptional circumstances, candidates who are in a minority or protected under Irish social legislation, or who also belong to an under-represented minority in academic posts may be approved if the individual HEI can clearly articulate reasons worthy of legal protection as to why these candidates should be considered for funding under the SALI.

Q: Is there a risk that women who are not suitably qualified will end up getting these posts?

A: No, these posts will be subject to the same normal high level of strict institutional assessment and processes as for any other professor or senior lecturer level 3 posts in the HEIs. Any candidate who is appointed to a SALI supported position must have the requisite skills, qualifications and academic experience as would be required currently for comparable senior academic leadership roles in the HEIs. These new and additional posts differ only in that they will be targeted at areas where there is a significant evidence of an under-representation of women.

After a period of austerity, where we had an Employment Control Framework (ECF) on staff numbers while at the same time the numbers of students coming into third level were increasing, HEIs are in need of new and additional staff at senior levels. The Government has recognised this need and responded with 45 new and additional posts that will be funded in areas where there is a significant under-representation of women, thereby helping to address two important issues in HEIs, the need for more staff and the need to increase the numbers of women at senior levels in the HEIs.

If applicants do not meet the normal high level of strict institutional assessment and competition rules for appointment at Professorship / SL3 level, then appointment will not be made.

Internationally, the experience in Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands was that in running a targeted initiative to attract women to their professor posts, their own University Deans were so impressed with the calibre of talented women that applied, that they pooled their own money to secure an additional three candidates over and above the original ten posts that had been advertised. Talented women are out there.

Q: Are men who are not eligible to apply under the exceptional circumstances criteria being disadvantaged by this initiative?

A: No, all the same opportunities that were available to these men before this initiative was launched are available to them still. The SALI posts are new and additional over and above what was already in the system.

Q: How will the HEA and Department of Education and Skills assess the success of this initiative?

A: The initiative will be evaluated prior to the commencement of each cycle. This evaluation will be conducted at the institutional, sectoral and national levels.

Q: Why are women not naturally progressing to professorship posts in higher education?

A: The reason why women are not to be found in the same proportion as men in the most senior positions is not because women are not talented or driven enough to fill these roles, it is because numerous factors within HEIs, conscious and unconscious, cultural and structural, mean that women face a number of barriers to progression, which are not experienced to the same degree by their male

colleagues; systematic barriers in the organisation and culture within higher education institutions mean that talent alone is not always enough to guarantee success⁴.

Q: Why are these new and additional SALI posts only being offered at professor and senior lecturer level 3 and not at the other levels of the career pipeline?

A: Analysis of recruitment trends by the Gender Equality Taskforce highlighted that rate of change, over the period 2013 – 2017, at the most senior grades is slower than at other grades.

Other countries have been actively working on trying to address gender inequality for longer than Ireland, but they still have a significant under-representation of women at the professor level (e.g. in 2016 women professors represented 24% in France; 23% in Germany; and 21% in Switzerland). This highest point on the career structure seems to be particularly problematic to change, which may in part be because there is a very low turnover of staff as they are permanent roles.

In 2017 in Ireland, there were c. 530 professors in the system and data analysis conducted by the Gender Equality Taskforce, estimated that annually only c50 posts became available for appointment/renewal. Therefore, the amount of change that is currently possible in the system is very limited/restricted, e.g. even if all these posts were won by women every year from now on, it could still take over 6 years to reach gender balance at this level. Therefore, a significant targeted positive action initiative such as an injection of new and additional posts was required in order to accelerate the change possible.

Q. How many female candidates apply for professorships and what is the rate of success?

A. Per the report of the Gender Equality Taskforce published in 2018, in the university sector, over the period 2013-17, 32% (37 out of 114) of applicants for the promotion to Professor were female and 29% (17 out of 59) were successful (i.e. 68% of applicants were male and 71% of successful applicants were male). However, success rates for female and male candidates were broadly comparable, at 46% and 55% respectively. (Please note that these statistics are a rough guide and not an absolute figure, as not all the data was available to the taskforce.)

Q. If a HEI is recruiting a new president, should this post be reserved for a female candidate?

A. The Gender Equality Taskforce recommended specific action around the recruitment of a new president. In planning for a new president, the governing authority will ensure that measures to promote gender equality within the search and selection process (as well as documenting the gender balance in the applicant pool, and at each stage of the selection process), are undertaken.

Q: The SALI apart, what are the HEA doing to address this wider systemic issue?

A: The [HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions \(2016\)](#) was an important first step in highlighting the gender inequality that exists at senior academic levels within HEIs, and set out recommendations for stakeholders across the system in order to bring about organisational and cultural change.

⁴ <https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/06/HEA-National-Review-of-Gender-Equality-in-Irish-Higher-Education-Institutions.pdf>

The HEA publish annual staff statistics by gender, in the [Higher Education Institutional Staff by Gender](#) (2018) report it was highlighted that in 2017 only 24% of Professor posts were held by women as compared to 51% women Lecturers, an entry level for academic posts in the university sector. The HEA has oversight for implementation of the Gender Equality Taskforce Action Plan (2018-2020), which encompasses a suite of initiatives to bring about sustainable organisational change and to empower a culture of gender equality in the HEIs for all staff, academic and professional, as well as management and support staff at all levels. In particular:

- The establishment of a *Centre of Excellence for Gender Equality* in the HEA will be a key enabler of this and in particular will ensure sustainable change by providing centralised support for the institutions, sharing of good practice, and funding for innovative organisational and cultural change initiatives nationally.
- Ambitious targets for the proportion of academic and professional, management and support staff of each gender to be in senior positions in 1, 3 and 5 years will be agreed with the HEA and monitored annually through the Strategic Dialogue process. Each HEI will be held accountable for achieving their targets and performance will be incentivised through funding incentives or consequences as appropriate, to ensure progress is constant and considerable.
- Attainment of [Athena SWAN](#) certification is an important part of this Action Plan. Engaging with the Athena SWAN process has been transformative for HEIs, according to stakeholder feedback to the Gender Equality Taskforce. A list of current Athena SWAN awardees can be found [here](#). It is a key aim of government to ensure that Irish HEIs have the necessary support to engage fully with Athena SWAN and be ambitious so that they can work towards obtaining a Silver, and eventually a Gold, level award.

APPLICATIONS

Q: How does the HEA assessment of potential new posts work?

A: The HEI can apply for a maximum of **two** posts in areas where there is evidence:

- of significant gender under-representation;
- that the new appointment will have a significant impact within the faculty / department / functional unit and the HEI;
- that the addition of a new post would have a proportionate and effective outcome to achieve an accelerated and sustainable change within the institution.

Applications will be first reviewed by the HEA for eligibility, then sent for remote evaluation to an international Assessment Panel. The Assessment Panel will arrive at an overall judgement of standard and make final recommendations to the HEA. An independent audit processor will be present at the Assessment Panel meeting. The HEA's decision on whether to award a SALI post under this initiative is final.

Q: What is meant by benchmarking and using international best practice to inform applications?

A: Institutions should seek to benchmark and use international best practice to inform their applications. While it is acknowledged that the HEA Expert Group recommendations and Gender Equality Taskforce actions are based on national and international best practice, HEIs may also wish to refer to best practice that they have identified in relation to their own HEI's situation.

National benchmarking where possible is also welcome. As comparative data may not be readily available, it is acknowledged that HEIs may not be able to include detailed benchmarking information in relation to the area in which posts are requested. At a minimum, comparisons should be made to international data at a disciplinary level.

Q: How narrow or broad should HEIs define the area for the posts?

A: It is up to HEIs to determine the specificity of the posts that they apply for but HEIs should specify areas that are broad enough to ensure that there is a spread of candidates that can apply, and where they have a robust evidence base to demonstrate that there has been a significant under-representation of women in this area at the senior level.

Q: Can a post that has already been approved be put forward for SALI funding?

A: Applications to the SALI must be for posts that are completely new to the system and have no prior funding committed to them. If a post has already been approved, it falls outside of the eligibility criteria for the SALI. SALI posts are new and additional to the sector, i.e. they are in addition to the existing Employment Control Framework (ECF), and they will be funded through new and additional funding provided specifically to help address the significant gender-imbalance among academic staff at senior levels.

Q: Can a previously unsuccessful post application be submitted in subsequent cycles?

A: Yes. HEIs should consider feedback from the unsuccessful application and include any updated data.

Q: Is there a word limit per post submission?

A: The posts submission sections have a 2000-word limit. Applicants must strictly adhere to all word limits. Word counts must be included at the end of each section. **Submissions that exceed the word count may be penalised.**

Q: What is meant by the term ‘functional units’ in the Call text?

A: This term refers to a unit (e.g. school, research centre) that does not fall under the terms “faculty”, “department”.

Q: HEIs can apply for up to 2 positions under the SALI. Does this limit apply to the lifetime of the initiative or to each call?

A: Calls for applications to the SALI are planned for 2020 and 2021. On the recommendation of the international expert panel of cycle 1, HEIs can apply for up to 2 positions per call.

Q: 30 marks are allocated for “Clear indication of the significant impact of the new post on the departmental / functional unit and fit with the strategies of the HEI plan”. What is meant by HEI plan?

A: This can refer to HEI Strategic plan, HEI Gender action plan or Compact between the HEI and the HEA. The HEI needs to show how the post fits strategically with the institutional mission.

Q: Can applications for fractional appointments be submitted?

A: No, the initiative is intended to fund 1.0 FTE posts. In exceptional circumstances, where the fractional salary cost is equal to a normal professorial / senior lecturer 3 salary and the appointment is at 1.0 FTE (e.g. clinician academic appointments), applications of this nature will be considered.

Q: Can a HEI propose a position at SL3 / Professorship level that is a non-academic post? Can it be a leadership / senior managerial role in a new area of thematic development where there are low levels of female participation and representation across the HEI sector?

A: Yes. However, an application for this type of post (like any other) will need to critically analyse the significant gender under-representation in the faculty / department / functional unit being put forward for the new post and indicate the significant impact of the new post on the faculty / department / functional unit and how it fits with the strategies of the HEI.

POSTS

Q: How much funding has been allocated for the SALI?

A: Funding allocated to these additional professorial posts in universities / senior lecturer 3 level posts in IoTs will be €1.5m in 2020, growing to €4m in 2021. When applying to the SALI, HEIs must outline the organisational and cultural supports that will be in place for the newly appointed SALI professorial posts in the IUA institutions / senior lecturer 3 level posts in the technological HE sector, including non-pay costs, administrative supports, research supports, etc. In accepting funding for a SALI post, HEIs must commit to providing these necessary supports for the posts.

Q: How are these new posts being funded?

A: These posts are new and additional to the sector, i.e. they are in addition to the existing Employment Control Framework (ECF), and they will be funded through new and additional funding provided specifically to help address the significant gender-imbalance among academic staff at senior levels.

Q: Is the funding permanent and ring-fenced?

A: Funding will be provided for a period of 10 years, after which the HEI must incorporate the costs associated with these additional posts into the HEI pay overall budget.

Funding for these posts is subject to the continued receipt of funding by the HEA from the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS). In the event of such funding being reduced or discontinued, neither the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) nor the HEA will be under any liability to provide funding or to compensate HEIs for any reduction or cessation of such funding.

The successfully appointed candidates (successful candidates to each post) will be permanent employees of the HEI, under its normal terms and conditions.

Q: What level of funding will be attached to each SALI post?

A: Funding will be provided at the appropriate level for each post and will cover salary costs. When applying to the SALI, HEIs must outline the organisational and cultural supports that will be in place for the newly appointed SALI staff. A contribution will be required from the HEI towards the cost of

the post. HEIs must detail the supports that will be provided for these posts, with specific reference to non-pay costs, administrative supports, research supports etc. In accepting funding for a SALI post, HEIs must commit to providing these necessary supports for the posts.

Q: A description of institutional and organisational supports is required in the application. Is there a minimum contribution from the HEIs towards the costs of a post?

A: No, an amount is not prescribed. The normal resources / monetary support that would be given to a Professor in the IUA institutions / senior lecturer 3 in the technological higher education sector should be provided. Institutions should demonstrate that the supports are in accordance with normal institutional practice.

Q: Is it expected that the post holders will become involved in the gender equality initiatives within their institution?

A: The appointee is not expected to become involved in gender equality initiatives over and above what is typically expected of an individual in this role.

Q: What happens if a professor appointed under the SALI leaves before the 10 years of Government support has expired?

A: HEIs may replace this position. However, any new competition must be run under the same terms and conditions as the original SALI appointment.

Q: Will the posts be pre-allocated to the different HEI sectors?

A: No, each application will be assessed on its own merit. In addition to the quality assessment of the applications, posts within the SALI will be awarded with consideration to institutional, faculty / department / functional unit, and geographical spread.

Q: Considering that the initiative will fund a spread of applications across institutions, faculties and geographical regions, is it intended that a spread of discipline area will be funded?

A: Each post will be assessed on its own merit. In addition to the quality assessment of the applications, posts will be awarded with consideration to institutional, faculty / department / functional unit and geographical spread.

Q: Could the number of awards be higher than 15 in this call if there are significant numbers of high-quality applications?

A: Funding has been allocated for 15 posts in this call.

Q: Will the final decision about which applications are funded be made at HEA Executive level or HEA Board level?

A: The final decision will be made at HEA executive level and sent to the DFHERIS for final approval.

INFORMATION ON GENDER EQUALITY CRITERIA

Q: In relation to the application for specific posts, HEIs must provide the comprehensive critical analysis of significant gender under-representation in faculty / department / functional unit. Does

this relate to under-representation in a specific area in the HEI or can national data on general under-representation be used?

A: The criteria for scoring the critical analysis of significant gender under-representation are HEI specific, i.e. the significant gender under-representation should be demonstrated and analysed in relation to the specific HEI faculty / department / functional unit where the post will be based. See *question re benchmarking and international best practice in Applications above.*

Q: The SALI application requires institutions to demonstrate that progress has been made towards gender equality, whereas the Athena SWAN Bronze award requires that an institution identifies the barriers to gender equality and puts in place a plan to overcome them. Are institutions that are at an earlier stage vis-à-vis progress in addressing gender equality at a disadvantage in terms of preparing a successful application?

A: No, the SALI application requires a demonstration that progress has been made towards gender equality following the recommendations arising from the HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish HEIs 2016 and the recommended actions of the Gender Action Plan 2018-2020.

Q: Are there any allowances made for smaller institutions and specific challenges they encounter in the area of gender equality?

A: The panel will be briefed on the higher education sector in Ireland and HEIs will be expected to demonstrate how the post will have significant impact in the faculty / department / functional unit.

Q: Is there any flexibility for institutions who have not yet had their gender action plan approved by Governing Body?

A: Per the recommendations of the HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions 2016 and the recommended actions of the Gender Action Plan 2018-2020, institutions are required to have a Gender Action Plan. If this has not been approved by the Governing Body, institutions must explain why.

Q: The application requests a description of the fit of the new post with the strategies of the HEI plan. What if a HEI is in-between strategic plans: can this be accommodated in the evaluation process?

A: In this instance, HEIs should link posts to relevant strategic objectives (e.g. Gender Action Plan).

Q: The SALI intends to address gender under-representation in Irish HEIs. Does this mean that HEIs who are meeting their gender objectives will be disadvantaged?

A: No. A key requirement from HEIs aiming to secure these posts would be demonstration of their commitment to gender equality, through the provision of their Gender Action Plans and evidence that they are progressing their stated objectives and targets to achieve organisational and cultural change. The institution must also demonstrate plans for future developments in this area and outline the organisational and cultural initiatives in place to support the newly appointed staff. These criteria account for 40% of the overall scoring for a SALI application.

PANEL AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Q: Will the posts be evenly distributed across all HEIs?

A: Each HEI can put forward up to two areas per application to be considered for new posts under this initiative.

In addition to the quality assessment of the applications, posts within the SALI will be awarded with consideration to institutional, faculty / department / functional unit, and geographical spread.

There will be a total of 15 (45 over 3 years) senior academic leadership initiative posts provided across sectors (e.g. university and institute of technology).

Q: What will be examined during the eligibility check phase? Will applications be rejected (not sent to the panel) if they fail the eligibility check? If an application is deemed ineligible, will the HEI be informed of the reasons why?

A: The eligibility of a HEI will be assessed according to whether it is provided with a dedicated pay budget by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) / HEA and is encompassed by the Employment Control Framework and if it has an institutional gender action plan. The latest gender action plan that has been approved by its Governing Authority / Body must be submitted with the application. If a HEI does not satisfy these conditions, the application is not assessed and the HEI will be informed of the reason in the feedback.

Q: Will the external panel also be reviewing Section 2 (Institutional Submission) of the application?

A: Yes, the panel will assess all aspects of the applications assigned to them.

Q: What briefing will be given to the panel on how to evaluate inter- or cross-disciplinary applications that involve more than one faculty or department?

A: Such applications will be assessed in the same way as single-discipline applications. Inter- or cross-disciplinary applications are welcome and will be required to demonstrate clearly the impact of the post on the departments / functional units and fit with the strategies of the HEI plan.

Q: Will the panel receive a briefing on the Irish education system to illustrate the context that institutions are working in? For example, will the difference between Professorial and Senior Lecturer 3 roles be explained to them?

A: Yes, the panel will be fully briefed on the Irish higher education system and the sectoral differences in relation to these posts.

Q: Will the panel have access to disciplinary expertise to help them to assess applications?

A: The focus of the application process is on institutional progress on gender equality objectives and panellists will allocate scores as per the assessment criteria outlined in the call guidelines.

Q: Will there be any cross-moderation of the applications within the panel in order to standardise the process?

A: Following an eligibility check by the HEA, applications will be sent for remote evaluation to assessment panel members. Each application will be assessed by three members of the assessment

panel. In cases of significant variation in scoring or where a final score is an outlier in relation to the median, the chair will moderate the application. All panel members will consider reports on all applications before moderating final scores at a panel meeting. The HEA will also appoint a Process Auditor to assess the overall process.

Q: Will institutions receive feedback on their applications and, if so, will this be done in advance of a third call?

A: Yes, results will issue Q2 2021 and feedback will be supplied ahead of the next call.

RECRUITMENT OF POSTS

Q: How will the recruitment process work?

A: There are two phases to the process. The first phase involves an application from the HEIs to win funding for the posts from the HEA. The second phase involves an assessment process to determine who will take up the new posts under this initiative which will be undertaken by the HEI themselves. The HEI will utilise their own recruitment and appointment processes so that these posts are subject to the same high standards of any HEI appointment at this level in the institution. Only suitably qualified candidates shall be appointed.