

Equal Opportunities Guidelines

October 8, 2020

This document provides a concise description of the CRC/TRR 257 policies and practices in connection with equal opportunities issues for the first funding period 2019-2022. The goal of these policies is to ensure that equity goals of the CRC, as set in the grant proposal, can be reached. We will keep our policies regularly reviewed and, if necessary, updated.

For the purpose of this document, equality of opportunities is defined as a set of institutionalised mechanisms to ensure that people with different ethnic and social backgrounds and various needs are provided with the means to succeed when pursuing a career (mostly) in academia, in spite of these differences.

Our overarching goal is to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of the CRC and to contribute to the creation of a more diverse academic culture. To reach this and the other goals included in our proposal, we will adopt a set of policies to be implemented during the first funding period. These measures and policies are listed below.

Equal opportunities, inclusiveness, family friendliness

In relation to the CRC, the most relevant issues concerning equality of opportunities are in the context of gender and disabilities as well as family, pregnancy and parental leave. In this context, we will actively enforce the following measures:

- We will encourage women to increase their level of responsibility within the CRC. This includes, but it is not limited to, a) actively seeking to increase the number of women in the Executive Board of the CRC; b) motivating women to assume leading roles in the scientific organisation of topical workshops and c) making sure that women take an active role in the scientific organisation of the annual CRC meetings.
- We will actively attract highly-qualified women, e.g. holders of and applicants to the Sofia Kovalevskaya Award (Alexander von Humboldt Foundation), the ERC Starting Grant (European Research Council) and members of the Emmy Noether Programme (German Research Foundation) as junior group leaders of the CRC to increase the number of our female principal investigators.
- We will ensure that the CRC provides a family-friendly working environment. We will do so by a) making flexible working hours a default employment practice; b) providing financial support for setting up home offices; c) facilitating access to childcare for CRC members and d) making an effort to conduct CRC-related activities during regular working hours, thereby contributing to the balancing of work and family life.
- We will enable interactive remote access (video and audio) to the main events of the CRC, including annual conferences and workshops.

- We will take care of the needs of CRC members with disabilities. For example, we will make sure that the annual meetings are always held in places which are wheelchair-accessible and have handicap parking spots. Generally, we shall ask which special needs CRC members have and try to accommodate for them as best as we can.
- We will adopt English as the working language of the CRC.
- We will make presentations on equity measures, such as unconscious bias trainings, a regular part of the annual CRC meetings. The topics to be covered in these presentations will be selected by the Executive Board, who will also provide the financial and logistic support for their organisation.
- We will, to the best of our abilities, offer flexible contracts, including possible extensions, to people that take parental leaves during their employment within the CRC.
- We will make every effort to support dual-career hiring at the doctoral and post-doctoral level when opportunities/needs arise.

Handling of conflicts

Cases of suspected bias and/or discrimination regarding any of the points in the previous section should be communicated to the CRC equal opportunity officer, who will guarantee that the case is treated with confidentiality and will make sure that the appropriate measures are taken.

Mentoring and networking

We will use the CRC structure to set up programs of positive action to actively support and promote our young scientists. In particular,

- We will establish a CRC-wide mentoring program for postdocs-to-faculty transition. This program will be mostly targeted at postdocs actively searching for faculty positions. Every candidate will have two PIs as mentors, who will help strengthen scientific profile and monitor the evolution typically for one year. In order to guarantee the effectiveness of the program, PIs should not mentor more than two people simultaneously.
- We will provide financial and logistic support for a) networking initiatives for female scientists of the CRC aimed at increasing the cohesion of the group and the awareness of equal opportunities issues; b) mentoring programs that female scientists of the CRC can benefit from and c) dedicated soft skills training sessions.

Soft skills training

Training sessions open to all young scientists will be incorporated as part of the annual meetings. These activities will be targeted mostly to the postdocs and experienced PhD students. Separate training events in the same spirit can be additionally organised.

- We will make soft-skills training sessions for CRC doctoral students and postdocs a regular part of the annual CRC meeting. The goal of these sessions will be to ensure that young members of the CRC possess the knowledge and skills required for a successful career in academia. These sessions will address multiple topics, such as (a) how to write excellent postdoctoral applications and grant proposals; (b) how to perform during a job interview, and (c) getting to know the funding opportunities that exist both at the national and international levels. The final composition of topics will be fixed after consulting with the young scientists through their representatives.
- We will make sure that doctoral students and postdocs of the CRC are also informed about career opportunities that exist outside academia. To this end we will include a dedicated session in the annual CRC meetings, where people working in the private sector, mostly former doctoral students and postdocs, will discuss the different steps to take to build a successful career outside academia.
- We will organise a young scientists forum during the annual CRC meetings, giving an opportunity to young scientists of the CRC (doctoral students and postdocs) both to discuss their research and to work on their presentation skills. This forum will be organised by the young scientists themselves (through their representatives), while the Executive Board will provide the financial and logistic support.
- We will encourage CRC doctoral students and postdocs to participate in the soft-skills training events organized by our participating Universities, e.g. in courses on scientific oral presentations and on scientific writing.

Hiring procedures

As stated above, this document is meant to ensure equal opportunities and inclusiveness for all members of the CRC, in other words to ensure non-discrimination on the basis of any criteria. In the case of underrepresented groups within the CRC, however, additional measures are required. In particular, in our field of expertise the number of women is substantially lower than that of men. For this reason we will set up a proactive and well-defined hiring procedure for female researchers, to reach a 1:3 female-male ratio among the CRC doctoral researchers and postdocs. Specifically we will

- Advertise the positions available within the CRC worldwide, in portals such as [AcademicJobsOnline.org](https://academicjobs.org), to make sure that our calls have the maximal reach.
- Distribute the information about job opportunities to various mailing lists that specifically inform female particle physicists, such as [GENHET](#).
- Compile a specific list of female postdocs in particle physics whose research interests are aligned with the research directions of the CRC, and inform those about job opportunities within the CRC.
- Scrutinise all female applicants specific to the scientific profile for each call, and discuss each female applicant individually in a hiring panel which includes at least one female PI.

Data collecting and monitoring

In order to keep track of how close we get to our goals, it is essential to keep a CRC-wide statistical database and monitor its evolution with time.

- We will twice a year collect data on equal opportunity and diversity and monitor the progress towards achieving the goals specified in our grant proposal. The data will be collected online through the CRC webpage.
- The data will be analysed by the Executive Board and presented to the PIs of the CRC during the annual CRC meetings.